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NEWSLETTER – TERM 1 – WEEK 1

Plant the Seed

Nurture the Growth

Celebrate the Harvest

Motto: 'Reaching New Heights'

MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING PRINCIPAL

22nd January 2016

Dear Parents and Carers of St John's School Community,

Welcome back everyone to the start of a new year at St John's primary school. I am very excited and looking forward to the position of Acting Principal in Term 1. I hope you have all enjoyed a joyful Christmas season with your family and wish you all a very Happy New Year! I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to any new staff and families joining us this year. I look forward to meeting everyone personally throughout the beginning week of school.

I have been very fortunate to be an educator in the Cairns Catholic Education Diocese for over 30 years. During this time, I have taught at a number of Catholic schools in the role of teacher, Assistant Principal, Acting APRE, Curriculum Support teacher and most recently Transition Leader. My husband Paul and I live in Cairns and are both locals. We have four wonderful children who are all grown up and live in Brisbane and Melbourne. We also have three beautiful grandchildren. I was born in Babinda and was raised on a sugar cane farm in Mirriwinni. The opportunity to work in a rural school has brought back some very fond memories of my own childhood upbringing. I am Greek Orthodox and my faith is central to my vocation as a teacher. I actively promote the Catholic values and beliefs and participate in Catholic liturgical celebrations and masses.

A good quality Catholic education is centred on the teachings of Jesus Christ and spreading the good news. It focuses on the development of the whole human person: spiritually, socially, physically, academically and emotionally preparing them for the challenges of the 21st century, allowing each child to reach their full potential. The school motto 'Always Reaching For New Heights' reminds us all to think about ways that we can improve. The beginning of the year is a good chance for you to have a conversation with your children, on what they would like to achieve and ways that they can achieve personal success at school. I encourage you to discuss with your child what they hope to achieve and keep these goals somewhere where they are visible and can be regularly referred to. Setting goals is a life habit that will assist success in the future.

Research clearly shows that when families and schools works together as a community in a collaborative and positive manner, a child's capacity to achieve their learning potential is significantly enhanced. Maintaining positive relationships and working together as a team to ensure our students are learning in a happy and safe environment is vital. Parents are a child's first and most important educator. Schools build on the foundations already set by parents in the development of the child. Communication between parents and teachers that is honest and open is essential. I encourage parents to actively participate in the life of the school by attending assemblies, P and F meetings, liturgies and masses and any school celebrations. Engagement in the school life of your child allows parents an opportunity to keep in touch and to be part of a student's learning.

Our dedicated staff has been involved in professional development this week. This year our focus is on Visible Learning and the implementation of the new Religion Curriculum. I know the teachers have already spent many hours preparing for their students to have a great start to the year and are looking forward to working with your child this year.



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The beginning of a new school year is filled with lots of excitement and also for some a little bit of nervousness. A huge welcome to our new Preps! I am sure it won't take long for them to settle into the routines with lots of support and care from the other students in the school. For our Yr6 students, this is also a very important final year at primary school. I look forward to working with our students on leadership skills that will assist them to develop confidence in themselves and also ways to serve others in the school community. I certainly look forward to meeting and getting to know all students across all year levels.

I am committed to support St John's primary school to continue to provide our students with the great work and traditions that has given it a wonderful reputation in the Cairns Diocese.

We pray that 2016 will be a wonderful 'learning journey' for all of our students, staff and parent in the community and that we can celebrate our successes along the way by forming strong and lasting relationships in God's presence.

**God, our Father,
We ask that Your Spirit be a constant
influence in the lives of all who make up
our school community this year.
Help our students to be discerning, so
that the outcomes of their choices will be
in accord with Christian values. Amen.**

Peace and Best Wishes,
Jo Martorella
Acting Principal
"Let there be peace. Let it begin with me." Luke 1: 68-69