From the Principal

A Good Start

It has been very pleasing to see the way students have resumed school life over the last fortnight. In this brief time, students have adapted to new faces, new teachers and a new year level of study. In addition, they have taken part in a whole school assembly where Student Leaders were presented along with new staff joining the Ave Maria College community.

A highlight has been our Opening Year mass led so well by Fr Tony Kerin. Fr Tony’s homily was both engaging and thought provoking. In it Fr Tony made reference to Pope Francis and his message of God’s love for all. I include here two recent twitter comments from the Pope:

**Dear young people, Jesus gives us life, life in abundance. If we are close to him we will have joy in our hearts and a smile on our face.**

**The world makes us look towards ourselves, our possessions, our desires. The Gospel invites us to be open to others, to share with the poor.**

As we begin afresh this year, Pope Francis reminds us what a relationship with Christ looks like (and how St Francis himself lived) – a life lived with joy, being open to others and especially a concern for those in need. It is interesting that Pope Francis and St Francis speak of simplicity of life being the pathway to abundance of life.

Our learning agenda is in full swing with three major whole school initiatives occurring at present. These take place of course alongside the most important learning which is taking place within and beyond classrooms daily.

**Information Communication Technology**

The roll out of student devices has taken place smoothly over recent weeks and I thank the IT department, teachers and parents for ensuring that students use their lap tops efficiently and effectively as a learning aid. In addition, the holiday period saw the installation of many LED screens throughout the school. This has been followed with professional learning for staff. Our facilities throughout the College are highly commendable and I am sure they will benefit our students’ learning.

**External Review and Strategic Planning**

This year the College is undergoing an External Review and Forward Planning project. The SIF (School Improvement Framework) combines a structured approach to external objective assessment and accountability along with a structured approach to internal school improvement planning. More details will follow with regard to staff, student and parent consultation in this process which will take place between March and August.

**Learning and Teaching Review**

During the course of 2013, the College embarked on a review of the Curriculum and Timetable. Stage 2 of this review has seen consideration given to the structure of the day and the best possible learning program for students. Mr Phillip Tascone is leading this process and he writes of this review within this newsletter. This review will result in a number of discerned changes for the purpose of continuously improving our teaching and learning program, and ultimately increased student success.

Elizabeth Hanney
Principal

**Prayer**

Loving God, we thank you for the guidance of St Peter amidst his human frailties. May we continue to follow and be inspired by the life and teachings of Pope Francis so that we might live the Gospel daily.
Deputy Principal

The Learning and Teaching Program Review 2014 is an exciting opportunity for enhancing learning and teaching. It was timely to conduct a full review of the curriculum model which has been in place since 2004. At the core of the review is the question: what could facilitate the best learning outcomes for all students? The Learning and Teaching Program Review 2014 aims to:

- facilitate learning and teaching within a framework that enhances student engagement
- design a curriculum model which reflects the direction and intent of the Australian Curriculum, provides a balanced program and reflects current research about adolescent learning – for implementation in 2015

The College Executive wish to confirm the completion of Stages 1 and 2 of the Learning and Teaching Program Review (LTPR). Stage 1: Planning and Communication was completed in November of 2013. Stage 2: Structure of the Day and the Cycle contained the follow determinations:

- the length of a period
- the number of periods per day
- number of periods per cycle

In considering a range of models, the following priorities were determined:

- frequency of contact
- maximising the of learning and teaching time in a day
- maximising the use of current teaching resources
- minimising movement and changeovers
- Addressing the needs of practical based studies in shorter lessons
- maintaining the early dismissal on Day 8 for staff professional learning

Student engagement has been identified in our School Improvement Data as an area for growth and as research shows, has the greatest impact on student learning. Increased frequency of contact and increased opportunity to maintain student focus and engagement were identified as positive outcomes for lessons shorter than the current 79 minutes. These two areas were considered as having the greatest weight in improving student learning. With shorter lessons come a range of practical challenges that need to be met. The College is confident in our capacity to meet these.

