



# St. Damian's Newsletter

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Thursday November 16th, 2023

No. 33 - 2023

The St Damian's School Community acknowledges that we come together on the ancestral lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation

## PLEASE NOTE:

**SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS IS BETWEEN 8.30am TO 3.30pm ON SCHOOL DAYS.**

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Amazingly we are half way through November with only four weeks left of the school year. Term Four always seems to fly as we endeavor to finish off one year and make preparations to begin a new year. As you can imagine we are all very busy at present completing student end of year reports, finalising classes for the following year, completing staffing arrangements, managing a building program and all the while continuing to teach the students and maintain normality for as long as possible. I understand that the rumour mill has been busy amongst the community regarding staffing for 2024. Could I please ask everyone to remember that children can be affected by gossip and this in turn can cause anxiety. Please be mindful of what is spoken about in front of children as we want them to finish off their year happily and feeling relaxed and to be excited about the wonderful adventures they will experience in the next year. Once our staffing is finalized, the whole community will be informed and everyone will receive the information at the same time. Movement of staff occurs in all spheres of society, schools are no exception. It is a fact of life, and in many instances encouraged as it allows for personal and professional growth. In this current climate of staffing shortages, all schools are doing their utmost to ensure that all classes have a teacher who will support the students' learning and growth. We at St Damian's are aware of this and as challenging as this can be, we always do our very best in this space.

## Prep Orientation Sessions

Today we held the final session of the Orientations Sessions. We look forward to seeing our newest members of the St Damian's community next year when they begin as Preps (Foundation students).

## P.A. Committee Meeting and AGM

The P.A. Committee met on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November at 5.30pm to finalise the final fundraising events for the year. We congratulate and thank this group of very committed mothers who put in many hours and work very hard to support the school. Thank you ladies, you are amazing and we could not do everything we do without you!!! On this same night, the AGM was also held. A new President and Secretary were elected and the current Treasurer continuing. A huge thank you to these three mums who have put up their hand to support. Anyone wishing to join the P.A. is very warmly welcomed. You do not have to be part of the committee if you don't want to be, you can simply support in other ways. Come and see for yourself.

## School Advisory Council - AGM

Last Tuesday evening, the SAC met for the final time this year. The new SAC was formed with all current members nominating for a further two years. I humbly thank each member of the current SAC for all they have contributed over the year, for their advice and their perspective. If you wish to nominate to be a member of the SAC for 2024 please email me expressing your interest. As this meeting was the final one for this year, the Report presented summarised the year's achievements and future directions. I have attached the Report for our community to read.

## Christmas Carols



Preparations for our Christmas Carols to be held on the school oval on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November are well underway. As this is the final event for the year we are hoping that all our families will join us to celebrate the end of another wonderful year of learning. Families are invited to bring picnic rugs, picnic chairs and join in with the singing as the students present a simple Nativity story. Hopefully it will be a lovely evening weather wise for us to enjoy our last community event together. Don't forget to buy your tickets for the Christmas Raffle which will be drawn on this night.

## Whole School Orientation for 2024

The students from Prep to Year 5 will meet their new classes and teacher for next year on December 8<sup>th</sup> for lunch at 11.30am and then again for an hour's activity session on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am.

## Front of School Car Park

We respectfully ask all parents to use the Kiss and Drop zone through Joseph Street when dropping off students in the morning. The front carpark is not to be used as a drop off zone. This is very dangerous as students are walking around where cars are moving.

Drivers using this parking area must park their car in a bay and walk the children into the school. If children arrive after 8.45am they must be signed in at the office by an adult. If there are no parking spaces available do not double park, you must leave the area immediately without stopping. The front car park is reserved for staff and for parishioners attending morning Mass. Please be mindful of the safety of all the children.

