Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Over the past three or four years you will have seen, heard or read about the flying fox colony that has taken up residence on the Council and school properties bordered by Hunter Oval on the east, Bliss Oval on the north and our neighbours along Tepequar Drive on the west.

During this time, I have met, periodically, with representatives from State Government, Local Council, Department of Environment and Resource Management, Queensland Health, Brisbane Catholic Education representatives, neighbours and various experts in this field. Last year, we held a parent meeting with input from a number of these people and today I write, again, to summarise the situation and to inform you of the facts as presented by those experts. Hopefully this information will lessen the very natural concerns you may hold, as parents.

The Health Facts (information from Qld Government publications: ‘Living with Flying Foxes’ and ‘Hendra Virus Infection Fact Sheet’). Flying foxes are associated with two viruses - the Australian Bat Lyssa virus and the Hendra virus.

Lyssa virus is not a reason to fear bats, as it is very rare and preventable if you are exposed. The rate of infection in free living, healthy flying foxes is less than one percent. With the death of an 8 year old boy in Queensland last year, three humans are known to have died from Lyssa virus, two after being bitten by a flying fox and one after being bitten by a sheath-tailed bat.

Lyssa virus can only be transmitted to people when infected bat saliva comes into contact with human tissue through a bat bite, scratch or with exposure to mucus membrane e.g. eyes, nose or mouth. Therefore, it can be avoided by not handling these animals. If a dead, injured or sick bat is found, no attempt should be made to assist the animal. A staff member should be notified immediately; or if after hours or beyond school grounds, contact can be made with the Department of Environment and Resource Management (1300 130 372) or RSPCA (1300 ANIMAL) or your local wildlife care group or rescuer.

In the unlikely event of contact taking place, the wound should be well washed with soap and water or any detergent before visiting your doctor. A vaccine is available to prevent Lyssa Virus infection following bat bites or scratches. Basically, there may be a problem if a scratch or bite, from an infected animal, is sustained and the vaccine is not given.

Humans are not exposed to the Lyssa virus if flying foxes fly overhead or feed or roost in gardens. Nor is it spread through their droppings, urine or if we live, play or walk near their colonies.

Hendra Virus

Although rare, the flying fox has been implicated in infecting a horse with the Hendra Virus. Scientists are yet to determine exactly how horses are infected. Hendra virus is not transmitted from flying foxes to humans. Horses may contract Hendra virus infection from eating food contaminated by flying fox urine, saliva or birth products.

The seven confirmed human cases of Hendra virus all became infected following close contact with respiratory secretions and/or blood from a horse infected with Hendra virus. Many people have reported similar contact with infected horses but have remained well and their blood tests have shown no evidence of infection. There is no evidence of human to human contact nor that the virus can be passed directly from flying foxes to humans, from dogs to humans, from the environment to humans, from humans to horses, or can float in the air.

So what is the situation at Stella Maris?

The Black and Grey-headed flying foxes took up residence about three to four years ago, and to date, we have been largely unaffected by their presence. Unlike our neighbours, staff and students are not at school when the bats are at their most active, that is, very early in the morning and early evening during which times they fly out and return from their foraging for fruits and seeds. During the day, bats are relatively inactive in the trees. Of late, however, there have been days when some have not settled as peacefully into their daytime routine of hanging in the trees. Kate Winter, Conservation Officer with the Council, told me last week that every year, around this time, the males come into season preparing to mate, hence the increased noise and activity.
Flying foxes love melaleuca trees; for this reason, for a number of years, they remained some distance away from the school playgrounds and building, more towards the centre of the forest. For a number of months they even relocated altogether but have now returned, locating themselves within sight and sound of Conway, Hunter and Bliss Ovals. I suspect this has to do with Council clearing of the forest closer to our neighbours and also the deforestation of the melaleuca trees after years of habitation.

Our primary concern, of course, is the health and well-being of our students, parents and staff and, with this in mind, we remain in close communication with system, health, government and environment agencies.

As a protected species there is extensive legislation around management of flying foxes, including their dispersal with a view to relocation. Even when government permission has been granted for this very expensive and time-intensive process, non-lethal dispersal has not proven to be successful (as recently seen with the Cassia colony at Coolum). I do understand, however, that this is still Council’s preferred solution and Council employees continue to closely monitor this colony with weekly visits.

What can we do under the circumstances?
As with other child safety messages (Recognise, React, Report), it is essential that we, teachers and parents, teach our children to recognize potential danger (in all its forms) and then teach them the appropriate strategies to respond. We will not always be with them to tell them what to do or to do everything for them (not that these are productive strategies in any case). Education in all sorts of safety matters is our shared responsibility. Education about flying foxes is not simply a school issue because we have a colony on our doorstep; it is an issue because children may encounter bats in their backyard or at the local park, indeed anywhere.