Stage 2 decisions: from the start of 2015

- The length of a timetabled lesson will be 64 minutes with Homeroom at 16 minutes
- There will be five timetabled lessons per day, with the exception of one day in the fortnight where there will be four timetabled lessons. The fifth lesson on this day will be used for fortnightly staff professional learning. Homeroom will be timetabled each day
- There will be 49 x 64 minute timetabled lessons per fortnight and 10 x 16 minute timetabled Homeroom periods per cycle.

We are currently finalising the placement and timings for lessons and breaks and will make this announcement in our next Newsletter.

Stages 3 and 4 of the review have now commenced. These stages include a review of the core and elective study offerings and the number of periods allocated to each. These stages will have a significant impact on learning outcomes for our students and are a major component of the review project. Extensive consultation will take place with all members of the College community and we encourage all parents and students to look out for forthcoming invitations to provide feedback around our key questions.

If you would like to know more please feel free to email me at phillip.tascone@avemaria.vic.edu.au

Phillip Tascone
Deputy Principal

Year 8 Parent Information Night
The Year 8 Parent Information Night will be held on Tuesday, 25 February at 7.00pm in the College Hall. Your daughters have received letters to take home regarding this evening. Please ensure that your daughter has returned this letter, so that attendance numbers can be finalised. Victoria Police will be doing a presentation on cyber safety and cyber laws. There will also be presentations on study skills and healthy living. I encourage all parents to attend this important evening.

Carolyn Mills
Year Level Team Leader Year 8
Head of School
Years 7 - 9

The goal is not to sail the boat, but rather to help the boat sail herself ~ John Roysmaniere

One of the great challenges for parents of teenagers is finding the balance between giving enough space and freedom for your child to develop independence whilst still wanting to protect them. Sometimes this is a challenge faced by teachers too – finding the balance between teaching students concepts they are comfortable with, and extending them with more challenging tasks. This probably leads us to ask about the definition of success: is it completing something just to be able to say that it was done, or is it making progress by doing something a little better than the previous time, even if the outcome was not ‘perfect’? The staff were reminded of this challenge at the last General Staff Meeting when the Mathematics Domain, who presented the reflection at the start of the meeting, shared the YouTube clip - Even eagles need a push. It is a poignant and beautiful clip that reminds us that sometimes the best thing a parent (or teacher) can do is give a little push. I encourage you to take a few minutes to look at the clip. Whilst the eagle story in the clip is about the relationship between parent and child, it could represent the struggle faced by a student or any individual – the struggle between staying comfortable in the familiar or ‘known’, versus pushing oneself to stretch out and try new things. I am pleased to say that I have witnessed so many students already giving themselves a little ‘push’ to make the most of the opportunities the College provides, and to challenge themselves academically and socially. I congratulate those students on a great start to the year, and encourage those students who are playing it safe in their comfort zone to consider giving themselves a little push.

Along the lines of goal setting and pushing oneself, all students in Years 7-10 this week completed their ‘my learning goals’ student comment report. This is where each student identifies actions and aims that they hope to display and achieve over the coming semester. Parents/guardians will get the official copy of this, along with the student’s reflective comments, at the end of the semester; in the meantime, each student has also recorded these goals in their student planner (on pg. 156). I encourage parents/guardians to discuss these with their daughter.

Cyber Safety

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to read the following article on cyber safety that appeared in the Herald Sun on 9 February - children may know more than you about cyberspace but they’re not safe. It is a timely reminder that the cyber world is part of our culture, and that the best way to manage and address issues is by being prepared and keeping the lines of communication open. With that, I also direct you to some useful websites that may assist you in learning more about the cyber world, social media and privacy on the internet: Australian Federal Police - cyber-safety-top-10-tips-for-youth Australian Government site - Cyber smart Telstra - internet tips-for-all-ages

Road Safety

Parents/Guardians are asked to remind their daughters about observing good road safety practices. It has been reported to the College that some students are crossing these roads, particularly Buckley Street, by trying to run between cars. Students should only cross Vida Street at the marked crossing in front of the College, and, when crossing Buckley Street, should do so at the traffic lights / pedestrian crossings at either Cooper Street or McCracken Street.

