Dear Families, Friends and Students,

Whilst visiting all the classrooms and interacting with the students, I have experienced a true sense of positive learning and enthusiasm. I am also very pleased with the positive support, interaction and collaboration of parents/carers. This was highlighted at our recent Assembly, volunteering in classrooms, attendance at Induction Ceremony and assistance at SAPSASA Swimming. This allows us to foster a positive learning environment at St Joseph’s Renmark.

Parent Interviews

I wish to sincerely thank all our parents/carers for their positive feedback. Having our interviews at the start of the year has been a new initiative that was purposeful and strategic. With new teachers and different class structures, we had a specific focus on building positive teacher/parent relationships. Our interviews were aimed at being proactive with discussions focussing on the social and wellbeing of the students as well as identifying academic strengths and challenges earlier rather than at the end of the term. It has been an excellent change which has allowed for positive two way communication.

Positive Parent/Teacher Relationships

Developing a close partnership between home and school helps children through this important formational time. Like any relationship, getting that partnership right requires work from both sides. As a parent myself working in Education, finding the right balance between supporting my children, growing their independence and developing resilience can sometimes be difficult. Letting my children learn for themselves, saying “NO” and letting them fail are areas I personally find challenging. However, I do understand that I can’t do everything for my children and that they need to learn about independence, feeling disappointment and failure. I am pleased that we are providing an environment at St Joseph’s that is caring and supportive but also where our children can work through challenges, sadness, disappointment and losing which hopefully will prepare them for future years. I just need to remind myself that this is one way to show love, even when they say “they don’t like Daddy any more”.

Teaching and Learning/Positive Communication

At St Joseph’s we are proud of the positive learning environment we are providing. I have recently received praise and positive feedback from visiting teachers about our learning environment. We operate with positive actions and attitudes and regularly promote all our successes and celebrations. We also understand that parents/carers may occasionally be faced with challenges and questions. We welcome feedback and encourage positive interaction and communication between staff and parents/carers. With all grievances or questions we invite parents/caregivers to come in and see class teachers. With this overt approach, we welcome feedback and encourage constructive points for future consideration. We discourage a covert approach to addressing questions as this may result in unproductive and ill-informed gossip that may damage relationships. We will continue to make decisions based around current educational research. Everything we have done and will continue to do is based around learning, resulting in improving student outcomes for your child. St Joseph’s School is committed to moving with society and striving to significantly improve
student outcomes, underpinned by current and progressive research. We are always consulting with other schools and systems and our Inquiry Strategies are student centered, cater for students’ needs and allow all children to experience success.

Some guidelines include:

- To read all notes carefully and return them by the due dates.
- To see class teacher/s directly with any concerns or queries.
- To appreciate that engaging in yard gossip is non-productive and could result in further misunderstandings or queries.
- The sharing of grievances using social media is also inappropriate, hurtful and ill informed.

If you’re not sure of something please come and see the teacher/s directly.

Renmark Combined Schools Partnership Group:
I am very pleased to again be involved with the local Education Partnership Group. This group includes DECD Principals, Directors and Representatives from local health services. The focus is to establish links and build positive relationships to allow us to share ideas, resources and services to best meet the needs of our local community. It is a unified strategy to highlight the collaboration between Government and Catholic sectors. We will be having our first meeting over the coming weeks and we look forward to establishing strong links within our Renmark community.

National Day of Action Against Bullying & Violence:
To coincide with our KidsMatter theme, “Relationships” we are pleased to be involved in the 2016 National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence. The day will be celebrated on the 21st of March which will coincide with Harmony Day and St Joseph’s Day. We will soon commence a whole school approach which will include:-

- Class pledges
- Visits from local police
- Parent/Carers Information
- Group activities
- Exploring the website
- Launching a whole school poster competition
- Discussing and identifying what is bullying and what is conflict

We will continue to promote and share progress with our community and encourage families to visit the website with many wonderful activities and ideas to do at home. www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

Child Safety—Drop Off & Pick Up Times:
We thank all Parents/Carers who are following the start and end of the day procedures when dropping off or picking up their children. However, we have received reports that people have been reckless and inconsiderate of safety at times. We are aware that we cannot control what happens outside the school grounds but by using friendly reminders we may highlight child safety as a priority. We wish to outline the following points:-

- Remember the speed limit when approaching the crossing—25km/hr (this should apply all around the school).
- Cars should not stop at intersections or crossings to collect children.
- Please use the ‘flagged’ road crossings appropriately.
- Parents and caregivers are encouraged to park their vehicle and come to the collection point, inside the front gate, to collect their child/children.
- A phone call is appreciated if you are running late for collection at 3.15pm.

