



# Parent Newsletter

Term 3

## From the incoming President...



Dear Parents,

I am sure that I know many of the parents in our schools but for those **who don't know me**, my name is Cheryl Murphy. I am the newly elected President of the Federation of P&F Associations in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

I have three children, and two grandchildren, with my youngest son attending Year 11 at St Mary's Catholic College, Gateshead.

Over the past 20 odd years I have been involved in the Committee/Executives of the P&F Associations of the schools my children have attended, holding a variety of positions.

As a Councillor on the Federation of P&F Association in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle I have previously held the positions of Chair of the Special Needs Working Party (SNWP), Treasurer and currently President. I will continue to be the Chair for the Special Needs Working Party in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

One of the pleasures of my role as Chair of the SNWP in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is the Annual Special Needs Mass. The Special Needs Mass, celebrated by Bishop William Wright, provides an opportunity for the community to gather together. It reinforces the

spiritual support provided to our families, affirms the welcome that exists for all and celebrates the gifts all our children bring to our communities. Mass this year will be celebrated on 11 September, 2018; at the Catholic Church of the Holy Spirit in Kurri Kurri, 7pm. This will be the 21<sup>st</sup> annual celebration of the Special Needs Mass. All are welcome!

I am also a Member of the Council of Catholic School Parents (CCSP) Management Committee & Chair of Special Needs Working Party for NSW.

Being a parent, in this challenging world, is a mammoth job. I am highly committed to helping parents access information and support and to provide opportunities for them to learn new skills to empower them to be the best parents they can be.

The Federation of P&F Associations for the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will, over the coming months, be providing opportunities for parents to be a part of various workshops and information sessions. If there are topics you would like to have addressed, please feel free to email us and we will endeavour to source sessions that are relevant to our parents.

I look forward to meeting the parents of our Diocese as I attend the various events that the Federation holds throughout the region.

Cheryl Murphy



# Parent Newsletter

## From the outgoing **President...**



Dear Parents,

I hope by the time you sit down to read this newsletter, you and your children have settled into the new school term. If you are a new family, welcome! I encourage you to **get involved at your child's school**. Take the step and go along to the P&F. It is a

wonderful thing to meet other parents, and get to know your school Principal and executive staff.

Over the years I have enjoyed being part of many discussions that have led to positive changes in the school community! Each schools P&F then have the opportunity to endorse delegates to attend The Federation of P&F Associations, the body that advocates on behalf of parents in our schools. At our general meeting, you will often hear directly from our Catholic Schools Director, Dr Michael Slattery and/or other CSO representatives, as well as other guest speakers. Over the year we will have some exciting and informative initiatives so I encourage you to consider putting your hand up to be a delegate but also to join us for our general meetings or special initiatives. You will find a very welcoming and supportive community of parents!

My five years as President ended at the AGM in May. It has been a pleasure to serve in this role **over the last five years. In this time we've seen our events reach more parents than ever before and we've been called on to be the representative voice of parents in our Catholic schools on important committees, interview panels and in the important reviews that take**

place from time to time. We enjoy a very collegial relationship with Bishop Bill, the Catholic Schools Office, the Director and Assistant Directors of the CSO and I have particularly enjoyed these opportunities and representing you all at the table! We are very proud of our collaboration with Bishop Bill to **establish The Bishop's Award for young people**, a major achievement.

It has been a joy to meet young people and their families involved in school and parish life. **Our future is in very good hands!** I'd like to thank Bishop Bill, Dr Michael Slattery (and our previous Director Mr Ray Collins) and the CSO Executive for their support and confidence over the last five years. It has been a pleasure to work with you and the parents and staff of our schools. Finally, I would like to thank Mrs Cath Garrett-Jones (Parent Liaison and Resource Officer) for her guidance and support over the last five years.

I plan to still be involved with the Federation Council and I look forward to meeting you all in the coming months!

Best wishes for a wonderful year!  
Kind regards

Giavanna Angeli



# Parent Newsletter



## 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Special Needs Mass

Bishop Bill Wright, the community of Holy Spirit Primary School Kurri Kurri, together with the Federation of P&F Associations and The Special Needs Working Party, warmly welcome all to join with principals, teachers, schools staff, families and parishioners for this special celebration.

**Tuesday 11 September at 7pm**  
**Holy Spirit Catholic Church / 100 Barton St, Kurri Kurri**

---

### **No RSVP required**

For more information please contact Cath Garrett-Jones 02 4979 1303  
[cath.garrett-jones@mn.catholic.edu.au](mailto:cath.garrett-jones@mn.catholic.edu.au)







# Parent Newsletter

**ASPIRE**  
MUSIC.DANCE.DRAMA  
PRESENTS

# DARK MATTER

CIVIC THEATRE, NEWCASTLE  
1 - 4 AUGUST 2018

Our lives. Other people's.  
We only see about 5% of  
what's going on. The rest is  
just...dark matter.