### 2023 School Fees

**Just a gentle reminder that all fees for 2023 are now due and must be paid by 21<sup>st</sup> November unless a payment plan is in place.** Payment of fees is a responsibility that each parent committed to when enrolling your children into the school. If families are having financial difficulties please make an appointment with me to discuss how we can work together to meet this financial responsibility. Please do not let the amounts accumulate to a point where it becomes overwhelming.

### School Closure Day

**Please note that Thursday December 7<sup>th</sup> is a pupil free day to allow staff to plan for the 2024 school year. Students are not required at school on this day.**

The 2023 School Year Ends on **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December** after graduation **for the Year 6 students** and on **Friday 15<sup>th</sup>** for all students from Prep – Year 5.

*Have a great week everyone.*

*Rosanna*

## Faith News

### St. Damian's Nativity and Christmas Carols Evening

As a School, we are busy preparing for our Christmas Carols Evening. We will be presenting the Nativity along with some traditional carols. The evening will take place on **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November** commencing at 7:00pm. The Students have been preparing in earnest so please come along and celebrate with our community. Thank you for your support.

### St. Damian's Christmas Giving Tree

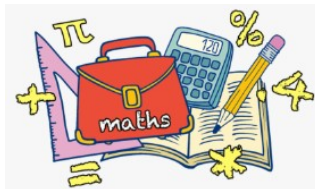
As is tradition at St. Damian's, we have been invited by St. Vincent De Paul to support those in need by providing gifts. We would be most appreciative if you could contribute to our collection. To enable enough time for the gifts to be distributed to those in need, we will begin collecting items on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November. The closing date for donations is **Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December**. Please support our 'Giving Tree' which will be placed in the School Foyer. Stars will indicate whether you wish to purchase a gift for a boy or a girl and will show an approximate age group. There are also stars to give gifts to a Mum, Dad or baby. Please take a star from the tree, purchase a gift, wrap the gift if you wish, then stick the star on to the package so the volunteers from St. Vinnies know who it is intended for. Please place the gift under the tree. These gifts will make Christmas a special time for families. Thank you in advance for your contributions towards this worthy cause. It is a privilege to witness our community take action for others.

### A Prayer to the Creator

*Lord, Father of our human family,  
you created all human beings equal in dignity:  
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit  
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,  
dialogue, justice and peace.  
Move us to create healthier societies  
and a more dignified world,  
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.  
May our hearts be open  
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.  
May we recognise the goodness and beauty  
that you have sown in each of us,  
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,  
and shared dreams. Amen.*

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, Encyclical Letter, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2020

Mary-Ann Wright  
Religious Education Leader



### Maths Family Fun

#### Seniors

Mary surveyed students in her school to find out what their favourite sports were. Out of 1,200 students, 455 said hockey was their favourite sport. What percentage of students said hockey was their favourite sport?

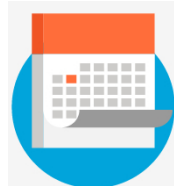
#### Juniors

Adrianna has 10 pieces of gum to share with her friends. There wasn't enough gum for all her friends, so she went to the store and got 70 pieces of strawberry gum and 10 pieces of bubble gum. How many pieces of gum does Adrianna have now?

Take a photo of your workings out, and submit to [Carmen.bruce@sdbundoora.catholic.edu.au](mailto:Carmen.bruce@sdbundoora.catholic.edu.au)

Happy Solving!

Carmen Bruce - Maths Leader



DATES  
FOR YOUR  
DIARY

<b>Term 4</b>	
<b>November</b>	
<b>Friday 17th</b>	Fire Commissioning Ceremony 2.30pm
<b>Wednesday 29th</b>	St Damian's Carols Evening 7pm
<b>December</b>	
<b>Wednesday 6th</b>	End of Year School Mass 9.15am
<b>Thursday 7th</b>	Student Free Day
<b>Thursday 14th</b>	Last Day Year 6's
	Year 6 Graduation Mass 7.00pm
<b>Friday 15th</b>	Last Day of Term 4
<b>January 2024</b>	
<b>Tuesday 30th</b>	Student Testing 8.45am—3.15pm
<b>Wednesday 31st</b>	Student Testing 8.45am—3.15pm

Donations of clean, good condition uniforms and school bags etc are gratefully appreciated. They can be left in the labelled box outside the School Office.

