Dear parents, students and friends of St. Brigid’s,

Welcome to our new school year !!! It has been lovely catching up with children and parents alike over the last few days as we gear up for our new school year. Welcome is definitely the theme of this week’s newsletter!

First and foremost welcome to all of our delightful new prep children and their families to our community. Welcome to:

- Terrence Ozimek
- Kyriae Fidler
- Mate Marinovic
- Henry Freemantle
- Scarlett Oldfield
- James Farrar
- Dexter Mullane
- Jaimi Reid
- Arian Drennan
- Kristian Seketa
- Olivia Meehan
- Angus Tranter
- Jonathan Bryan
- Ava Conroy
- Ruby Sims
- Jake Plageman
- Joel Card
- Nate Closter
- Eamon Grigg
- Charlie Black
- Foster Trinder
- Chelsea Winter
- Zachary Ozimek
- Madison Buttigieg
- Patrick Hermans
- Allahy McFall

Additionally we have a number of new staff and families who have joined us from other schools and communities. Welcome to:

- Mrs Maree Morris, our deputy principal and Year 3 and 4 teacher.
- Miss Shannon Macklin, a teacher starting out on her career and is our Prep/One Teacher.
- Miss Chelsea Brennan, who like Shannon is a ‘newbie’ to education and will be working in Year 3 and 4.
- Mrs Breeann Kerr our new Year 2 teacher who has come to our school from St Patrick’s in Kilmore.
- Mrs Melissa Backhouse, a learning support officer who will be working in the Year 3 and 4 team, and lastly, but by no means least
- Miss Asha Roche who is taking a break from her studies and will be working as an LSO in the Junior team.
- The Connally Family - Steve and Anna-Lise and their children Ava and Tom.
- The Heaton Family – Sherri-Jane and her children George and Mary-Jane

We all know that there will be lots of mixed emotions for all as they settle into school and particularly the life of St Brigid’s. Yet, I also know that all within our community will make them feel very welcome and part of our school family.

CONGRATULATIONS
A very special congratulations to two of our staff members who experienced some exciting happenings during the holidays.

To Emma Anticaglia and Justin Smith who announced their engagement on Christmas day. Justin very bravely proposed to Emma in front of all of her extended family. Congratulations and job well done!!!

When we employed Bree before the holidays, she was Breeann Cole, but since that time Bree spent some time in Fiji, with the express intention of marrying her fiancé, Manny, so she begins her time with as Mrs Kerr.
Congratulations and every best wish to Emma and Justin, and Bree and Manny as they all begin new chapters in their lives.

The staff have already done much work in preparation for this school year - our learning spaces look wonderful including the recently reclaimed Year two room (previously the art room).

We have also had considerable cupboards installed in an effort to keep all of our resources neatly stored. We are very aware that with the art room now a classroom our main corridor has the potential to become very congested, particularly in the mornings before school as parents and students alike gather in this space.

In an effort to ease this we are now asking that the children (and their parents and younger siblings) come into the classrooms via the external classroom doors unless the weather makes this challenging. A reminder too, that as highlighted a number of times last year, the children should not be coming to school until 8.30am when the teachers officially start their supervision. If children are at school before this time, the children will need to sit on the seat just inside the front door until 8.30am when they can then go into their classroom.

MASTER PLANNING
As our school continues to grow as demonstrated by the need to use the art room as a classroom, we need to make plans to accommodate any extra growth, and also continue to develop the facilities we need to continue to offer appropriate contemporary educational programs.

A number of years ago, Peter and the then School Advisory Council in conjunction with our architects developed a Master Plan for the school. Thanks to their hard work and commitment that master plan has effectively been completed or achieved.

Hence we now need to develop a new Master Plan for the school and grounds. We would love to have everyone in our school community involved in this process. So we would like all families to complete the Treasure Card attached to this week’s newsletter. The idea behind these cards is to hear a little of your vision or plans for the physical aspects of our school. The card ask a number of questions including:

- What two physical features do you value the most?
- Two new elements I would like to see in a future master plan?

This is an opportunity for you all to contribute to what you believe are the key facilities we need to have included in our school now and into the future. Obviously, we all need to be little realistic about our dream school but sometimes the most unusual ideas can be the beginning of something quite inspirational.

In considering any building development we also need to acknowledge that some things might need to change or even be removed from our present school. Hence the question about what you don’t want to lose from our present school and grounds. For your family it might be the sand pit, for someone else it could be decking, or the central corridor, or even the cypress trees.