Ellie sees school like dark matter - she doesn't know what's going on most of the time. Particularly now she and Joe have broken up and everyone thinks he dumped her!

But Ellie doesn't really care. There are bigger things happening anyway: the International Space Station is passing over tonight and that's something she wants to see.

ASPIRE's latest production, *Dark Matter*, explores what's really going on under the surface for the staff and students of St Albert's Secondary College as they enter a lockdown and nobody seems to really know why.

BOOK AT THE CIVIC THEATRE BOX OFFICE  
Newcastle theatre call 4825 1977  
S11 Mailing: S11 Newcastle University | S12 Adult  
S13 Online Booking up to 10 weeks | S14 Family  
Ticket prices include GST. Booking and transaction fees may apply.

**TICKETEK**

**ASPIRE** | Catholic Schools Office  
MUSIC.DANCE.DRAMA



# Parent Newsletter

## Useful links and websites







# Parent Newsletter

- **New APP to help parents engage in their child's education** - The free '**Learning Potential**' app is now available to download today on iPhone or android devices.  
<http://www.ccspp.catholic.edu.au/hot-topics/new-app-to-get-busy-parents-active-in-their-child-s-education>
- **Connecting Learning at School and Home** - A series of short, snappy videos explaining primary math concepts in simple terms for parents, teachers and students to share. Now parents can have a 'peek' into the classroom.  
<http://www.partners4learning.edu.au/connecting-learning/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=30>
- **My Big Tomorrow**  
My Big Tomorrow is a resource designed to help young Australians realise bigger life choices. Here you can discover your dream career, experience a day in the life of someone doing that job and find out how they got there.  
<http://www.mybigtomorrow.com.au/>
- **Catholic Schools Office – Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle**  
<http://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/>
- **Partners4Learning** – fabulous website for parents with children of all ages  
<http://www.partners4learning.edu.au/>
- **Better Together** - to assist Catholic school communities with their existing school advisory bodies and help those wishing to establish such a collaborative body.  
<http://www.btadvisorybodies.catholic.edu.au/>
- **School A to Z**  
<http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/>
- **Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority website**  
<http://www.acara.edu.au/>
- **Council of Catholic School Parents (CCSP)**  
<http://www.ccspp.catholic.edu.au/>
- **Skoolbag** – to download Federation of P & F Associations Skoolbag app, go to:  
<http://www.skoolbag.com.au/forparents.php>
- **GERRIC** - runs courses for parents of gifted and talented children. They have also published a range of helpful books and other resources. They run a range of school holiday enrichment programs for gifted and talented students from Year 3 to Year 10. It can make an enormous difference to gifted children who may feel socially isolated at school because their interests and abilities differ very much those of their classmates. It also gives parents a chance to network with others in the same position  
<https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/about-us/gerric/for-parents/>
- **The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner** – the site has useful information about internet and social media safety as well access to lodge complaints about cyberbullying: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>
- **Kids Matter** – resources to support mental health and wellbeing in early childhood and primary settings  
<https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>
- **Mind Matters** - a mental health initiative for secondary schools that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people.  
<https://www.mindmatters.edu.au/>



# Parent Newsletter

## *Did you know* CatholicCare now offers Autism Assessments?

Completed by trained psychologists, we offer assessments for children, young people and adults.

Medicare rebates are available for children under 13, if referred by a paediatrician or child psychiatrist. Other cognitive and developmental assessments are also available.

To find out more, visit  
[www.catholiccare.org.au](http://www.catholiccare.org.au)  
or phone 02 4979 1120



## *Can you help make a difference?*

Emergency, respite, short and long term foster carers are urgently required for children of all ages.

Foster carers support children and young people, helping them to meet their full potential by providing them with stability, support and nurturing.

Being a foster carer is both challenging and rewarding, but our carers don't do it alone.

CatholicCare partners with our carers, providing them with ongoing support and development opportunities, as well as an allowance to assist them in meeting the needs of children in their care.

Where restoration of children with their birth parents is not possible we are assisting carers to adopt or become legal guardians.



To find out more, visit  
[www.catholiccare.org.au](http://www.catholiccare.org.au)  
or phone 1300 590 898



**Social Services  
Hunter-Manning**  
DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE



[www.catholiccare.org.au](http://www.catholiccare.org.au)





# Parent Newsletter



## St Nicholas Early Education

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND - NEWCASTLE

.....Is building connections.....