(We cannot accept damaged, old or stained items). Cash sales only.

Open each FRIDAY: 9am-10am (located up the hill just after the office entrance).

Please email [sduniformshop@hotmail.com](mailto:sduniformshop@hotmail.com) for any item requests

**SECOND HAND**  
**UNIFORM SHOP**

# Student of the Week

<b>Prep A</b>	Emily Schembri	For being organised and always ready to learn.
<b>Prep M</b>	Isabella Gioffre	For your neat and organised approach to learning tasks.
<b>1A</b>	Gianna Pieterman	For being enthusiastic about her learning and always trying her best.
<b>1C</b>	Tala Torres	For being an amazing student all year and always giving 100% on tasks.
<b>1M</b>	Lisa Li	For always doing her best and producing excellent work.
<b>2D</b>	Charli Nguyen	For consistently showing enthusiasm and motivation towards her learning.
<b>2S</b>	Antoni Bernardi	For trying hard to focus when researching for his information report.
<b>2W</b>	Maxell McDonnell	For being an excellent role model student in class.
<b>3C</b>	Alissa Meng	For always having a positive attitude and demonstrating excellent presentation skills.
<b>3K</b>	Salome Ramirez-Suarez	For her excellent behaviour and kindness towards others.
<b>4F</b>	Felix Longford	For becoming independent in his writing and for improvement in spelling.
<b>4M</b>	Chloe Liang	For your excellent contributions to literature circle discussions.
<b>4N</b>	Oliver Ngo	For great learning towards our Transformation and Location unit.
<b>5B</b>	Chloe Butterfield	For making a huge effort to improve spelling and handwriting.
<b>5R</b>	James Pantelidis	For your enthusiasm and dedication to learning.
<b>6C</b>	Neveah Walter	For being self motivated and focused when completing all set tasks.
<b>6S</b>	Andrea Hagiliassis	For your dedication and commitment to your learning particularly with your debate work.



Chloe Huynh—2S  
 Yueru Liu—1A  
 Lara Ristovski—2S  
 Emma Rigoni—1A  
 Marcus Wang—1C  
 Kaden He—Prep A  
 Oliver Mills—Prep M  
 Jayden Lam—3T  
 Angela Chen—3T  
 Olivia Salvo—5B  
 Peter Stingas—5B  
 Lori Davide—5B



## Shadow Puppet Plays in Performing Arts

In Performing Arts, Year 2 - 6 students have been learning about shadow puppet traditions from different societies in Asia. Over the last few weeks students have designed and constructed their own shadow puppet character, and worked in groups to create a play using their characters. They have begun creating paper sets and props to add details and drama to their stories. We look forward to watching all the plays in the coming weeks!

**Alex de la Rambelje - Performing Arts Teacher**



# St Damian's Catholic Primary School

## School Advisory Council

### Principal's Report

#### November 14th 2023

Dear Members of the School Advisory Council and the St Damian School Community,

It is with pleasure that I present this final report for the 2023 school year. This report provides a summary of the year's activities, achievements and future plans as a school community.

Our School Community's highlights for 2023 were focused on some key areas. In **Education in Faith** we celebrated all the three Sacraments this year, including Reconciliation with the Year 2 students, Confirmation with the Year 6 students and First Eucharist with the Year 4 students. Our parents and families were invited to participate in the Sacramental workshops run by the Presentation Sisters. During these workshop sessions families worked together to support the Sacramental candidates as they continued their faith journey and to better understand the commitment they were making by receiving the Sacraments. Our hopes and dreams for the students is that this journey of faith which they are travelling will help to sustain them when they come to the crossroads of life. As the children experience different circumstances throughout their lives we hope they will always feel connected to their faith, their faith community and come to know and love a merciful and loving God who will guide them throughout their lives.

