Dear Families

Welcome back! What a fantastic start it has been to the new school year. I would particularly like to welcome our new families who, from my observations, seem to have settled into our school without so much as a hiccup and to our new staff members Nathan Owen, Lauren Menchise and Josie Grasso. I have had the pleasure of visiting most of the classrooms and am excited about the degree of enthusiasm the children are showing as they begin the new school year. It is hard to believe that there has only been a few school days, with the children well and truly engaged in their learning, and comfortable with their classroom routines. Once again our teachers have put in the hard yards with their preparations in the days and weeks leading up to the new year and I can’t speak highly enough of their commitment and dedication to ensuring the children in their care are given the best opportunities to learn and develop. Over the last couple of days I have received many comments from those new to our school about the sense of welcome that exists at our school. Our Parents deserve a great deal of praise and credit for that. They do a remarkable job meeting, greeting and getting to know our new families in a most friendly and unassuming way, which is what St Robert’s is all about. The year has only just begun but it is already clear to me that 2016 is going to be another great year at St Robert’s. Thank you in advance for the part you all play.

God Bless you all and have great week,  Mark

LIBRARY 2016

Following a great deal of discussion and for a wide range reasons, staff have made the decision to trial a new approach to the school’s Library program this year. Library will no longer be part of the specialist program and has become the responsibility of the class teachers. The children will have the same access to the library as they have had in previous years, however, teachers will have a greater capacity to align their teaching and learning to a more specific range of library experiences more suited to their needs. Rest assured the children will still have the opportunity to borrow books and develop their Library skills under the guidance and direction of their class teachers. If you have any questions or concerns about this change of approach please don’t hesitate to mention them to me.

CONGRATULATIONS

We extend our congratulations to Laura and Martin Rowan on the safe arrival of ‘Miriam’ sister for Roderick (Gr 1KH), Lucy and Henry.

ENHANCING OUR CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Making New Beginnings – Ash Wednesday, Lent and the Year of Mercy

As we start the year together, there are many new beginnings to celebrate. Our new school calendar will already be marked with special events, offering exciting new possibilities and heralding joys and challenges to come. We have opened the doors of our school to the return of colleagues, friends and students and the arrival of new staff, new students and new families. We are called on to make new efforts, personally and as a school community, to present ourselves afresh, renewed, and ready to go. We need to be aware too of the lost, the sad and the fearful who find these days a challenge, and give them our support and care.

The Lenten season is prompting us to experience God’s mercy in reconciliation, prayer and in giving to others. When we pray asking the Lord for a change of heart, the experience is like choosing to set out on a pilgrimage. Reflecting on God’s mercy, compassion and forgiveness will provide ways we can open up the loving mercy of God to our communities and practise the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.
New perspectives from God’s mercy

Ash Wednesday invites us to begin a Lenten journey or pilgrimage to change our ways and view of the world. In this Year of Mercy, experiencing Ash Wednesday may be likened to passing through a doorway to a new view, a new perspective on life. Like passing through the Holy Door of Mercy in this Jubilee Year, Ash Wednesday offers us blessings, just as turning to follow God more closely during Lent will offer us new hope in our lives when we experience his loving forgiveness, grace and mercy.

In this Jubilee year of Mercy, Ash Wednesday will be different. Traditionally it is a sombre experience where fasting and self-reflection give us a sobering image of ourselves. This year it also offers us a new beginning, a marker on our pilgrimage to follow Jesus more closely. It’s a wonderful opportunity to choose to make a new beginning, to experience the joy of receiving God’s mercy more fully, and to experience being merciful to others as Pope Francis has reminded us: Above all, let us listen to the words of Jesus who made mercy an ideal of life and a criterion for the credibility of our faith: ‘Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy’ (Mt 5: 7): the beatitude to which we should particularly aspire in this Holy Year (MV, n. 9).

UPCOMING MASSES AT ST ROBERT’S

**Beginning of Year Mass:**
Friday 5th February at 9:15am in the School Chapel, all classes

**Ash Wednesday Mass:**
Wednesday 10th February at 9:15am in School Chapel, Grades 1 to 6

SACRAMENTAL DATES FOR 2016

Below are the proposed Sacramental dates for 2016:

Sacramental Enrolment Evenings at St Mary’s Basilica; Tuesday 8th March at 7pm and Wednesday 16th March at 7pm. The guest Speaker will be Paul Spence.