You may have noticed over the past few years St Nicholas Early Education has become a significant part of our diocesan story. St Nick's, as it's affectionately known by parents, children, educators and anyone who has seen the commercials on TV, now has Centres operating in Singleton, Newcastle West, Chisholm, Cardiff and Lochinvar. Around 120 staff are now employed by the diocese in the five St Nick's Centres and as part of its Head Office team.

Through St Nicholas Early Education the diocese is honouring its commitment to supporting family life as the foundation of society and the Church. Each Centre is staffed by professional educators and best practice guidelines in early education are employed to facilitate each child's optimal, social, intellectual and physical development in partnership with parents and carers. Everyone is welcome at St Nick's.



Lochinvar

A number of St Nicholas Early Education Centres are located on the same site or close to local Catholic primary schools. Two of the Centres, Chisholm and Lochinvar, commenced operation earlier this year and have already built collaborative relationships with their respective primary schools, St Aloysius and St Patrick's. Recently, children in the Mini-Vinnies Team at St Aloysius spent time with the children at St Nick's reading stories together. St Nick's Singleton has a long-established relationship with St Catherine's Catholic College and the older children at St Nick's enjoy a fabulous orientation program that allows them to transition seamlessly to 'big' school when the time comes. The benefit of having a single drop off point for children is one that families love and planning for more St Nicholas Early Education Centres is certainly taking this into consideration. There are already plans for St Nick's Centres in Maitland, Branxton, Raymond Terrace and Gillieston Heights.



### Why do people love St Nick's?

- St Nicholas provides quality, affordable care and education for pre-school aged children in a nurturing environment.
- The facilities at the purpose-built St Nicholas Early Education Centres are exceptional, with a focus on natural light and elements to stimulate your child's imagination, amazing playgrounds including a pirate ship (Cardiff) and mud-pits (Chisholm and Lochinvar) and an active respect for local Indigenous culture and the environment.
- St Nick's employs a higher ratio of early childhood teachers and educator to child ratio than is required. All educators at St Nick's benefit from a week-long orientation process prior to the service opening which promotes a fantastic team culture. The continuing professional development of staff is also prioritised and this has immediate benefits for the children in care.
- St Nick's is dedicated to providing children with as many child-led, play-based learning opportunities as possible. The incredible facilities certainly enhance these opportunities.



Chisholm

If you have a pre-school aged child or know someone who does, please visit the St Nicholas Early Education website – [www.stnicholasmn.org.au](http://www.stnicholasmn.org.au) or call your local St Nick's to find out more.  
General enquiries can be directed to 4979 1110.





# Parent Newsletter

## St Nicholas Early Education

# TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PROGRAM



We can tell the children who have participated in the transition to school program at St Nicholas as they settled into the school environment sooner and with great ease.

**Teacher - St Catherine's**

My son Sam benefitted from his visits from St Nick's as he was already familiar with the school and knew where the toilets were and how to use the canteen. This gave me extra confidence as a parent.

**Leanne - St Nicholas Parent**

I can't wait to go to big school with my friends and buy a Kool Cup from the canteen!

**Neave - St Nicholas Child**

### Helping your children become capable and confident entering the school system

Starting school can be an exciting, though often anxious experience for young children and their families. When children move from a familiar child care environment, with established relationships and routines, a larger more structured school setting can be overwhelming even for the very confident children. Child care services play an important role in preparing children and families for school and easing their transition from child care to the school setting.

St Nicholas Early Education values the benefits of school transition programs that prepare our pre-schoolers for school. Many of our centres are based on campus or very close to our Catholic primary school. This enables our pre-schoolers to undertake a program of scheduled excursions to the school.

These excursions include:

- ▶ Visiting the library and participating in a literacy activity
- ▶ Spending time in the Kindergarten classrooms
- ▶ Observing school assemblies and participating in extra curricular activities such as Book Week, obstacle-a-thon and Christmas Carols
- ▶ Purchasing a food item from the school canteen
- ▶ Eating their lunch with the infants students
- ▶ Engaging in outdoor play facilities.

### Benefits of Our Program

Through our transition to school program the children will:

- ▶ Gain confidence and create a stronger sense of belonging in a school setting
- ▶ Gain knowledge and experience school routines
- ▶ Become familiar with teachers and school surroundings
- ▶ Participate in school events
- ▶ Have a better understanding of 'big school' which can help lessen anxiety levels.



**If you have any questions or would like further information about the transition to school program enquire today:**

@ [enquiries@stnicholasmn.org.au](mailto:enquiries@stnicholasmn.org.au)

☎ 49 791 110



# Parent Newsletter

## NAPLAN Online

In May of every year, students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 take part in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). NAPLAN was first introduced in 2008 and has become a routine part of the school calendar in Australia.

NAPLAN, which is a part of the National Assessment Program (NAP), is how governments, education authorities and schools can determine whether young Australians are reaching important educational goals.