We have continued to develop connections with the Parish and are grateful for the support and guidance provided to our school community by Fr Dong, our Parish Priest. His welcoming of the children to the daily Masses has enabled the children to experience the celebration of Mass within a faith community. We are very appreciative of Fr Dong's openness and accommodation of our school's needs. The children feel very welcomed and enjoy the experience of celebrating Mass on many occasions, including the beginning and end of year, Graduation, weekly Mass, various Feast Days as well as those Masses celebrated to mark significant Sacraments. As a result of these opportunities, the students feel confident when going to Church and have a reverent demeanor during Mass.

In the **Learning and Teaching** space we have much to celebrate. This year's NAPLAN results for Year 3 and Year 5, show that the majority of our students are achieving above the State and National benchmarks, with some of our students excelling in English and Mathematics. Given that this particular cohort of students is the product of the COVID years, we are very pleased with the results. This year we introduced the Literacy Enhancement Program which replaced the Reading Recovery Program. This new initiative allows for more students to be identified and supported with their English skills acquisition. The program targets students in the early years of learning, namely Year 1 and 2, and ensures that students who may be at risk are identified early to enable the right skills to be taught. This targeted approach enables students to improve and experience academic success in Literacy.

As a Leadership team, we have focused our energy on better understanding the new directions in curriculum that MACS is undertaking. With a renewed focus on improvement, our school leadership has been exploring the Science of Learning with a view to implementing the Science of Reading in 2024. The Science of Learning explores how the brain works and how children learn. The body of research that underpins this initiative delves into a deeper understanding of how children acquire and retain knowledge. This insight into the cognitive intricacies of learning enables teachers to guide learning using diverse strategies meeting students' individual needs. This approach fosters profound curriculum retention that extends beyond exams, shaping enduring knowledge. This year, we also introduced a new specialist area with STEM complementing the other specialist areas. The students have embraced this new way of interacting with their learning and have been given many rich learning opportunities.

Many of our students have experienced a variety of extra-curricular achievements, some in Mathematics through various competitions, others in P.E. activities such as athletics or sport. The most obvious extra curricula opportunity this year has been the Whole School Performance, where all students had the opportunity to build on their creativity and grow their confidence. As usual, the students were offered a comprehensive curriculum with many opportunities for incursions/excursions to experience hands on learning.

In **Leadership** this year we welcomed a new Deputy Principal, Mrs Dianne Viola, who came to St Damian's from one of the Doncaster schools. Dianne has made a seamless transition and has complemented our Leadership Team with her skills, experience and knowledge. A very welcome addition to our school. Professional Learning for leaders has been around building Psychological Safety within the staff as well as understanding the Science of Learning (especially SOR). These two areas have been the biggest priority. The Principal attended a conference in Hobart in Term 2. The main theme of this conference was around understanding the brain and gaining new insights through cognitive and brain science. The leaders all continued their professional learning through attendance at their various regional network meetings. Staff's professional learning was in the main managed in house with some staff also accessing online Professional Learning where appropriate to their particular needs. We continued the professional learning with MACS on the Teacher as Co-Learner model to teach Italian. This program is now fully underway with students really embracing and using the language.

The final phase of the building program is currently underway with five classrooms being refurbished, a new toilet facility built and two new offices for Leaders and the School Counsellor. The timeline for completion is the end of January. Once all the work is complete it will complement the previous works and results in a new Arts centre, a new canteen, new

multi-purpose area (also used for OHSC) a new kitchen facility, new cleaners room, a new library area and as well as another two new classrooms. We are very pleased that we have been able to provide our school community with these new transformational spaces.