Newsletter
We believe that our school newsletter is not only a source of information but also a story of everything that is unique at St Joseph’s. We put considerable time and effort every fortnight to share events, activities and learning that occur within our school and our wider community. We do believe in using technology to send out our newsletter but also continue to have a traditional mindset with hard copies. They provide valuable opportunities for families to share the many stories and pictures. We encourage all families to use the newsletter as a catalyst for discussions at home or around the dinner table and to encourage families to embrace the joy of reading a text without the use of a screen.

Clean Up Australia Day:
St Joseph’s has enthusiastically embraced the initiative of being actively involved in the national Clean Up Australia Day being held on Friday 4th March. All of our students will be involved in cleaning up local and neighbouring school environments. Parents are required to assist with supervision; further information is included in this newsletter pack. We are the stewards of creation and this activity heightens the
awareness of our personal responsibility to ensure that we maintain a clean and healthy environment for each other and future generations.

**Board Annual General Meeting:**
We wish to promote our AGM which will be held in the Activity/Library Room next Tuesday 1st March at 7.30pm. We encourage and welcome all staff, parents and friends to attend. We see this as an excellent opportunity to share and highlight all our success and challenges from 2015. Furthermore, this is an excellent meeting which highlights the partnership between staff, students, parents, parish and the wider community. I also wish to acknowledge the wonderful support and contribution to outgoing member Jeff McDonald (4 years service). I announce the nominees for 2016: Brett Blackwell, Darren Bussenschutt, Adrian Hunt, Nicole Pitman and Todd van Dyk.

We wish to express our sympathy and condolences to Ruth & Malcolm Daws and their family on the passing of Ruth’s mother, Joy. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this sad time.

We experience many celebrations and successes every day. We are a wonderful community and a fantastic school. It is with much pride that we highlight, recognise and acknowledge staff, students, parents, events and activities with our very popular and well presented newsletter. Have a good week and we look forward to seeing you at our AGM on Tuesday.

Regards,
**Don DePalma**
Principal

**Reminder of PUBLIC HOLIDAYS**
Monday 14th March ~ Adelaide Cup
Friday 25th March ~ Good Friday
Monday 28th March ~ Easter Monday

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**School Captains & SRCs:**


**House Captains:**

Back L-R: Josh Bright, James Haslett, Declan Johnson, Emily Smart. Front L-R: Renee Johnson, Aiden Richardson, Sasha Jenke. Absent: Amy Gibbons

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**Start Student Awards:**

L-R: Meikah Gittos, Eloise McConchie, Isabelle Wutke, Mahlia Gill, Riley Hunt, Ryan Li, Georgio Loulas, Archie Preusker.

L-R: Toby Johnson, Chelsea Crack, Max Logos, Katherine Tran, Sasha Jenke, Arielle Milich, Alex Curtis, Madeline Ramm, Alex Ramm, Roni Phan.
Project Compassion:
The next two inspiring stories for the Project Compassion 2016 Learning More Creating Change are the stories of:

**Week 2: Dominic – Papua New Guinea**
Participating in the Caritas Australia supported Community Conversations program has empowered Dominic and the people of his village to create a new way of life, far from the violence and gender inequality of the past.

**Week 4: Evangeline - Australia**
When Evangeline left high school she had a limited vision for her future. But the training she's received while working at the Djilpin Arts Ghumnarm Culture Centre, supported by Caritas Australia, has helped her develop new skills and ignited her passion for the maintenance and preservation of her Aboriginal culture.

To access these stories at home go to [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion)

Unpacking the title: “Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy”

‘A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just’ Pope Francis

‘EXTRAORDINARY’
Very unusual or remarkable specially convened
Synonyms: remarkable, exceptional, amazing

‘JUBILEE’
A season or occasion of joyful celebration
Biblical origins from the Hebrew words yobel or yovel meaning a ram’s horn, trumpet or coronet
Synonyms: anniversary, commemoration, emancipation, restoration

‘YEAR’
A period of 365 days
Liturgical Year of Mercy (Dec-Nov) 348 days!
Synonyms: a revolution of the earth

‘MERCY’
Compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one’s power to punish or harm
Synonyms: leniency, grace, humanity, charity, love

Susan Frawley

This year at St Joseph’s staff are putting a strong focus on developing effective partnerships between school and home. Our training in the KidsMatter program has highlighted the importance and the benefits that come from having a good relationship between the school and our student’s families.

One of the strategies we are using is to hold parent teacher interviews this week. As a school we feel it is important to have valuable learning conversations with parents as early as possible. This helps us to clarify classroom structures and processes, determine any areas of concern and to open up effective lines of communication that can be built upon throughout the year.