**First Eucharist:**
- Saturday 21st May at 6:00pm
- Saturday 28th May at 6:00pm

**First Reconciliation:**
- Tuesday 9th August at 5:30pm
- Wednesday 10th August at 5:30pm

**Confirmation:**
- Friday 14th October at 5:30pm
- Sunday 16th October at 11:00am
- Confirmation preparation day is Thursday 13th October

SHROVE TUESDAY

Next Tuesday is Shrove Tuesday and we will once again have our world renowned chef Henri here at St Robert’s preparing his famous pancakes for each class. Children are asked to bring a gold coin donation which will go to our Partner Parish St Mary Immaculate, Viqueque.

FISH ‘N CHIP NIGHT

Next Wednesday, 10th February, our now famous Fish ‘N’ Chip Night will take place on our school oval starting at around 5pm. Despite the title please feel free to bring any type of food you like, however, be mindful that it is Ash Wednesday. This is a great way to start the year and a chance to catch up and meet other families in a fun and relaxed way. Hope to see you all there on Wednesday.

SCHOOL CLOSURE DAY

Tuesday 23rd February will be a School Closure/Student Free Day. St Robert’s staff will join staff from other Catholic Primary Schools for a Professional Development Day - ‘The Big Write’.

SCHOOL PHOTOS FOR FOUNDATION STUDENTS AND STAFF

Photographers from MSP Photography will be at St Robert’s next Monday, 8th February to take the Foundation students and the Staff 2016 photos. These photos are mostly for ID purposes and Foundation students will also have their official school photos taken later in the year.
OUR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER – INFORMATION FOR NEW FAMILIES
Our St Robert’s Newsletter is emailed to families each Wednesday afternoon. Some hard copies are also available from the rack just outside the office. For the first two weeks a printed copy will be given to each Foundation child and could I ask that Foundation parents complete the tear off slip below and return to the office to ensure that I have all the required email addresses. Also if any family has had a change to their email address could they please indicate on the form below. Finally if you are not receiving your newsletter on Wednesdays please let Nola know and I will follow up to discern what the problem may be.

Email Address for the Newsletter:
Name: ……………………………… Email Address
Child’s Name and Class: …………………………………..

WHOLE SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES
Our first whole school assembly for 2016 will be held on Monday 8th February. Assemblies will at 3:00pm every second Monday unless otherwise advised.

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG - PICKING UP & DROPPING OFF CHILDREN AROUND SCHOOLS
For the safety of students, parents are reminded to take care and obey parking signs and observe the Road Rules when picking up or dropping off students around schools. Council’s Parking & Information Officers monitor all supervised school crossing on a regular roster and issue infringements to drivers who stop in unsafe areas, such as ‘No Stopping’ zones, within 20 metres of a school crossing, parallel to a yellow edged line, or if double parked even for a moment to drop off or collect a student. Queuing to enter a pick up/drop off zone leads to traffic congestion and vehicles being stationary in prohibited areas. Remember, as soon as you stop to let your student in or out of the car, you are deemed to be parked. You do not have to leave your cat or turn the engine off to be fined, so please ensure you are parked in a legal parking area. At children’s crossing, you must remain stationary at the stop line while any person (including an adult or the supervisor) is on the crossing or the stop sign is displayed. Do not let your child alight from the vehicle at this time, and ensure that they wait until you are safely and legally parked. If you breach a parking regulation or Road Rule the Parking & Information Office assigned to monitor the crossing will usually record your registration number and details, and the Penalty Infringement Notice will be posted to you in due course.

WHEET-BIX KIDS TRYATHLON
The Weet-Bix TRYathlon will take place on 20th March at Eastern Beach Reserve, Geelong. To register, view the Online Training Program or for more information please go to http://tey.weetbix.com.au

STUDENT AWARDS
Congratulations to the following students who have received certificates this week for outstanding work.

Gr 1KH Samara and Cooper
Gr 1YE Indiah and Tom C
Gr 2CC Evelyn and Molly
Gr 2KT Jacob and Nellie
Gr 3NF Ben and Summer
Gr 4MA Ava L
Gr 4MM Hudson and Jemima
Gr 5/6DB Zara and Isaac
Gr 5/6PB All 5/6PB students for a wonderful start to 2016
Gr 5/6SP Blake and Toby

BIRTHDAYS
The St Robert’s School community wish to congratulate the following children on the celebration of their birthday throughout January and this week. Happy Birthday to:

2nd January Noah B
3rd January Indiah M
4th January Thomas R
5th January Madeleine S
7th January Louis C