**NAPLAN is moving online.** This means moving NAPLAN from the current paper-based tests to computer-based assessments. The transition to NAPLAN online commenced this year. In May 2018, 505 schools in NSW trialled the Online NAPLAN tests. It is hoped that most NSW schools will move to Online testing in 2019.

NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) will be completing Readiness Testing of the platform this September. This is to ensure the system is able to cope with the number of students and schools accessing the system at one time. NESA want to be sure that the system is robust enough for the huge task. Our schools will take part in this Readiness Testing. Year 5, 7 and 9 students will do two 40 minute tests, a mixed omnibus test (made up of literacy and numeracy questions) and a writing task. Year 3 students will just complete an omnibus test. NESA is using current year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students because their data is already in the system, so less administration is required by schools. Schools will not receive results from these trial tests.

Moving NAPLAN online brings many new opportunities for students and teachers that are limited by or not possible with paper-based tests.

## The benefits of online assessments

---

Some of the main benefits of students taking part in NAPLAN Online include:

- **Better assessment – and more precise results.** NAPLAN Online uses a tailored test or adaptive design, where the test automatically adapts to a student's performance and asks questions that match the student achievement level, allowing the student to demonstrate their knowledge. This provides teachers and schools with more targeted and detailed information on students' performance on the tests. Tailored testing also provides an opportunity to broaden the scope of the assessments.
- **Faster turnaround of results.** Delivery of assessments online significantly reduces the time it takes to provide feedback to schools, students and parents, so teachers can respond more quickly to learning needs.
- **More engaging.** ACARA research into online assessment has shown that students have engaged well with electronic tests.

As technology develops, ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority) aims to further refine the delivery of the tests to best use the available technology to provide increasingly sophisticated assessments and valuable feedback to teachers, parents and education authorities.





# Parent Newsletter



**Cath Garrett-Jones**  
Parent Liaison and resource Officer  
P 4979 1303 E [cath.garrett-jones@mn.catholic.edu.au](mailto:cath.garrett-jones@mn.catholic.edu.au)

I am the Parent Liaison and Resource Officer for the Catholic Schools Office in the Diocese of Maitland –Newcastle.

I am a wife and mother of two adult girls and one daughter about to commence the HSC. I am an experienced secondary teacher, beginning my teaching career 30 years ago. While working in both the public and Catholic sector, as well as in a research role for a tertiary institute, I discovered my passion for combining my great love of family, education and the journey that comes with raising children.

My work is centred on creating and enhancing positive relationships between families and schools to build safe, inclusive and nurturing environments, respectful of individual difference, gifts and talents.



**Emma Barrett**  
Parent Liaison and Complaints Officer  
P 4979 183 E [federationpandf@mn.catholic.edu.au](mailto:federationpandf@mn.catholic.edu.au)

My name is Emma Barrett and I commenced in this role alongside Cath in April 2018. What I have learnt so far is that this role is incredibly diverse and at times complex, but also very rewarding. I moved into this role after working for the Diocesan Child Protection team and I have a professional background working with women and children experiencing family violence, youth homelessness and working with children in out of home care. I have worked in the community services sector in both Government and Not for Profit organisations for over 14 years.

I am passionate about early intervention, education and building empowerment in our students, parents/families and staff communities to strengthen their knowledge and improve overall wellbeing.

I have a particular interest in online safety and digital citizenship, healthy peer relationships and issues impacting on young people.

I am a mother myself and I too know the challenging yet rewarding journey that parenting our children can be. My hope in this role is to support the school and parent community in strengthening their relationships, providing education and support and working towards a more positive experience for our families in our Diocesan school community.



**Debbie Ryan**  
Administrative Assistant  
Parent Liaison, Resource and Complaints Officers  
P 4979 1216 E E [federationpandf@mn.catholic.edu.au](mailto:federationpandf@mn.catholic.edu.au)

I joined Cath in 2016 and her ability to wear many hats never ceases to amaze me. I bring to my role experience in the private and public sectors in both financial and administrative roles. My primary role in the CSO is to provide administrative support to Cath and Emma, assisting with the Bishop's Award, Federation of P&F,

Special Needs mass and Special Events. I also assist in the Secretariat when required and this has given me a board understanding and appreciation of the many functions of the CSO and Diocese. Some of my bigger projects have been the review and updating of manuals and standard operational procedures for Federation, Canteen and the Bishop's Awards. I have a son doing his HSC this year and fully appreciate the emotional roller-coaster of parenting, but still believe it is the most rewarding, fulfilling and awe inspiring role I have ever had the privilege to hold. My hobbies include our horses, our dog and testing all my son's amazing food experiments (a chef in the making), I speak fluent Japanese and am currently completing an Italian language course and a Cert IV in Business Administration.