Building effective communication is important to, and benefits, both families and staff.

Families benefit from effective communication with staff as:

- Effective communication helps build relationships between families and staff through respectfully sharing information and observations.
- Families and staff are more likely to share information if they feel listened to and understood by each other.
- Families feel more involved in their child’s experiences at the early childhood service.

**Staff benefit from regular, effective communication with families by:**
- Building a deeper understanding of the children in their care.
- Feeling appreciated in their role (e.g., when families talk and share information staff provide about children).
- Understanding what is happening with families and children (e.g., when families share information with staff, this knowledge helps them support children).

At St. Joseph’s we want all families to feel welcome and included in their child’s learning. The school’s doors are always open for any conversations about the children, be it challenges, concerns or successes.

Amy Thompson, Tony Luxton & the KidsMatter Team

Happy Birthday for the month of March
Hamish Young, Annika Milich, Hugh Riedel, Jye Smith, Wesley Webb, Arielle Milich, Ryan Phan, Chelsea Stoneham, Marissa Crack, Murphy Strachan, Ashlee Lattin.
Building relationships with families

Why are relationships with families important?

Positive, collaborative relationships with children’s families are the foundation of being interculturally-responsive. A child’s family members are the most important people in their life, and will have the greatest influence on emerging cultural identity.

When schools and families build positive working relationships, it shows children that their cultural background and language are accepted and valued. Being accepted and valued helps children feel they are an important part of the school community, which builds their self-esteem, helps develop a positive cultural identity, and supports their mental health and wellbeing.

Benefits to families

Families benefit when they have a positive relationship with their child’s school.

Families are more likely to feel comfortable asking questions, offer their own ideas and skills, and feel involved in the school when staff are welcoming and value their input. Families also find it easier to come together and build relationships with other families and develop support networks in the school and local community.

Having support networks can help families to cope if they have moved away from their country of origin or moved a lot since arriving in Australia due to resettlement requirements (Lynch & Hanson, 2004). Schools can also be a place where families can come for information to support their child’s education, mental health and wellbeing.

Benefits to schools

For schools, relationships help staff understand the needs of a family (e.g., best ways to communicate), and to address these needs through planning, policies, procedures and practices. Staff will find it easier to learn about families and provide them with school information if they have plans in place (Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, 2006).

Family involvement allows school staff to better understand the needs of the students in their care and to use this information to support their student’s learning, mental health and wellbeing.
Key areas to consider when building relationships with families

Communication

Effective communication between families with diverse cultural backgrounds and school staff means that everyone has a shared understanding about supporting children. It also means that everyone has a voice and is heard. To strive for successful communication, you might like to:

- become aware of each family member’s verbal and written English skills
- ensure a trained interpreter, bicultural worker, or community leader is present when meeting with the family
- learn the meaning of nonverbal and indirect communication (e.g., body language) in different cultures - sometimes nonverbal communication can carry more meaning than verbal communication
- maintain awareness and sensitivity to nonverbal communication during discussions with families
- be aware of any discomfort or inadequacies (which may lead to a feeling of shame) that family members might experience due to lack of English
- be aware of how shame can reduce communication with school staff
- identify the best communication method and the most appropriate family member to communicate with
- discuss with those who have cultural knowledge the most sensitive ways of learning about families and communicating school messages, requirements and expectations.

Learning about family needs and strengths

It takes sensitivity and time to relate to and learn about families with diverse cultural backgrounds. Sensitivities, such as past experiences, can make some people suspicious or cautious when it comes to talking with ‘authority figures’ or ‘institutions’. However, assumptions cannot be based on past experiences alone. Experiences such as living in a refugee camp or exposure to war do not always lead to vulnerability; sometimes they can also build resilience. To get to know family needs and strengths, you could:

- be aware of your own assumptions and how your knowledge and experiences may have led to these assumptions
- provide private spaces where families feel safe to discuss their needs and are confident that information shared is confidential
- use culturally-appropriate and sensitive communication strategies to learn about the backgrounds and experiences of each family
- have strategies (e.g., community gardens/kitchens), that encourage family members to share their skills and knowledge in different ways.

Sharing perspectives and expectations

Another key part of building relationships with families and being interculturally-responsive is sharing different perspectives. Each family member, due to their cultural background and schooling experiences, may have very different expectations of their child’s education and the role they play in it. It is also possible that schooling experiences have not been easy since arriving in Australia, due to communication difficulties or the prejudices that can occur. To share perspectives and expectations, you could:

- learn about families’ expectations of schooling
- learn about families’ previous experiences of education in and outside Australia
- sensitively share the expectations of students and families who attend your school
- develop skills to listen to and identify any conflicting ideas
- develop skills to discuss differences in expectations with families
- have an awareness of and knowledge of the supports available in the community when help is needed to understand families’ perspectives and expectations.

