



# Presenting Primary

Regular Primary Newsletter

Edition 4 – 10 March 2016

Dear Parents

## News Flash

**Cross Country now on Friday 11 March at 9.00am.**



Due to the wet weather putting a stop to our Cross Country plans on Wednesday this week, we will now run our Cross Country tomorrow, Friday 11 March at 9.00am. Our regular Early Years Chapel Service and Assembly will be held straight after morning tea at 11.30am on the same day. The change of day has an impact on regular events but I am sure you will understand the need to complete our Cross Country carnival as soon as possible so that team members can be finalised for interschool competitions. Parents are most welcome to join us for the Cross Country and Chapel Service afterwards.

## What's New?

There was great excitement at school this week when the students in Years 4, 5 and 6 moved into their new classrooms. The new learning spaces are light and airy and provide plenty of opportunity for flexible learning and collaboration. There are still some aspects to the new rooms that are not completely finalised, but that has not concerned the students and teachers who have all expressed how wonderful the new areas are for learning. Parents are most welcome to pop into the new rooms and see the transformation that is taking place.



Earlier this week, I was in the new Year 5 classroom block at the time when students were lining up to go back into class after morning tea play. One student asked, "What are we doing next?" and he received the reply, "Big Write – we are doing writing." The boy who asked the question was thrilled, he jumped up and down saying, "Big Write, Big Write." His classmates joined him in his joyful chant. I was amazed to see genuine excitement on the faces of these Year 5 boys who were really looking forward to writing. I must admit I have never seen such a positive response for a writing lesson in all my years of teaching. What is the secret to this new excitement for writing at St John's?

This year we introduced a different focus on writing across the year levels with the aim of improving student writing achievement and providing students with memorable strategies to help them make their writing well-structured and more interesting. The teachers attended professional development sessions at the end of the 2015 school year when the children were all on holidays and we implemented the program at the commencement of this year.





Big Write activities encourage quality writing rather than quantity. So instead of focussing on how much a student writes (because this could be poorly written and lacking in correct grammar and punctuation) the focus is on four key features that are required for good quality writing: Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation. When you visit our classrooms you will see displays on the walls as reminders of these four features - VCOP. Our new writing program is also a lot of fun. For example, students learn about punctuation by doing the 'Kung Fu Punctuation' dance and they are encouraged to talk about their stories before writing. Once they know exactly what their story will be about they can focus on using the four key features required for good writing. This focus on **how** to write, and not **what** to write can result in far better quality writing.

I encourage you to have conversations with your children about their writing as this will help them cement their ideas in their mind so that what to write becomes easier for them. Also ask them to show you how to do the 'Kung Fu Punctuation' dance, and join in their fun of learning.



## College Carnival

Preparations are well underway for the College Carnival to be held on Saturday 21 May this year. This event is always a wonderful occasion of fun and community spirit and I am looking forward to seeing everyone there. Many of our Performing Arts groups will be providing entertainment on the day and the children in our primary music and dance groups are busily preparing their performance items.

We have a wonderful band of parent helpers assisting with the Carnival and we sincerely thank them and the P&F Executive for all their hard work in preparing for this special event. We particularly thank the primary parents, listed below, who have volunteered to be stall convenors.

As you can see from the list we are still needing convenors for three stalls. Please contact myself or Tammy Duggin, our Stall Coordinator via email [tammyduggin@bigpond.com](mailto:tammyduggin@bigpond.com) or mobile 0409 001 169 for further information and advice about the stalls and let us know how you could assist at the carnival.

## Primary Stalls

Kindergarten	Toys
Prep	Books
Year 1	Lucky Dips
Year 2	Home wares and Gifts, Convenor: Sharyn Cuff
Year 3 & 4	Cakes and Sweets, Convenor: Vanessa Newham
Year 5	Things in a Jar, Convenor: Donna Douglas
Year 6	Chocolate Toss, Convenor: Brenda Kett

A number of different rides have been hired for the Carnival and families can purchase ride bands for \$35 each, prior to the Carnival, or \$40 on the day. The ride bands provide students with unlimited access to the rides for the entire Carnival. Further information about the Carnival will be provided in the coming weeks, but in the meantime, please support your child's year level stall by donating items requested by the stall convenors. You will receive information about these requests, in the first instance, through emails sent home by your child's class teacher. Thank you for your support!



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## Kiss and Drive

Our Kiss and Drive pickup and drop off procedure has been developed in conjunction with Brisbane City Council and local police and it is an expectation that all families follow these procedures to ensure the safety of everyone. These procedures have been outlined to parents in previous newsletters and parent information handbooks, but if you are not familiar with them please contact Primary Reception for a copy.

Thank you to those parents who have been following our Kiss and Drive procedures correctly and not queuing around the round-about during peak pick-up times. This ensures that we are following road rules and also allowing local residents to use Alpine Place with greater ease. There is a very short period of time in the afternoons when the traffic in Alpine Place can become heavy and your cooperation in following procedures and being patient is greatly appreciated.

I also encourage parents to avoid arriving at 3.00pm and 3.15pm as these times appear to be the busiest. Parents who arrive at around 3.08pm and 3.20pm, have very little waiting, if any, because the majority of students have been collected. Staff are on duty in the Kiss and Drive area until 3.30pm each afternoon and so there is no need for parents to rush to be here at 3.00pm (for P to Year 2) or 3.10pm (for Years 3 to 6) when the bell rings for the end of school.

## Vacation Care

A wonderful program of activities has been developed for the coming Easter holiday period. If you would like your child to attend either ABCC or the Early Years' service during the holidays, please check the new program and complete the booking form available on the College website.



Kind regards

**Sandra Hawken**

**Head of Primary**