Prayer

Loving God, as we celebrate Lent 2016, may You open our minds and our hearts so that we draw closer to You. We make this prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen

I include here a link to recent research from Stanford University which heralds the value of Positive Education.

Last week all families received a letter via email introducing new staff and providing parents with an overview of important dates and events over the coming weeks and months. If you did not receive this correspondence, please contact the College Reception to ensure your contact details are current.

Peace,
Elizabeth Hanney
Principal

From the Principal

The Year of Mercy

We have begun the academic year with a number of important backdrops. Pope Francis has declared 2016 a special Jubilee Year of Mercy. Our College Annual Theme for 2016 is “Be Messengers of Peace”. These words were spoken by Helene de Chappotin over one hundred years ago to her sisters in the newly formed community of Franciscan religious women who went on to be missionaries of mercy, peace and ministry in many countries; in turn establishing Ave Maria College in 1963.

In these themes of Mercy and Peace we are invited to begin afresh this year. God’s good gifts to us: mercy, peace, love. Parents’ good gifts to their children: family, faith, education and love. We know that children first experience each of these in the home. As adults we know our own need for mercy and peace. So too, in a world such in need of mercy and peace, what inspired leadership from our Pope and Helene herself! Based of course on the leadership of Jesus. This Lent, particularly, we might examine ways we can bring God’s mercy and peace to others and bring about the unity and peace that Christ speaks of for humanity; being sharers in Divine Love.

Pope Francis: Mercy is the ultimate act by which God comes to meet us (The Face of Mercy No.3)

A Positive Start

A warm welcome to all students and families for 2016. A particular welcome to those families beginning their journey at Ave Maria College. We trust that all new students will feel the warmth of our community - in the friendships formed and the opportunities given to show courage and confidence in their growth and learning. Well done to all students for a very positive start.

Ash Wednesday service speaker, Molly Kennedy, Faith and Social Justice Captain
Deputy Principal Leadership & Learning

A warm welcome to all parents to the new academic year. As the year progresses, the learning all members of our community will experience promises challenge and growth for us all. At the closing assembly in 2015 I invited the students to think back to the first day of the year when they walked in through the gates for first time. I asked them to reflect on the person they were then and how much growth they experienced in 2015; be it physical, psychological or academic growth. Conscientiously reflecting on this growth from a specific point in time can be very affirming as it opens a window to how much we have actually learned. And so, here we are now at the start of a new year and we have all entered the gates for the first time this year. At our opening assembly I asked the girls to take a mental picture of how they were feeling and what they were looking for in the year ahead. I am going to ask the girls to reflect in the same way again at the end of this year and I extend the same invitation to you.

Our Mission Statement includes the phrase, We are people of learning. But what does it mean to be a person of learning? What does being a person of learning look like? If I am a person of learning, what will others actually see me doing? There are so many possible responses to this question. Research tells us two things. The first is that our attitude has a major impact on how effectively we learn. The second is that a person who reflects on how they learn and how they respond to new learning can also improve the effectiveness with which they learn. This is called metacognitive thinking. That is, thinking about your thinking.

So, ask yourself this question: What is my attitude or mindset when faced with a change or the challenge of having to learn something new? Do I have instant thoughts of not being able to succeed or do I jump in and just start learning without any fear of failure? Maybe a bit of both? Do I shy away from the effort needed in learning about this new challenge or am I willing to do the work because I accept that it’s a requirement for learning? How predictable am I in the face of learning and what do I model for my daughter? As parents it is important that we engage in the practice of reflecting on these questions and model for our children the important traits that underpin successful learning. We strongly encourage you to do this by talking regularly to your daughter about her learning in anything she does. Having to explain her thinking will help enormously in developing her capacity to learn.

I wish all families every blessing for the year ahead.

Phillip Tascone
Deputy Principal Leadership & Learning

Heads of School

Welcome back

Welcome to the 2016 academic year. Congratulations to all students on a smooth start to the year, in particular our Year 7 students who have settled in so well, and the Year 12s who have begun the year with enthusiasm and a positive approach to all that lies ahead.

Parent Information Nights

Notification about the Parent Information Nights is being sent home this week via students. Please ensure you RSVP via the return slip. These nights are an important event to learn more about what your daughter will experience as well as an opportunity to meet your daughter’s Homeroom Teacher and Year Level Team Leader. These nights are occurring as follows:

- **Year 7 – Tuesday, 16 February.** Following a brief overview session, including camp information, much of the night will be spent with the Homeroom Teacher.
- **Years 10 and 11 – Thursday, 18 February.** Elevate Educate will speak to parents about the habits of highly successful students, and practical ways to support students in their VCE studies.
- **Years 8 and 9 – Tuesday, 23 February.** Coming together for the first part of the evening, parents will then move off to meet Homeroom Teachers and hear about events specific to their year levels! For Year 9, this includes information about the Outdoor Adventure Camp (Term 2).