More information on communicating and learning about families can be found in Working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (2010):

School Board Nominations:

Brett Blackwell

I would like to take this opportunity to put forward my keen interest in re-nominating for the St Joseph School board for 2016. I have many years’ experience in the Renmark area working with children to provide positive pathways and believe if I am elected on the school board I would hold the position in high regard with lots of enthusiasm as well as a hands on attitude. My experience includes the ability to mentor and provide children with a respectful nature to work together in a team environment. Over the past two years I have coordinated and worked with the Buildings and Maintenance Team which has seen us complete many projects around the school and help at many school events. I believe in supporting the school and the staff which helps with the learning and experiences for our children.

Darren Bussenschutt

My two children started at St Josephs this year in Year 1 and Reception respectively. I am seeking an opportunity to serve on the school board and would hope that I could bring enthusiasm and energy to the position.

By way of background I am currently working for SA Police as a Detective and have lived and worked in the Riverland since 2004 in that role. It is my plan to raise the children in Renmark. Prior to working in the police I held various management positions with some prominent South Australian companies. I believe that my background has allowed me to gain skills that would be of benefit to the school community in the management and administration areas as well as being able to bring a pragmatic and analytical approach to tasks.

I was impressed at the progressive approach to learning that is embraced by the school and feel that I could contribute to the school’s future in a most positive way. I feel that I could be a positive influence on the development of the school and would relish the chance to serve the students and wider school community by becoming involved at a board level and contributing to leading the school into the future.

Adrian Hunt

I have 3 boys at St Joseph’s: Brodie (Y2) and Riley & Max (Rec). I became an active member of the school community last year as a member of the Parents and Friends and the yard redevelopment committee. I am a carpenter by trade, with extensive experience in business management, project management and building processes and believe this knowledge will make me a valuable member of the Board. Over the last two years I have put my business goals on hold to take a more active role around the house, as my wife is the full time and a half Director at Barmera Kindergarten. This gives me insights of the demands placed on school leadership teams. I have the ability to support, construct or maintain facilities. I believe in supporting Don and his staff so that they can continue to move the school forward so our children are given the best possible opportunities to thrive.

Nicole Pitman

I am excited to express my interest in being part of our school board. I have 3 sons, who all currently attend St Josephs, Blake in year 5, Angus in year 3, and Hamish in year 1. I currently work fulltime as Viticulturist for Kingston Vineyards. I have lived in the Riverland most of my life, with a desire to participate in my community, with having been involved with Renmark Netball Club as a committee member (President and Secretary) over various years. I have enjoyed helping our school community where I can, and find it very rewarding. Previously I was involved in the parent committee for the school mural. I would love to have the opportunity to participate as a board member, and build our strong school community involvement. St Joseph’s has a strong focus on continuous improvement, and this is something I wish to be involved as a board member. If elected, I aim to continue to help this school be the great school it is.

Todd van Dyk

I have been a member of the St Joseph’s School Board for the last 2 years. With my position coming up for re-election, I wish to take this opportunity to nominate to continue as a Board Member for a second term.

I currently have 2 children attending St Joseph’s School. I have a keen interest in making sure that decisions made for the school are in the best interests of all students, staff and families involved. As a local community member I enjoy getting involved with children’s interests and activities. I currently coach the local junior soccer teams and assist with the running of the local T20 Milo cricket competition, as well as being involved with other local sports. As a local police officer and parent, I feel I have a good understand of community issues. I believe I am in a position where I can be a positive influence and role model for children, families and the school community which is a major reason for me wanting to continue in the role of Board member.

SCHOOL BOARD
You may cast a vote by attending the AGM on Tuesday 1st March 2016 at 7.30pm in the Library/Activity Room.
KidsMatter

Chloe Smith was recently recognised as our first recipient of the KidsMatter Champion Award. Chloe was rewarded for being a fantastic role model to all students, demonstrating the positive, friendly and helpful behaviours that we value at St Joseph’s.

Parish Connections:
Parish Priest ~ Fr Paul Bourke
Mass: Saturday 6.30pm ~ Sunday 9.00am

The CWL meeting is being held at the school every third Thursday of the month. We welcome their ideas, suggestions and interactions with our school. Riverland Parish Picnic will be held on Sunday 13th March at Kingston-On-Murray riverfront from 10am. Please bring a salad to share, chairs and drinks.