At school we give the message that flying foxes are one of God’s creatures; they have an important ecological role to play in the greater scheme of things. As with all creatures, some may be sick and carry infections which may be harmful to us. Only a small percentage of creatures are sick, but we need to be sensible and careful in order to keep safe.

Our best protection is to be prepared and knowledgeable. To this end, we continue to give students the following messages, most recently at last Thursday’s assembly:

- **Recognise** the potential danger in making contact with any wild animal and indeed some domesticated animals as well. There is a fine line, however, in having young ones receive this message without instilling unnecessary fear. The aim is to raise awareness, not scare them.
- **React**: Never approach or touch a live, dead, sick or injured creature. Keep yourself and others away.
- **Report**: Immediately report to an adult if bitten or scratched or when an animal is found. This is essential.

Once again, I cannot thank you all enough for your support and understanding in this tricky situation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss further and I will continue to keep you informed as matters come to hand. Please be assured of our ongoing and strenuous commitment to the education and safety of your children.

Donita, Eileen and I are in Auckland with the BCE study tour of schools this week. In our absence, we welcome Mr Ian Morice. Thanks Ian!

Have a great week everyone.  

Glenda

**Catholic Identity Survey and Prize Winners**

Thank you to those who have already completed the survey which can be accessed via the link provided in the email from school. It would be wonderful to see an overwhelming response this week. Remember to send the completion page at the end of the survey to the office to be in next Friday’s draw (5pm).

Congratulations to our first winners: Christine Spink who chose one of the free family entries to this year’s Fair at Aussie World, and to Kellie Wessely who chose one of the iPad minis.

There are lots of prizes still to be won, including 50% reduction in Term 2 school fees.

**Unsafe Driving on School Grounds**

It is a very dangerous situation when basic road rules, courtesy and common sense are ignored around our 800+ students and other young family members. Everyone is called to a higher level of accountability around so many young ones. Please reconsider the wisdom of using mobile phones and driving with excess speed for the conditions.

**Pick-up, Drop-off and How the Ring Road Works**

Today we are sending home a copy of the map and directions for use of the ring road. It would be very helpful to have another read to better ensure safety and efficiency. Thank you.
Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Following on from our Virtue of the past fortnight, Generosity, the Stella Maris Care Pantry will be open Friday morning this week and Monday and Tuesday mornings next week from 8.15am to 8.30am for parents to collect empty containers for home cooked meals to assist families in need. New Volunteers who are willing to provide one or two meals per term to be delivered to the Care Pantry are very welcome. One volunteer is needed each day to assist with operating the Care Pantry to distribute containers and then accept, record and store contributions appropriately when they are returned. If you are able to help, please contact me on 0438939200. Your support of the Pantry is much appreciated. A free standing A-frame Care Pantry sign will be on display on the footpath outside the entrance to the Hall during Pantry opening times each morning to indicate that we are open for business.

Other opportunities will be provided during the year for volunteers to gather socially and to share recipe ideas that are both nourishing and cost effective. We hope these meetings will provide an opportunity for socialising as well as enriching contributions to the Care Pantry. So choose your favourite recipes and be prepared to share your ideas with other very enthusiastic Care Pantry ‘Chefs’.

If you are able to volunteer for this group (both ‘old’ and ‘new’ volunteers are very welcome), please complete the slip below to update/ provide contact details. We hope that many of you will be able to assist with stockpiling meals for when they are most needed. Through your spirit of Generosity, the day-to-day provision of meals for families needing a bit of a helping hand will be accomplished.

God bless,

Judith.

Please complete and return to your child’s class teacher by this Friday 27th March.

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: .............................................................

Phone: (H).................................(W)..........................

(Mob) ..................................................

E-mail Address:..........................................................
QUOTE OF THE WEEK

‘Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don’t live it, it won’t come out of your horn.’ ~ Charlie Parker ~

TIP OF THE WEEK - Do you play with correct posture? This is very important during lessons, rehearsals and especially at home when you practice. Ask your teacher to remind you about good posture!!

TWELVE BENEFITS OF MUSIC EDUCATION - The fifth benefit of music education:
A study of the arts provides children with an internal glimpse of other cultures and teaches them to be empathetic towards the people of these cultures. This development of compassion and empathy, as opposed to development of greed and a “me first” attitude, provides a bridge across cultural chasms that leads to respect of other races at an early age.