VCE Subject Changes

At the start of the new school year VCE students may wish to make minor changes to the mix of subjects they undertake. Students wanting to do so must see Mr Smith to collect a VCE Change of Subject Request form. All requests must be submitted to Mr Smith by Friday, 12 February.

Uniform

We take this opportunity to remind all parents about students adhering to the Uniform Regulations. By now all students must have attended to items like dress length, hair colour, excessive earrings, etc to ensure they are compliant with the regulations. Students who are do not meet these expectations can expect to receive a demerit for any infringements, and may be sent home if the issue cannot easily be rectified at school. We thank you for supporting these expectations and regulations at home.

Head of School Years 7-9  
Ms Jo Hammer

Head of School Years 10-12  
Mr Matt Smith

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**Term Dates 2016**

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>Term 1</td>
<td>Monday, 1 February - Thursday, 24 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>Monday, 11 April - Friday, 24 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td>Monday, 11 July - Friday, 16 September</td>
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<td>Term 4</td>
<td>Monday, 3 October - Thursday, 8 December</td>
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Teaching and Learning Leader

Teaching and learning is well underway for Term 1, and each year brings a chance for students to reset their focus and take on new learning challenges. In order to maximise their learning it is crucial for students to establish efficient study habits early. Effective use of their Student Planner will help assist with time management and enable them to plan ahead in preparation for busy assessment times.

Home Study

Home Study is regarded as being a valuable part of the education process. It allows students to practise, extend, reinforce and consolidate their learning from class. It is important for memory retention that students develop their understanding of concepts through regular revision and establish strong brain pathways. Students are encouraged to revisit their learning from class each night. They might do this through creating flowcharts, reciting notes or discussing their learning with someone at home.

Home Study Environment

It does not matter where students study but there are some key features of the most effective Home Study environments. The desk or work area will set the tone for the way a student often approaches their study. Working on their bed may be comfortable but is likely to result in a far more relaxed and less focussed approach to study than a table or desk. In the digital age the students seek to remain connected, however, minimising the distractions can ensure that Home Study time is efficiently used, and the quality of learning maximised.

Veronica Pham, 2016 Academic Captain offers these as her top three study tips:

1. Find and set up your study space. It should make you feel happy and motivated.
2. Set yourself an achievable goal for the end of your study period.
3. Remember to give yourself a break. Relax, rejuvenate and re-energise!

Assessment Calendar

All assessment due dates are posted to the calendar for students to view and assist them with their planning. You can use your daughter’s AveSpace login details to access the relevant year level page and look for their class code.

This year promises to be a year of rigorous learning in a challenging but supportive environment for your daughter.

Jessica Hall
Teaching and Learning Leader

Faith and Religious Education

The 2016 College theme is “Be messengers of peace”. This timely message, steeped in the Franciscan charism, speaks to us in many ways. I need to be at peace with and accept myself – and all the goodness that God has placed in me. Each of us needs to foster relationships that are marked by acceptance and compassion – thus spreading peace.

We marked the beginning of the school year with the staff of Ave Maria College, St Bernard’s and St Columba’s Colleges gathering in the St Bernard’s auditorium for Mass, celebrated by Bishop Terry Curtin. This was a very successful initiative. Our College Opening Mass was held in Francis Hall on Wednesday, 3 February with Fr Bill Attard, Canonical Administrator, as celebrant. Fr Bill’s homily challenged us to adopt Jesus’ style of leadership. The Opening Mass saw the College Student Leadership Team blessed and new students and staff presented with their Tau cross, beloved of St Francis, as a sign of their joining the Franciscan family.

Wednesday, 10 February is Ash Wednesday that the College marked with a service which included distribution of the ashes and the encouragement to ‘turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel’. Year 12 Retreat runs from Wednesday, 10 February to Friday, 12 February with the theme “All that I can be”. It will be held at the Mt Helen Campus (Ballarat) of Federation University.

Parent Involvement

1. Refugee Homework Club is held on Monday afternoons during term time. If you are able to drive the students (regular car licence and Working with Children Check required) once or twice during the year, please contact me.