Uniform Regulations

Parents/Guardians and Students are advised to familiarise themselves with the College Uniform Regulations as outlined in the Student Planner (pg. 28-31). Some students are presenting to school with dress shorter than the required ‘knee length’. We ask that any short dresses have their hem lowered by Monday, 24 February. Likewise, students have been coming to school with nail polish, multiple ear piercings, excessive make-up and the wrong coloured hair accessories. As indicated in the Uniform Regulations, any student that does not adhere to these regulations will, in the first instance, receive a demerit. Ongoing or serious breaches may result in more serious consequences. We appreciate parent / guardian support of these expectations.

Joanna Hammer
Head of School Years 7 - 9

Canteen News

Due to an administrative error some of the people who volunteered for Canteen this year may not have been contacted. If you would like to join the canteen roster in 2014 could you please call Mary Calthorpe on 9331 9314 with your preferred day. Canteen Volunteers are required between 10.00am to 2.00pm. All rosters will be sent home via your daughter.

Mary Calthorpe
Canteen Manager
Faith and Religious Education

Our College theme has inspired much conversation from our staff. When we say that something is important to us, it can be helpful to have a discipline, routine or ritual to help keep that in the forefront of our minds. As we continue to do our best to live out our College theme, perhaps we could reflect upon these questions:

Where have I seen goodness recently? How have I recently shown that goodness matters?
What beauty has touched me lately? How do I show that beauty matters?
How do I show that matter matters?

“Walk as a living Gospel” (Helene de Chappotin)
There are many facets to this rich Franciscan saying. Our society can see words as static. Uttered in one moment, recorded, used as evidence of praise or blame - this is not the intent of Helene's saying. Rather, she means that we should embody the good news of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection as we walk through our lives. The bar is set high but such a faith is real - this is the path of integrity. If we each walk as a living Gospel, open to God’s promptings amidst our failings, there is a good news, for each of us, from another.

Young people want ideals that are authentic, that live up to some scrutiny. If we provide examples of integrity amidst our failings, we are authentic to ourselves and live up to the scrutiny of many young people. The media, which young people can consume so voraciously, can highlight the negative in the world. What better antidote for our young people than to be able to walk and live and speak good news to each of them?

Patrick Jurd
Director of Faith and Religious Education

Student Wellbeing

Dress for Success in 2014 continued....

3 The way students perceive failure is what marks the difference, failure is a dreaded construct and the trick lies in approaching it with the right attitude. Those that see mistakes, errors, poor performance or difficulties as opportunities for growth, as a way of improving or as training for the better outcome become resilient students that actually learn from past mistakes and use every opportunity to keep them in track of their goal. The way you think about a problem and the attitude you develop in that encounter is what makes the difference.

The fear of failure may also be related to self-worth if a student measures her value based solely on their academic results,. Then every essay, test or, project will be not only testing their academic performance but also testing their self-worth. At the same time their emotional sensitivity will be heightened towards any kind of assessments. Therefore their hard work or lack of hard work, their effective study or ineffective study will need to focus not in them as a person but as an external strategy that may be maneuvered at will.

Nothing is set in stone: unmotivated students can become motivated at any point in time, so why not forge a great start to the year by BELIEVING IN YOURSELF, BEING EMPOWERED and MAKING the MOST of every opportunity. Make 2014 count!

Faye Evans
Student Counsellor

Important Dates Term 1 2014

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<td>Year 8 Parent Information Night (7.00pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 February 2014</td>
<td>Year 12 Creative Arts and Wellbeing Program</td>
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<td>3 March 2014</td>
<td>Year 12 Creative Arts and Wellbeing Program</td>
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<td>5 March 2014</td>
<td>Year Level and House Assemblies</td>
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<td>6 March 2014</td>
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<td>7 March 2014</td>
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Bernina active 125S
Bernina active 125S sewing machines for sale.

Ave Maria College is selling a small number of Bernina sewing machines at $300 each. They are approximately 8 years old, in very good condition and have been serviced regularly (twice a year). They come complete with the different feet and accessories. Please contact Cheryl Kerin (Domain Team Leader Arts) for any other information.