SPEECH AND DRAMA LUNCHTIME CONCERT - Mrs Rowell’s students will be presenting a lunchtime concert on Tuesday 31 March at 10:45am in the Music Room. Students and parents are most welcome to come along and hear these children.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC NEWS
Lesson timetables are currently being finalised for Term 2. Please advise any changes to enrol prior to Monday 30 March to avoid additional fees and charges. Term 2 Timetables will be emailed to families by Friday 17 April with lessons commencing on Monday 20 April, the first day back at school. If you have changed your email address recently, please let us know to ensure you receive your lesson timetable. Timetables will also be displayed on the notice board outside the music room.

Junior Band will commence on Monday 27 April involving all students who started to play Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Euphonium and Percussion. Parents of students involved will receive an email from Mr Wynyard with further details.

♫ Percussion Lunchtime Concert – Friday 27 March – Music Room, 10.45am
♫ Speech and Drama Lunchtime Concert – Tuesday 31 March – Music Room, 10.45am
♫ Senior String Ensemble performing on Assembly – Thursday 30 April – School Hall, 8.45am
♫ Percussion Ensemble performing on Assembly – Thursday 7 May – School Hall, 8.45am
♫ SM Singers performing on Assembly – Thursday 28 May – School Hall, 8.45am
♫ Woodwind & Piano Soiree (Mrs Dean) – Tuesday 2 June – School Hall, 5-6pm
♫ Singing Soiree (Ms Bond) – Wednesday 17 June – School Hall, 6-7pm
♫ Guitar Ensemble performing on Assembly – Thursday 18 June – School Hall, 8.45am
♫ Sunshine Coast Catholic Schools String Workshop (all violin, viola, cello and double bass students) – Monday 22 June – School Hall, all day with a Concert at 4.30pm
♫ Piano Soiree (Ms Worthy) – Tuesday 23 June – School Hall, 5.30 – 6.30pm

Remember, if you need to contact your child’s tutor, details are shown on the top left corner of the lesson timetable. 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
Classroom Music Specialist
idurrer@bne.catholic.edu.au

Todd Wynyard
Instrumental Music Coordinator
twnyward@bne.catholic.edu.au
**From the Guidance Counsellor**

**The emotional side of learning**

*Children seek to be safe and comfortable before they care about what there is to be learned.*

Emotions have a huge effect on the ability to focus and learn. The feel-good neurotransmitters released in the brain during positive experiences contribute to learning as well as to good health.

Emotions are both innate and acquired, learned from peers and parents throughout life. When our emotional needs are met, the brain produces serotonin, a feel-good transmitter.

Students feel good when they feel included and part of the group- that “warm, feel-good” reaction when they know someone cares. Learning occurs best when a student’s attention is focused and their skill level is matched to an appropriate challenge.

A child is in a strong learning mode when they feel capable and empowered to be successful.

Our classroom beliefs which support positive emotional experiences include:

- All students will learn;
- differences are honoured;
- learning is connected to real life;
- students can show what they’ve learnt in multiple ways;
- students are challenged at their level;
- intrinsic motivation is cultivated;
- we are inclusive;
- gains toward targeted standards are celebrated;
- students and teachers can laugh and celebrate together.

Christine Craig - Guidance Counsellor/ Psychologist
email: ccraig@bne.catholic.edu.au

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**Community News**

**Parent Portal**

This year Stella Maris has moved to publishing the weekly Newsletter digitally via the school's Parent Portal. The Parent Portal requires a login and password generated from our enrolments database. This website allows access for only relevant stakeholders as well as the school staff who are able to publish information pertaining to children, in a safe and secure environment. In the current digital age, this is an important measure to safeguard the security of our children.

Stella Maris will begin using the Parent Portal more and more as a secure communication point, not just for administration type notifications, but also as a direct link to classroom learning and publications.

At this point in time, email alerts are a transitional strategy to support our parents to develop the habit of going to the Parent Portal to read the school newsletter. In time, these emails will cease. This will happen in the near future following a relaunch of the Parent Portal as a key resource for communication with our Stella Maris families. In the not too distant future (aiming for Term 2), BCE will provide us with an App that will take you directly to the Portal login from your phone or mobile device. Allison Brown can provide advice on ways to simplify the login process.