SAPSASA Swimming:

SAPSASA Swimming: A big congratulations to the following students who represented St Joseph’s School at the SAPSASA Swimming Carnival in Loxton: Jamie DiCerbo, James Haslett, Hudson Pearce, Cooper Newman, Indya Wittwer, Chloe Smith, Kian Slagter, Nicole DiCerbo, Demi Flaherty, Paige Vause, Breea Martinson, Harrison Binder, Kobi Lowe, Tammy Tran and Zoe Siviour.
The events included the 100m freestyle, 50m freestyle, 50m backstroke, 50m breaststroke, 50m butterfly and the team relay. All students should be very proud of their efforts. A big thankyou to the families who helped with transport and timekeeping on the day.

Kyerin Grundy

SJSR PLAYGROUP
Families of St Joseph’s are invited to bring along your children aged 0-5 years to Playgroup.
Lots of fun including art, craft, outdoor play, singing, storytime and more!
Fortnightly on Fridays in the Italian Room 9.30am-11.00am
$3 per child or $5 per family (more than 1 child) per visit
Please bring along a piece of fruit to share

TERM 1 DATES
12th February 26th February
11th March 8th April
Parents & Friends:

Hello everyone!
Hopefully we have all survived the week with the hot weather!
After our first meeting at the beginning of February, the committee have come up with some great ideas for our school and families!
Please put in your calendars to save the date Saturday 9th April week 10.
P&F are organising a 'Movie Under The Stars' to be held on the oval at school. This will be a great fun family night that we will all be looking forward to! More details will follow as it comes closer, but book it in now!!
A massive day of celebrations will also be taking place on Monday of week 8 with the school celebrating St Josephs Day & Harmony Day. We would love some volunteers to help with these celebrations with the school having a shared lunch, so anyone who can help with putting out food for our children would be greatly appreciated!
We also held our first coffee & chat for the term, this is always a great time to meet new parents & chat about our children & how they are coping with school life (& us too!). It’s a great time to also borrow some books from the P&F library with a variety of topics on offer.
Anne Bliss will be a guest speaker coming to the next meeting on 15th March, she will be helping to guide us into providing a great P&F for St Josephs. Everyone is more than welcome to attend at 7.30pm in the activity room.
Hopefully our children have all settled back into school life nicely and look forward to updating everyone on upcoming events!
Thankyou
Kristine and the P&F Committee

Community Engagement ~ Dr Catherine Langford

Importance of Movement
There is wide research that suggests that the health of children is continuing to decline due to inactivity. How does exercise improve learning and brain function?
Exercise encourages our brain to work at its optimum level. We get more oxygen and blood flow to the brain and a release of endorphins which are happy hormones that reduce stress and improve our mood.
In children, exercise has been shown to reduce restlessness and hyperactivity, decrease symptoms of ADHD, improve moods and immunity, and it also improves sleep. It has also been shown to increase energy levels. Imagine if your child began the day with more energy, a better mood and was more settled. Imagine how much better their ability to learning would be.
Movement particularly from birth to 3.5 years is essential for laying down appropriate pathways for learning and development. It is how the brain learns to relate to the world around it. Movement develops optimal posture, eye movement and control through balance and co-ordination, better reading and better fine motor control which is crucial for handwriting.

How to get kids moving?
Walking or riding a bike whenever you can. Try other activities including dancing, walking the dog etc
If there is time to watch TV in the morning, there is time to send the kids outside in the backyard. Bike riding, jumping on the trampoline, running around, kicking the footy, whatever it may be.
Get to school early and play on the playground before going into class.

Give them goals
- “See how long it will take you to run around the backyard” and time them while you’re getting yourself ready. Then do it a second time and see if they can beat their time
- “Go outside and see if you can get 10 goals” or “See how many goals you can get in a row” (Basketball, soccer, football)
- Organise friends to walk/ride with before or to school.
- Ask them what activities they like and incorporate these into the daily or weekly routine.
- Get the family up 20 minutes earlier to ensure there is a little more time before school.
While exercise in the morning is the best time for learning, any time is better than not at all. Even after school limiting screen time is so important for many reasons besides getting the body moving more.
Regards
Catherine Langford
In Maths this term, the 1/2 classes have been working on number. We have looked at counting to 100, place value in the hundreds and now we’re looking at skip counting by 2s, 5s, 10s AND 3s! We love doing ‘hands-on’ activities and the highest we’ve got skip counting by 2 is over 300 (see top left photo of our pattern). We love having helpers in for Maths groups and we can’t wait to show off our new skills. So ask us about it at home!
Ms Allen & Mr Slagter