Dear Parents and Caregivers

The recent wet weather has had me thinking about the virtue of patience. No surprises why this might be the case - rain and other disruptions have the tendency to spawn its absence.

I write this newsletter as someone who has battled an impatient nature my whole life, so I speak from experience on this one. Fortunately, with this experience has also come a growing awareness of my behaviour and recognition of its negative effects upon self, others and life in general. I also began to see how deeply unattractive and ego-centric was this impatience and I began to lose respect for my lack of self-control. Anyone who has had to live or work with a highly impatient person knows how unpleasant it can be. It was time to make a change - and that's the hard part, isn't it? Have I defeated impatience? Of course not but I continue to try and, with each testing situation, awareness grows and self-control increases.

For me, the tipping point came when that little interior voice (you know ...... the one that can be really annoying because it speaks the truth?) asked the question, 'What makes you think your time is more precious than anyone else's?' You know there really wasn't a satisfactory answer when I thought about it and, thereafter, I was on my way to shining a light on my response when called upon to wait. I also began to wonder what hope I had of seeing through to conclusion those tasks in life that required long-term perseverance, if I could not manage patience in the very small things.

Let's take a minute to look at one of those 'very small things', namely, pick-up time at school. Yes, it's busy. What else can be expected with nearly 800 students and very few who catch buses, ride or walk? As it is, the dismissal bell goes at 3.05pm and the expected with nearly 800 students and very few who catch buses, that's the hard part, isn't it? Have I defeated impatience? Of course not but I continue to try and, with each testing situation, awareness grows and self-control increases.

OK, so we know it is going to be busy, so there's a choice to be made. Here are a few of the more common behaviours I see as a result of impatience - complaining, criticizing, showing frustration and anger, forgetting the common courtesies, cutting in ahead of others, parking illegally, driving dangerously and even getting children to load in the outside lane or to cross at places other than the crossings. And for what reason? To save a few seconds or, at most, a minute or two? And what atmosphere has been created? Is anyone happier? People of patience, on the other hand, make the world a more kind and gentle place and others feel safe around them.

There are alternatives. If self-knowledge tells you that you really cannot control your impatience at this point in your life, then arrive a little later. The children are supervised by the teachers on duty and staggering arrival improves the situation for everyone.

SCHOOL FEES ARE NOW OVER DUE

The other alternative, as difficult as it may prove in the short-term, is to join that incoming queue and use the time positively - to listen to music or simply to breathe, relax and observe your surroundings, perhaps take the time to be grateful for life. A large part of the problem, of course, is the fact that we are all so highly scheduled that we see this alternative as a waste of our time - we could be doing something more constructive, we need to be somewhere else, our mind tells us. Perhaps this time in a queue is exactly what is needed to slow our minds, bodies and hearts amidst the outside noise and rush, to focus on the present moment and simply 'be'.

The Virtues Project reminds us that patience is about accepting things we cannot control. Even when feeling impatient, we maintain our calm. Practising patience means surrendering to something that has to be endured, like an illness or injury that will last a certain time, or to something that needs doing— especially when it gets difficult or tiresome. And, of course, trust in God can bring patience – that quiet hope that one can get through the tough times.

I guess, in the end, improving patience means making a choice to live more lovingly. As St Paul wrote in his First Letter to the Corinthians, 'Love is patient, love is kind...'. I do not think it is coincidence that patience is the first virtue mentioned in this often-quoted description of love.

So, to all of you wonderful parents out there who maintain your sense of calm and sense of humour in the traffic and the rain, those who follow the common sense procedures without fuss or complaint, those of you who smile and wave and share a friendly word – thank you! Please know that we staff members appreciate your co-operation and care.

Have a great week everyone.

Glenda

Pick-Up – Important reminder—There is only ever one lane into the school grounds. Incoming cars join the queue at all times. The outside lane is used for cars leaving parking places to exit the grounds and for emergency vehicle access. It is not to be used to form another queue to the Year 4-7 pick-up. If you are wanting to get to 4-7 pick-up, stay in the queue beside the footpath until you reach the by-pass at the head of the ring-road (near P-3 pick-up), then move into the right-hand lane as you are able.

In wet weather, one pick-up zone only is in operation (P-3), so everyone stays in the queue all the way to P-3 pick-up. Remember to always move as far along the zone as possible. The children will walk around to your car. The zones are marked by yellow markings on the bitumen. P-3 pick-up starts around the bend near the crossing near the path to the Office.