Cooper W
8th January  Henry B  
   Lulu H  
   Lyle W  
9th January  Oscar C  
11th January  Hamish V  
12th January  Isabella C  
13th January  Seamus R  
   Remy W  
15th January  Adam S  
   Dibdin F  
19th January  Mekah M  
   Luke P  
   Oscar S  
22nd January  Noah T  
23rd January  Lachlan C  
27th January  Lucas S  
28th January  Samuel G  
29th January  Finn A  
   Sullivan J  
1st February  Ava C  
   Jasper  
   Milla L  
   Orson L  
2nd February  Sam B  
   Ethan N  
4th February  Adam M  
   Samuel W  
5th February  Harrison C  
   James T  
6th February  Monteya C  
8th February  Henri N  
9th February  Sam R

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Chess Coaching

Free lesson Friday 5th
lunchtime in chapel

Where: School Chapel

When: Friday lunchtimes, 5th Feb – 18th Mar

Cost: $85 (discount $75 for 2nd sibling)

Benefits: Strategic thinking, improved self esteem, attention span in class, lateral thinking, team work, analytical skills.

To enrol your child please make payment (per child) of $85 by Friday 12th Feb. Cheques made payable to “Hooton Consulting Pty Ltd”

For more info contact Phil on 0421 901 530

Forward this section in an envelope marked “Chess Coaching” with your payment to your school office.

Child’s Name: ____________________________
Grade: ___ Phone: __________________________
Email: __________________________

DATES TO REMEMBER

FEBRUARY

Fri 5th  Beginning of Year Mass, 9:15am St Robert’s Chapel
Mon 8th  Foundation and Staff Photo Day
           Whole school assembly, 3:00pm
Tues 9th  Shrove Tuesday
Wed 10th  Ash Wednesday, Mass 9:15am St Robert’s Chapel, Gr 1 to 6
           Fish ‘N Chip Night
Thur 11th  Swimming Trials Qualifying students Gr 3-6 (proposed)
Sun 21st  Staff Commissioning Mass, 11am
Tues 23rd  Staff In-service Day – The Big Write – School closure/Student Free Day
Fri 26th  St Robert’s Athletic Trials Gr 4-6
           Landy field, all students

MARCH

Tues 8th  Sacramental Enrolment Evening 1, 7pm at St Mary’s Basilica
Wed 9th  District Swimming – Qualifying students
Fri 11th  St Robert’s Cross Country, Gr 4-6
           East Gardens
Mon 14th  Labor Day Public Holiday
Wed 16th  Sacramental Enrolment Evening 2, 7pm at St Mary’s Basilica
Thur 17th  St Patrick’s Day
Thur 24th  Holy Thursday, Last day of Term

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School Advisory Board Committee Members
Fr Kevin Dillon
frkd@stmarysgeelong.com.au  Website: www.srnnewtown.catholic.edu.au
Mark Soldani  marks@srnewtown.catholic.edu.au  Anita Thomas  pryan40@bigpond.com.au  Fiona Fitzgerald  fionaf@ggs.vic.edu.au  Angela De Grandi  dominic.degrandi@bigpond.com  Sonia Mackay mackays@7mail.com  Kym Brooks  kymgibson@ncable.net.au  Katey O’Sullivan  kateyos@bigpond.com
Louise Clatworthy  the.clat@bigpond.com
The program is available to all families attending either school, the program is based in the Multi Purpose room and within the school grounds for outdoor activities.

The Program operates daily and on curriculum days. Operating hours are: **7.30 am-8.45 am and 3.15–6.00 pm.** Enrolment packages are available from the Co-ordinator. Every child is welcome to use the service with a one off registration fee of $10 per family. A $50.00 bond applies which is refundable when the family exits the program.

### Our Fees for 2016 are:

- **Before School Care** $10.00 per child
- **After School Care** $15.00 per child
- **Non-cancellation fee** $10.00 / $15.00 per child
- **Late pick up fee** $1.00 per/min late

**Fees.** To assist the OOSHC Team and to minimise administration we request that families are in credit on their accounts. A number of families have taken this option and find it saves their time as well.

The government provides fee relief for all families through the child care benefit scheme and details of how to apply are outlined in the enrolment package.

We offer a diverse and exciting program for the children that are both relaxing and socially stimulating. Examples of our program include Arts and Craft, board games, cooking, play station challenges, and outdoor games. Our program is advertised weekly in the newsletter.

The program has the flexibility to offer both permanent and casual bookings.

**Should you wish to make a booking please return the slip below to the program and collect an enrolment package.**

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**All enquiries can be answered by calling 0417 014 973**

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**Outside School Hours Care Booking Sheet** (to be returned to the OSHC program)

Name: _______________________________ Grade: _____________

I am interested in enrolling my child/ren in the program on:

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