The move to this concept is to try to make life easier for our parents. The aim is to avoid the confusion that occurs when communication happens in all manner of ways and results in parents not always being sure which source they should go to for information and communication. We acknowledge this is a big change for parents initially, but the Parent Portal is a valuable communication tool that will allow the school to monitor the release of information to relevant people only. We will be working hard in the next term to add more classroom information for parents and perhaps even establish some blogs where people can share in classroom chat. We appreciate your patience and persistence in supporting this move.
March
26  No Assembly – Easter liturgy 8.55am in Hall. (Palm Sunday)
30  Easter Liturgy 2.00pm in Hall (The Last Supper)

April
2  No Assembly – Easter liturgy 8.55am in Hall. (Liturgy of the Cross)
2  Last day of Term 1
20  Term 2 begins
20  Easter Liturgy 2.00pm in Hall (The Resurrection)
23  ANZAC Day Assembly 8.55am in Hall
24  School Cross Country 9.00am-10.45am

June
26  Last Day of Term 2

If you happened to log onto the P&F Facebook page over the weekend, you would have seen lots of comments about the school drop off/pick up zone. Being a fairly new parent to the school, I am unaware of how the traffic flow system used to work, but I gather from a lot of the comments that the current system can and should work if everyone follows the protocol.

The Master Plan discussed by Glenda at the Parents Partnership Meeting will, amongst other issues, address this area and until that time we really need to work with what we have and be patient and courteous to each other. Everyone is busy and on a schedule, however the safety of our children is paramount. Here are some dot points which cover some of the major issues:

- There are two areas 1. Prep to Year 3 (in front of the prep buildings); and 2. Years 4 to 6 and their siblings (on the grass further around the driveway)

- Use the zones like a quick moving taxi rank. Please remain alert to other vehicles and children and following the directions of teachers on duty. Always drive as far as possible into the zone.

- Stay in the queue and move forward as space become available.

- Drivers must remain in the car while in the zone – no-one is to leave the car even momentarily – while parked in the zone. If you need to leave the car then you must park in a designated parking area.

- Children must enter and exit from the footpath side of the vehicle only.

- Children’s bags and other items must be in the car not in the boot. Please do not ask children to get their school bags in or out of the boot nor should adults leave the car to do so.

The P&F and the school will be coming up with some ideas about how the above can be made clearer but in the meantime I am sure we can work together to make the area a safe one.

Thank You Stella Community

Last Wednesday 18th March, Stella Maris students and staff raised funds to support the Leukemia Foundations Shave for a Cure and Crazy Hair Day. Students and staff arrived at school with crazy colours, hairstyles and wigs! Some staff members even had their heads shaved.

McDonald's Camp Quality Puppet Show also visited our school and Stella students now have a better understanding of what it's like to live with a serious illness.

The school Community raised $1245, which will go towards further research and to families dealing with Leukemia. Well Done Stella Maris Community!
**Notice Board**

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**Sport News**

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**District Trial**

Coastal District Netball - Congratulations to Lily McClure, Hayley Edgar, Ayla Cheatham and Tully Thompson who were selected in the Coastal District Netball team. The girls will now compete at the Regional titles in Caloundra on 5th May. Well Done and Good Luck!

Process for District Trials - It is the student’s responsibility to collect a Coastal District "District Trial Permission Form" from Mrs Till or it may be downloaded from the Parent Portal. This Permission Form must be completed in full by parents/caregivers and brought back to school to be signed by Mrs Till. Students must bring this signed Permission Form to the Selection Trial. **NO PERMISSION FORM - NO TRIAL!**

Please check the Parent Portal for updated District Trial Dates, Times and Venues.

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**Stella Maris Cross Country Carnival**

Friday April 24th 2015

Students aged 10yrs, 11yrs and 12yrs wishing to trial for District Cross Country MUST nominate and complete the longer qualifying course. All other students are to run with their Year Level.

Students may only compete in ONE race – NOT BOTH

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<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>11 &amp; 12 Yrs Boys &amp; Girls start – District Trial</td>
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<td>9.20am</td>
<td>10 Yrs Boys &amp; Girls start – District Trial</td>
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**Tuckshop News**

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**This Week’s Special**

Fish and Wedges $4.00

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**No Weekly Special Next Week**

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**Last Day of Term Meal Deal**

$5.00 for a Pizza Slice, Juice and a Cookie. Flyer coming home this week.

Please return the cut off slip, taped to a paper bag, to the Tuckshop by 27 March.

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**Ingredients Roster**

Suggestions for required items are: Packet Mixes (Pikelet – Chocolate Muffin – Chocolate Cake) Icing Sugar – Eggs – Sugar – Cocoa – Butter – Coconut – Dates – Fruit or Salad Items (particularly apples for the slinky machine).

**Group 5**

A Corboy, C Penn, C & M Hubbard, D Christie, F Ellis, J Fuller, K Kretzers, L Wiseman, M Himing, M Ratcliffe, N Pace, O Robins, A Berthier, S McGahan, T Maas