Dear Parents,

Homework has become a topic of conversation once again in the education circles. There has been much debate about the effectiveness of homework and whether or not it is beneficial for students, in particular Primary Students.

It is important that children arrive at school fresh and eager to learn and therefore formal homework in primary school is minimal. Reasons for having minimal homework are: so not to impinge on family time and most importantly not to cause stress and concern to the child. Children need time to relax and recharge after a hectic day at school. Therefore, time out to play and to become involved in extra-curricular activities is seen as important in the development of a balanced lifestyle. The school values and understands that family and special occasions may mean that homework is not always completed and that these are also important learning experiences.

There are many research papers that have been published about homework and if it is at all beneficial to the outcomes of learning. Professor John Hattie, of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, has famously calculated the 'effect-size' of more than 100 education innovations. He recently told the BBC that homework in primary school has an effect-size of around zero 'which is why we need to get it right, not why we need to get rid of it...'

Due to research such as that conducted by Professor Hattie, St. Mary's has decided to change the way we set homework. We will not be sending home worksheets as they appear to have no specific benefit to the students learning and we will not be sending home projects, as according to Professor Hattie, they are the worst thing you can do. Homework will now consist of reading 5 nights a week which will include reading aloud to an adult for all year levels, this needs to be written and signed in diary's, revision of sight/spelling words and revision of times tables for grades 2-6.

We are in the process of reviewing our teaching and learning practices and this is the best practice we can offer students as far as homework goes because it is relevant to their learning and an extension of what they are doing in the classroom.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us at school

Kind regards
Deb Owens
**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Friday 4th March**  
Ride to School  
8.30am from the park

**Saturday 5th March**  
St. Mary’s Trivia Night 7.00pm @ the Mary MacKillop Hall

**Monday 7th March**  
Whole School Assembly 9.00am  
School Photos

**Tuesday 8th March**  
Wellington Division Swimming Carnival. (Selected students Gr 3-6 from Yarram Schools)

**Wednesday 9th March**  
Grade 4/5 Class Mass @ 10.00am  
All welcome

**Friday 11th March**  
Casual Dress Day- Easter egg  
Donation

**Monday 14th March**  
Labour Day Holiday

**Tuesday 15th March**  
School Advisory Board Annual General Meeting at 5pm all welcome

**Wednesday 16th March**  
Social Committee Annual General Meeting at 5pm all welcome

**Thursday 24th March**  
Last Day of Term 1

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**CASUAL DRESS DAY**  
**Friday 11th March**

PLEASE BRING A DONATION OF AN EASTER EGG.

This will be for our annual St. Mary’s Easter Raffle

Raffle Books will be sent home next week.

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**Classroom Awards**

These children have received an award this week:

**Class Awards**
- Grade 4/5 – Kayla
- Grade 5/6 – Jakob

**Principal Awards**
- Prep/1 - Xavier
- Grade 2/3 - Emma
- Grade 4/5 - Leny
- Grade 5/6 - Evie

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Let’s all get together and ride to school tomorrow **Friday 4th March**. We will meet at the Yarram Memorial Park at 8.30am and ride to school along the Rail Trail.

On arrival at school we can enjoy a healthy fruit cup snack.

Students will be supervised by staff members

Students are to be collected from the school at the end of the day or if old enough, ride their bikes home alone.

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**Happy Birthday**

Happy Birthday to those who celebrate birthdays this week:

Alexi
SCHOOL NEWS

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Division Swim Carnival next Tuesday. Congratulations and Good Luck to Kirsty, Evie, Charli, Lily, Samantha & Oscar who are representing St. Mary’s and the Yarram District at the Wellington Division Swimming Carnival. We are very proud of your effort and achievement. Mr Sheedy will be accompanying students to this event.

Yarram Division Athletics Carnival (Gr 3-6) - Monday 18th April, 2016.

On Tuesday in very warm conditions, we started our athletics training in preparation for this event. While we spent the day “chasing the shade”, it is really important that all students have a water bottle with them at school so that they can have a drink of water whenever it is required. We will be doing athletics practise for the remainder of Term 1 and with another warm day expected next Tuesday, I would ask for your support in helping children to establish this vital routine.

Information and permission notes will be going home next week.

Premier’s Active April Campaign.
We are hoping that as many families as possible will join in this activity for the month of April, not only increasing our personal fitness levels but also giving us an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities as a family and school community.
If you have any queries regarding Active April, please feel free to contact me.

PHYS ED AWARDS:

INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK:
For trying hard to do new activities and not giving up.
CONGRATULATIONS!
Grade Prep/ 1- Keegan, Riley & Ryan
Grade 2/3- Xavier C, Tahlia & Charlotte
Grade 4/5- Tara, Grace & Tyson (Voted by their peers)
Grade 5/6- Evie, Alex & Mason S (Voted by their peers)

The Big Write

Our First Big Write for 2016 will be on Monday 7th March!!!!!!!

This Friday night the 4th of March, all families will receive a stimulus sheet about The Magic Book. Over the weekend Talk, Talk, Talk about your ideas for your Narrative – a made up story.

For our new Prep students this will be very exciting as they will be encouraged to draw, paint, make their story using craft paper and Mrs. Cook will assist children to write their ideas.

BIG WRITE is so much fun!!!! Classical music will be played, special pencils will be used, games will be played & lots of shared TALK will be experienced & ideas will be created.

TALK! TALK! TALK! Talk! Talk! Talk!

Spending time together talking and sharing will help your child to expand their ideas.

Together you can give your child some up-levelled V.C.O.P, for their writing.

V =Vocabulary, wow words.

C=Connective, words that join ideas together.

O=Openers, Amazing ways to start a sentence. Words that end in ‘ly’ or ‘ing’ are power openers

P=Punctuation, Ask your child to show a game called, "Sensei Says" (hand signals) to demonstrate.

The BIG WRITE is not a test. It is a CELEBRATION of your child as a writer and the time spent together talking will enhance their writing experience and learning.
CONFIDENTIAL & EMERGENCY INFORMATION
Thank you to everyone who has returned these forms already. If families could please return the forms ASAP. The school office has spares for students who may not have received one.

A PRAYER FOR THE YEAR OF MERCY
Lord, Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees God.
Show us your face and we will be saved. 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.
Send you 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.
Amen.
Pope Francis

REMINDER
School Photos Monday 7th March. All students are to wear their correct summer uniform. The school office have extra order envelopes if needed.

Thank you
BOOK CLUB Book Club orders are due back on Friday 11th March.

Congratulations to Tyson & Tahlia on the arrival of their new baby brother Theodore.

Parish News
Mass: Sunday 6th March 2016 at 10.00am

COMMUNITY NEWS
St. Mary’s Trivia Night
Saturday 5th March 2016 7pm
Mary MacKillop Hall
$10.00 per person
Tables of 8-10
BYO ALCOHOL
Tables available on the night

PARKS WEEK 2016
Saturday 19th March
Tarra Bulga National Park Discovery
Enjoy a number of scheduled guided walks throughout the day.
Location: Tarra Bulga National Park,
Time: 10.00am-4.00pm
For more information on other free family events got to www.wellington.vic.gov.au