One of the most critical areas in schools is **Student Wellbeing/Pastoral Care**. As well as the current Student Wellbeing Leader a new Learning Diversity Leader was appointed. The main role of the LDL is to support families and students with additional needs. Tim Holland, replaced Julia Strentz who replaced Renee Waters. Tim is a very experienced and knowledgeable Learning Diversity Leader and in a few short weeks put many things in place to support the LSO's as well as the students who require the extra support under NCCD. To further support our student body, a school Counsellor was appointed to work two days per week. This contract will end at the end of November and we are in the process of organizing a new contract for next year. Unfortunately, at this stage the Counsellor service will be available for one day next year as the Grant is limited. I have put in for another grant, however, we have not heard if the school has been successful as yet. The Respectful Relationships initiative continues in the school with the Student Wellbeing Leader driving this work with the teachers. Students undertake units of work focused on developing positive and respectful relationships with one another. Child Safety continues to be an area of priority with all staff cognizant of their responsibilities in keeping children safe at all times. Finally, the Prep Orientations concluded in mid-November thereby allowing for a smooth and positive transition into Primary School for all the incoming Preps.

We value **Community engagement** and encourage a variety of ways for parent involvement. The five parents who are part of the School Advisory Council have worked on ways to improve communication with the community as well as ways to further engage with our families. The tireless work done by the P.A. Committee has ensured that the new STEM program was adequately resourced. Much of the funds raised over the past twelve months have been expended on the purchase of digital devices to ensure that this curriculum area could be taught well. The students have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities provided as a result of the P.A. Committee's efforts. We are looking for future funds to support the resourcing for the Science of Reading program. Our Volunteer program supported many classes with parents volunteering to attend Camp experiences, excursions, classroom helper programs, supporting the various school events held during the year as well as sporting events and activities. Without the generous support of our community, many of the things we currently do would not be possible. We are most grateful to our families for their support and generosity.

Speaking of generosity, our wonderful students, with the support of their teachers and peers have held two major fundraising events this year. The Year 4 students held a mini market and raised a substantial amount of money to aid the victims of the earthquake earlier this year. The Year 3 students organized a fund raiser to aid cancer research. They made loom bands and sold these to the students in the school. Again a reasonable amount was raised. We congratulate the students on their initiative and also their care and concern for others. Over the year the school community has supported St Vincent de Paul society through the winter appeal and Christmas giving tree; Caritas through the term one bring a gold coin casual dress day and Project Compassion. These very worthy charities work tirelessly to help those in need in our community. We are very proud of the efforts of this community who strive to be the Hands, Heart and Voice of Christ in so many ways.

In looking ahead to **Future Directions**, our school community is committed to expanding academic programs to meet the evolving needs of our students. In 2024, we will be modifying the delivery of the reading program to align it with the research around the Science of Learning. This research is drawn from cognitive psychology, neuroscience and education to understand the processes through which we learn. This understanding helps teachers implement practical teaching strategies that will improve student outcomes.

Further, through a better and shared understanding of how to improve communication and parent engagement, we aim to strengthen partnerships to create stronger ties. To support us in achieving this we are moving into a new administration package called Compass. This new package will streamline the facilities of the different APPS we are currently using, thereby streamlining the whole administration process for families.

We aim to continue to provide our students with quality facilities and resources to enable them to learn in an environment that meets their needs. With this in mind we will strive to continue to upgrade facilities through appropriate grant applications and renew resources to support the students' learning.

In ending, I look forward to the continued collaboration between the School Community and the School Advisory Council to achieve our goals and provide the best possible education for our students. I am most grateful for the support of our School Community. We value your support and engagement in our school's progress. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of the members of the SAC, for their advice and contribution made to the school. We look forward to meeting again in 2024 and continuing to work in partnership. My heartfelt thanks are extended to the staff, parents and students for all that has been achieved this year. A special thank you to the P.A Committee for all their hard work and the support given to ensure we can provide appropriate resources to support student learning. I wish all of our parent community a very joyous Christmas Season. May the blessings of this special time of the year be with you all.

Rosanna Piccolo  
Principal