We want everyone to put on their thinking caps - it is the one chance for everyone to contribute to the physical direction our school could go. Also keep in mind this is a master plan which can have a number of stages, and obviously will serve the needs of our community for many years to come.

Once we have collected all of the treasure cards we will use these to assist in developing an educational brief which our architects will then use to develop a master plan for St. Brigid’s. The children will also complete their own treasure cards at school. All families who complete the cards will go into a draw to win a special prize!!!! So get let you imagination run wild !!!!
On behalf of you all I would like to extend a massive thank you to Maggie and John Sheehan who recently devoted many, many hours to improving the deck at the back of the school. They spent much time scrubbing and removing the varnish that had previously been used on the deck. Since then they oiled the deck with a product that we hope will lessen the “slip factor” in wet and frosty conditions. Thank you so much we really appreciate all of your efforts.

Our nature strip and some areas around the school really do need a mow - if there is a generous hearted person who could spare an hour or so we would appreciate your help. The ride-on is in the shed all ready to go!!! Our maintenance roster will be sent out shortly.

**POLO TOURNAMENT.**
A key event coming up very soon (SUNDAY 14TH FEBRUARY) IS THE Yaloak Polo Tournament which is our first fundraiser for the year. We are seeking volunteers to assist with parking, gate keeping, and cooking and manning the barbeque. You do not need to be at the event all day - just an hour or so. Please fill out the attached form and return to the school as soon as possible. It is important to remember that we all need to contribute to the life of our school - we should not be leaving fundraising, maintenance, support for families, classroom helping to everyone else. If we all chip in there is less work for a few and most of all you may even have some fun!! If you have any questions about this event just call into the office. We need your help!!!

Below please find the calendar to date for Term One:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 4th Feb</td>
<td>Rest day for Foundation children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 5th Feb</td>
<td>School Assembly at 2.45 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 10th Feb</td>
<td>Ash Wednesday.  Mass at 11am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday 14th Feb</td>
<td>Polo Tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 1st March</td>
<td>Annual General meeting for School Advisory Council</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7.30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 8th March</td>
<td>Program Support Group meetings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 10th March</td>
<td>Program Support Group meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 20th March</td>
<td>Ballan Autumn Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 24th March</td>
<td>Last day of term one.</td>
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This year has been declared the year of Mercy by Pope Francis and was the theme of our beginning of the year mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral last week. I share with you today the same prayer we as ambassadors for the year of Mercy prayed at the conclusion of the mass.

Please also keep in your prayers:
- Mrs Maree Morris and her family - Maree’s father passed away peacefully early on Monday morning.
- Grace Van Gaans as she continues her regular medical treatment.

*Lord Jesus Christ,*
*you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,*
*and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.*
*Show us your face and we will be saved.*
*Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;*
*the adulteress Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;*
*made Peter weep after his betrayal,*
*and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.*

*Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:*
*"If you knew the gift of God!"*
You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Amen.

Have a great week everyone.

PS Have you downloaded the St. Brigid’s Skoolbag app yet?? Go to your phone’s app store and search for St. Brigid’s, Ballan. Then just wait for the alerts to follow through!!!

NEWSLETTER:
Our newsletter is usually sent home with the eldest child each Tuesday. It is also available via email or accessed from the school website – www.sbballan.catholic.edu.au. Today’s newsletter, the first of the year, is quite formidable as we explain routines, practices, seek information and acknowledge aspects which enhance the opportunities for the children.

DROPPING OFF / PICKING UP:
Parents are asked to please observe the school crossing signs and “No Standing” signs in both Inglis and Stead Streets when dropping off and picking up children from school. You are able to drop off your child on the east side of the Church, but please observe the “one way” sign on exiting. Also, just a reminder that Hudson’s Carpark is no longer available for use for pick ups and dropping off.

OFFICE HOURS:
During Term 1 the office will be open from 8.30am to 4pm each day.

SCHOOL UNIFORM:
- The children look resplendent as they began the year in their new uniforms. A reminder that having all items clearly/securely labeled ensures there is no unnecessary purchasing of new jumpers / polo tops. School footwear is black leather – boots, shoes or closed toe sandals. Canvas shoes or black runners do not give appropriate growth support and allow feet to breathe compared with leather shoes.
- A school hat is required to be worn for all outside activities – A hat for parents also sets a good example.
- Bikes should only be ridden by Grade 3 and above children unless supervised by a parent. Helmets are to be worn at all times.
- Please be very careful at all times. Parking around the school is regulated by street signs so try to avoid a fine. There is ample parking along Stead Street towards the Shire Offices.
- Any money paid to the school is to be put into an envelope with your child’s name, grade and reason for payment written on the outside. Your assistance in this matter would be appreciated.
Also a reminder that all Prep children have each Wednesday off until the end of Term 1.