2. Liturgy Team. This initiative is to involve as many people, students, staff and parents, as possible in the liturgical life of the College. Parents who are interested in helping should email me. I will send you a calendar of the College events. You can then contact me in person or by email or phone if you have an idea that you would like to share to enliven our Masses and liturgies.

The College phone number is 9331 9300 and my email address is patrick.jurd@avemaria.vic.edu.au

Patrick Jurd
Director of Faith and Religious Education

Enrolment Applications Year 7 – 2017

Enrolment applications for entry in Year 7 2017 close Friday, 26 February 2016. Parents are reminded that siblings of current students who are wishing to commence Year 7 in 2017 must also ensure Enrolment applications are received by this date.

Important Dates

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 16 February</td>
<td>Year 7 Parent Information Night</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 18 February</td>
<td>School Photo Day</td>
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<td>VCE Awards Afternoon</td>
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<td>Monday, 22 February</td>
<td>Year 7 Immunisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 23 February</td>
<td>Year 8 and Year 9 Parent Information Night</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School Photo Makeup Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, 26 February</td>
<td>House Swimming Carnival</td>
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Learn to Plan Instead of Worry

Happy New Year! Hopefully the holidays have provided a chance to relax and recharge for the challenges of the year ahead. For some students, a new year level, Homeroom, teachers and subjects will be quite daunting. Feeling a little nervous is normal, however if your daughter’s worries are affecting her school life, home life or relationships, psychological assistance should be considered.

It is a good idea to regularly ask your daughter how she is feeling. Encourage her to tell you if she is feeling overwhelmed, and ask her how you can help. You may wish to help your daughter solve her problems by making a plan. A big difference between planning and worrying is that a good plan does not need constant review. An anxious brain, however, will reconsider a plan over and over to be sure it is the right plan. This is all just ruminating worry disguising itself as making a plan and then seeking constant reassurance. Four simple steps that can be used to make a plan are: 1) concretely identifying the problem, 2) listing the problem-solving options, 3) picking one of the options; and 4) writing out a plan of action.

Once a plan has been made it becomes part of the worry-stopping statement, “Stop! I have a plan!” It also helps the endless reassurance-seeking, because it provides written solutions to problems.

If you are concerned about your daughter, a good first step could be to make an appointment for her to see myself or Ceci Tankey. We are able to assess levels of anxiety and suggest strategies to manage anxiety symptoms. If your daughter requires additional support, a GP can organise a referral to a registered psychologist under the Better Access to Mental Health Care items.

Suzanne Hall
Student Counsellor

Year 10 Work Experience Students

As part of the Year 10 students’ career development the College runs a one week block of compulsory work experience. This year the Official Work Experience Week for Ave Maria College commences Monday, 20 June and finishes Friday, 24 June. During the blocked week Year 10 classes will not operate at the College. Work Experience outside these dates can only occur with the permission of the Head of School Years 10-12, Mr Smith and will generally only occur if it supports an individual student’s post school plans or is in a high demand area not available during the main Work Experience period. Any changes to Work Experience dates must first be negotiated with the Pathways Coordinator Ms Aliaga. A letter will be emailed to parents giving a broad overview of the program. Further information is available on the Careers and Pathways page on AveSpace.

Year 11 Students

In Year 11 students attempt to answer the question "What job should I do?" There are a number of ways that parents can help their daughters explore options and manage and develop their careers. Parents can keep informed by logging into Careers and Pathways on AveSpace on a regular basis. The Career and Pathways page is updated every week with Announcements, Documents, Weekly Career Newsletters and links to relevant websites. A letter will be emailed to parents explaining the many ways they can help.

Year 12 Students

In Term 1 all Year 12 students will have an appointment with the Pathways Coordinator. Students will receive a pre-interview sheet which must be filled out and brought to the interview. At the interview, students will be introduced to Coursesearch on the VTAC website. They will complete some preference practice exercises in preparation for the real VTAC applications which open in August. They will also discuss their goals and career aspirations. A letter will be issued to the Year 12 students in the next week explaining the process.

Welcome back to a new school year. As the Pathways Coordinator I am available to provide ongoing support and advice. Should parents or students have any queries or would like more information please feel free to contact me. I am available Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Helen Aliaga
Pathways Coordinator

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) 2016

The CSEF is an annual payment towards camps, sports and/or excursion costs for your child.

For more information see www.education.vic.gov.au/csef.

Applications (if eligible) are due for lodgement to the College Finance Office, along with your Health Care Card, by Monday, 29 February 2016.

Helen Aliaga
Pathways Coordinator