Uniform Spot - Thank you for your support of the Uniform Shop which, in turn, supports our ability to offer the service on site. It also makes for a uniform that is truly ‘uniform’ and not simply ‘near-enough’. Please be assured that mark-up is kept to a minimum. Teachers have been asked to contact parents where students are in incorrect uniform and no note has been provided to explain short-term circumstances. Experiencing longer-term difficulties with uniform? There are usually ways we can help, so please contact Glenda, who will be very happy to discuss what can be done.
Garden News

Mother nature has certainly been offering a series of challenges over the last couple of weeks. Despite the wet weather, we have managed to progress in the garden with the building of new composts and the planting of Autumn and Winter seedlings. The children are so enthusiastic that they have chosen to work in the garden (once they have eaten) in their lunch break; a great start to the garden club! Cucumbers and herbs have headed to the tuck shop to be used in salads and we look forward to lots more produce from the garden being included in tuck shop lunches! A big thank you for the donation of cow manure for our compost and for those parents who have offered their time to get involved in garden projects. We are still keen to get our worm farm underway so if you are able to contribute any of the materials required, we would be most grateful.

Donations needed for our new worm farm:
- Hessian bags
- Drainage gravel (several bags)
- Sturdy shade-cloth
- 4 Bessa bricks
- Course river sand

*Donations of Lemon Grass, Passionfruit vines, Tamarillo seedlings, or anything that you have on hand that would compliment our garden would be most gratefully received!

Siena Catholic College
Year 8 Enrolment for 2013

Families considering enrolling their child at Siena Catholic College in 2013 are invited to attend an Information Session at the College on either Sunday 11 March or Monday 12 March. From 3:00pm on the Sunday, families will have the opportunity to view the College facilities followed by an Information Session at 4:00pm. On the Monday evening, the Information Session will begin at 7:30pm. If you intend to attend one of these sessions, please contact the College Office either by email ssippydowns@bne.catholic.edu.au or phone 5476 6100 to register - this is for catering purposes. College Principal, Mr Graeme Hight, and the Siena College Captains will speak to the Year 7 class at Stella Maris on Thursday 8 March and distribute enrolment packages. Parents may wish to view the Siena website www.siena.qld.edu.au. Enrolment interviews will commence late Term 1 and will extend into Term 2.

St John’s College, Nambour
Year 8 2013 Enrolment Interviews

For your information:
- Members of the college leadership team will visit Stella Maris primary school on Tuesday 28 February.
- Year 7 students will be offered enrolment packs for St John’s College on this day.
- A Parent Information Evening will be held on Wednesday 21 March at 7pm at St John’s College in the Multi-Purpose Centre.
- Enrolment interviews will be held from Thursday 19 April to Tuesday 24 April.

At St John’s College we provide quality education in an environment that nurtures children in their Catholic faith.

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

As we continue with Prayerfulness as the Virtue for this fortnight, please keep in your prayers many families in our community who are suffering through ill-health, job loss, or financial burden. While we can help in some practical ways, your prayerful support I am sure will work wonders!

The Stella Maris Care Pantry will have its first meeting of the year in the Chapel on Friday 9th March from 9.00 to 9.30, followed by Morning Tea and then a cooking session in the kitchen from 10.00am onwards for an hour or two. All volunteers are cordially invited to attend all or just some of these sessions. Our Chair, Vanessa Portors, and Secretary, Sylvia Kelim, extend a warm welcome to both ‘old’ and ‘new’ members of this group.

There will be changes to the processes for this year, arising out of our learnings from the trial during Term 4 last year. The main difference will be that there will no longer be a roster as such, but a list of volunteers who are willing to provide one or two meals per term to be delivered to the Care Pantry in first 2 weeks of each term. We have now purchased and installed a large freezer where meals can be kept and distributed as needed. A small band of volunteers (10 at most) is needed to man the Care Pantry for this period to distribute containers and then accept, record and store these contributions appropriately. A free standing A-Frame sign has also been commissioned for display on the footpath outside the chapel/Kitchen entrance during opening times each morning so that parents are aware that the pantry is open.

Other opportunities will be provided each term for the volunteers to gather for cooking sessions for a bit of bonhomie and to share recipe ideas that are both nourishing and cost effective. We hope these cooking sessions will provide an opportunity for socialising as well as making a valuable contribution to the Care Pantry. So choose your favourite recipes, bring along ingredients and cooking utensils (including electric frypans, etc), and be prepared to share your ideas with other very enthusiastic ‘chefs’!

If you are able to volunteer for this group, both ‘old’ and ‘new’ volunteers, please complete the slip below to update/ provide contact details. We hope that many of you will be able to come along on Friday 9th March.