**SCHOOL HOURS:**
School commences at 8.55am and concludes at 3pm
Recess is from 10.55am to 11.15am
Lunch is from 12.50 pm to 1.30pm
Children should not be at school prior to 8.30am.
If there are exceptional circumstances, please let a staff member know.

**SCHOOL BANK:**
Children can bring their Dollarmite Account Bank books each Tuesday. St Brigid’s receives a commission from the Commonwealth Bank for all deposits made through the school. Kits to open accounts are available from the school office.

**REAL FRUIT DAY:**
We encourage the children to have “real” fruit each day for morning snack. You would be very aware of the media reports about the poor nutrition in chips/biscuits and processed foods. Eating snacks other than “real” fruit is discouraged at recess time. Also, only water should be in the children’s drink bottles.

**STUDENT DETAILS:**
If any details have changed over the holidays, (ie change of address, phone numbers, emergency numbers or names) can you please advise the office. It is vital that our records are up to date. If there are any changes, please complete the tear-off slip below and return to school. Also, if your child has an allergy to bandaides/peanuts, or on Asthma medication, we need to know. A medication certificate must be completed if your child is taking any medicine.

**EXCURSION PERMISSION:**
From time to time, the children, under the supervision of their teacher, will have a “mini excursion” within the township of Ballan.

This might be a walk to the local shops, to the hall for a concert practice or a visit to the hospital or hostel. Also, the local newspaper on occasion will wish to take photographs of children in class, participating in sporting events, etc. As always, these activities are under the supervision and discretion of the teaching staff of St Brigid’s. Please complete the permission tear-off slip and return to school by Friday, February 12.

**ABSENCES OF CHILDREN:**
If your child is absent for a day, the school would appreciate a phone call first thing in the morning. For any length of time, a short note is required.

**SCHOOL ACCOUNTS:**
Accounts will be sent home shortly. Just a reminder of the fees for this school year:
- Tuition Fee: $890.00 per family
- Capital Fee: $85.00 per family
- Book/Stationery Fee: $165.00 per child
- Fundraising Levy: $120.00 per family

We would ask that the Book Stationery Fee be paid by February 26, so that we can meet our commitments to the suppliers. Please note that the school does not have EFTPOS facility.

**DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT FOR SCHOOL FEES:**
We are able to offer this facility for payment of school fees. If you would like a form or some more information, please complete the tear off slip below and return to school by this Friday or contact Lin at the school office. The first Direct Debit is scheduled for Friday, February 19.
SCHOOL ENTRY IMMUNIZATION STATUS:
An immunization status certificate is still required for a child’s enrolment into primary school. If you have not already provided one for the school, parents are asked to please attend to this matter immediately.

PARENTS & FRIENDS NEWS:
HOT LUNCHES:
We plan to again have hot lunch orders available for the children, but as in the past, we just cannot do this without YOUR help. If you are able to assist, then please complete the tear off slip below and return to the school office before the end of this week. Lunch orders will commence as soon as we can get enough helpers and a roster is organised. There will be notification when they are due to begin.

Again we are grateful to Gyorgyi Gorman who is willing to coordinate the ordering of food, etc but she will need help with this role. If you would like more information, please have a chat to Lin in the school office.

To the new mums, if you are able to help, then we would team you up with an “experienced” mum who can show you the ropes, so please, don’t let that stop you for putting your hand up.

I would like to assist with the Yaloak Polo Tournament on Sunday, February 14.

Name …………………………… Contact Number ………………………

My child/children………………………… have permission to participate in “mini excursions” within the local area of St Brigid’s School for the 2016 school year.

I also give permission for my child to be photographed during a school activity with the possibility of being displayed in the local newspaper

Signed ……………………………………….. Date ………………….

Please list any changes that you would like to make:

Child’s Name …………………………………

Address ………………………………………………………

Emergency Contact Name & Number ………………………

Telephone – Home…………..Mobile …………………

Other ………………………………………………...
I am interested in Direct Debit for payment of School Fees. Please send me some information.

Name ............................... Contact Number .....................

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My child ....................... has an allergy to bandaides  Yes / No

Any allergies we need to be aware of

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I would like to receive the newsletter each week via email. My address is:

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(please print clearly)

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I would like to assist with lunches on a Friday.

Name ............................... Contact Number .....................

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MASS TIMES:</th>
<th>5th Sunday of Ordinary Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>February 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunnstown</td>
<td>6.30pm</td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
<td>February 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>8.45am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballan</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
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