God bless, Judith

I wish to volunteer/continue to provide meals for the Stella Maris Care Pantry (one or two meals per term). My contact details are provided below:

Name/s: (First): ………………………………………………………………………………………………..
Surname/s: ………………………………………………………………………………………………..
Phone (H)…………………………………….(W)………………………………………..
(Mob) ………………………………………..
E-mail Address: ………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Oldest child at school: Name and Class
Group…………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
MUSIC NOTES

QUOTE OF THE WEEK
“Music isn’t just learning notes and playing them, you learn notes to play to the music of your soul.”
~ Kate Greenwood ~

TIP OF THE WEEK
Practice is most valuable when you are fresh, not worried about things and most importantly when you are not tired. This means fewer errors!!

CLASSROOM MUSIC
YEAR 3 - Students are revisiting their recorder playing this term. They will begin to play in 2-part, some of the more familiar tunes in our repertoire.

CHOIR NEWS
Thank you to all parents and students who have returned their commitment form for each of our three choirs. This last week we were fortunate enough to have nearly 200 children participate in one of the choirs. Well done and happy singing!

TEN FACTS ABOUT SCHOOL MUSIC
Continuing from last week, the following is the second fact about music education.

2. Music students are more likely to be good citizens:
A 10-year US study called ‘Champions of Change’ found that high school students who participate in arts programs, including in school bands, are less likely to be involved with drugs, crime or have behavioral problems.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC NEWS
Sincere thanks to those parents who advise tutors and ensemble leaders when their children will be absent. All students are essential and play an important role so please keep this up!

Parents are also to advise tutors directly (via email or text) if their child will not be present at a lesson due to sickness. A message on the school absentee line is not sufficient as this is often not cleared till later in the day and office staff are not responsible for advising tutors. Tutor email and phone contacts can be found on your lesson timetable or in the Music / Singing / Speech Diary. Email can also be sent to StellaMarisMusic@bne.catholic.edu.au.

If you have queries regarding anything musical – please feel free to catch up with us before or after school, by contacting us in writing or via email.

Musically Yours,
Inez Durrer    Todd Wynyard
Classroom Music Specialist   Instrumental Music Coordinator
durrer@bne.catholic.edu.au  twynyard@bne.catholic.edu.au

Congratulations to Jackson & Jada Cleary and Cartia Thompson on being selected in QLD OZ Tag teams.

Cartia Thompson has also been selected to compete in the State Nippers Carnival in March after receiving a Bronze medal for Beach Flags and Beach Sprints. Good luck to you all!

Full District Swimming report next newsletter and certificates presented on Assembly next week (8 March).

Thank you to:
Macy Eastment, Estelle Tonkin-Farr, Leila Parry, Caden Fuller, Toby Wills, Emily Lucas, Eleni Hurley

Week Ending 2 March
Ways to Increase Communication and Language

There are a variety of ways to increase communication depending on a child’s age and ability level. Below are some ideas for increasing language and communication throughout the day.

1. Expand Sentence Length – When children answer a question or request an item using one or two words, increase their sentence length by repeating their answer with an expanded phrase. For example, if you ask a child, “Would you like orange juice?” and they answer “Yes,” model a longer response. “Yes, I would like orange juice.” Then have the child repeat the phrase.

2. Use Books for Language - Reading stories is an excellent way to incorporate language into a fun activity. Ask questions about the pictures, the story, and the characters. Even very young children can identify colours, gender, words, or concepts (e.g. the boy that is the tallest/shortest) by pointing to pictures. Have children predict what is going to happen next throughout the story. After finishing the book, review what happened in the story.

3. Create Situations that Promote Language - Favourite toys, clothes, and foods can motivate young children to use language. Store favourite items in eyesight, but out of reach, so children have to use their words to request the items.

4. Provide Choices – Give children choices in activities, stories, toys, and foods so they communicate their preferences. You can create an opportunity for communication even if you know a child is going to select a favourite story or game.

5. Be Supportive – Children are more likely to communicate if they feel valued. Encourage language by listening attentively to children and asking them questions. If children answer questions incorrectly, teach them the correct answers using kind, supportive words. Repeatedly asking a question a child does not know how to answer or condescendingly correcting them can hurt their feelings and decreases the chance they will answer questions in the future. Instead, encourage them to say, “I don’t know,” and use the situation as a learning opportunity.

7. Be a Role Model – Children learn from the adults around them. When adults speak in full sentences, use correct grammar, and articulate well, children hear and are reminded of how words and sentences should sound.


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