**From the Principal**

A warm welcome to a new school year. Together we look forward to an exciting year full of challenging and rewarding experiences. As a Parish school community, one of our goals for 2017 is to continue to strengthen the relationship with all members of our Parish, and to support each other. Thank you to all who contributed to our Parish census, this will help in building our Parish/School Community.

As we begin our new year we ask for God’s blessing over our St Agatha’s community as we embark on a year of providing a high level of quality teaching and learning that is underpinned by Catholic values for our children, our first priority. We welcome our new families and children to the St Agatha’s parish community. We are a parish school fulfilling a special ministry in education on behalf of the Catholic Church. We are sure that you will find our St Agatha’s community to be very supportive, welcoming and enthusiastic.

It has been wonderful seeing the children so excited about the upgrade of our school environment. Over the holidays much of the refurbishment to our classrooms and playground was completed.

Last week the staff worked with Prof. Mike Gaffney (University of Canberra), who will help lead us on our journey of establishing some form of advisory council at our school. He will also be working with our P & F in the same fashion, by conducting a variety of forums over the year. 2017 will see some changes to how we operate here at St Agatha’s.

The P&F (Parents and Friends) Association are a dynamic group who provide a wide range of experiences and functions which support the children’s learning and welfare and I strongly urge you to be very involved in all their activities this year.

You are most welcome to attend our Opening School Mass this Friday 3rd February at 11:40 a.m. and our Welcome BBQ on February 10th at 6 p.m. (special note)

**School Apps**

We use the Skoolbag App as one of our main means of communication and QKR for payments. If you have not downloaded the Apps yet please do so. Click on the links for instructions on how to download the [Skoolbag](#) and [QKR](#) Apps.

**P & F Levy**

A P & F levy is included on the school fees and this is not a compulsory fee, however, we do not have a major fund raiser (fete) every year and this levy provides resources for our school. This year, the money has been used to support the purchasing of new ipads, computers, some of our new playgrounds and equipment for the classroom. This levy is an important way for all to contribute to our school and I count on this as an income source to provide resources for our children. I urge all to contribute.

**Nut Products**

Please make sure that your children do not bring peanut butter or any nut products to school as we have a number of children who are allergic to these products.

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**Important Diary Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Opening School Mass - 11:40am</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Swimming Carnival Yrs3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yr 1 Parent Information Evening - 6:30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yr 2 Parent Information Evening - 6:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yr 5 &amp; 6 Parent Information Evening - 7:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Year 5 &amp; 6 NRL - 9:30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Welcome BBQ - 6pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yr 4 Grade Mass - 9:30am</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yr 4 Parent Information Evening - 6:30pm</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Staffing for 2017
Principal                         Mr Bauer
Acting Assistant Principal       Mrs Bauer
Religious Education Coordinator  Mrs Ford
Music                             Mrs McGreevy-Brand
Sport                             Mrs Vella
Learning Support                 Mrs Anderson / Mrs Maskell
Gifted & Talented                Mrs Ryan
Librarian                        Mrs Mason
Canteen                          Mrs Daniels
Uniform shop                     Mrs Dittmar
Administration Staff             Mrs Fallan / Mrs Breytenbach

Class Teachers
Kindergarten                     KG Mrs Olding    KR Mrs Mrs Cahill / Mrs West
Year 1                           1G Mrs Knipler    1R Mrs Hume
Year 2                           2B Mrs Ryder      2G Mrs McLenaghan     2R Mrs Seymour / Mrs Commissio
Year 3                           3G Mr Spencer     3R Mrs Harrington
Year 4                           4B Mrs Schell     4G Mrs Whibley
Year 5                           5G Miss Speter     5R Mrs Trenwith
Year 6                           6G Mrs Young      6R Mrs Tubb

Staff Development Days for 2017
20th February Mathematics Assessment Day (MAI)
7th April Staff Development Day - Literacy
24th April Staff Spirituality

Once again, thank you for your continued support. I believe that it is in partnership that we can achieve great things for our children.

Kevin Bauer - Principal

From the Assistant Principal

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)
Our school-wide approach to behaviour management is PBL - Positive Behaviours for Learning. Our school Well Being Team consists of teachers, parent representatives and members of our school leadership team. At St Agatha’s our three school rules are:

• We are RESPECTFUL,
• We are RESPONSIBLE
• We are LEARNERS.

During the first three weeks of school the classes will be focusing on these three rules. Activities will vary from class to class where the students will learn ways they can be respectful, responsible learners. Click the link for a copy of our PBL matrix.

“Mini Merits” are our award system for students that demonstrate the school rules. These are accumulated throughout the year as the children strive for their Bronze, Silver and Gold PBL awards. Mini Merits always need to be kept in a safe place because they will not be replaced if lost. This is part of developing the children’s value of being responsible.

MAI Testing - Staff Development Day Monday 20th February
We will again be completing the MAI (Mathematical Assessment Interview) on every child at St Agatha’s to measure student growth in Counting, Place Value, Addition and Subtraction and Multiplication and Division. This assessment is a one to one (student to teacher) assessment taking approx. 30mins.

To assist teachers with this process, children will be booked in for appointments on our Staff Development MAI Testing Day on the Monday 20th February. We aim to get as many children as possible assessed on this day. Teachers will negotiate timeslots for the MAI day and parents are asked to make appointments for the MAI using the online booking system (this will be available from Tuesday, 7th Feb.). We appreciate your assistance with this assessment as the data and knowledge gained helps all teachers cater for individual student needs.
Parent helpers in the classroom

A session for Parents who would like to help in the classroom will be held on Friday the 17th February at 9am. This session is for Kinder parents, new parents or parents who have not attended one of these sessions previously.

It has been great to see all St Agatha's students returning from the break looking neat and tidy in their uniforms. Please ensure that when you are purchasing sports shoes or joggers for your children, they need to be predominately white as per our uniform guidelines. It’s important that students wear their hat when outside and come to school wearing sunscreen particularly with the extremely hot weather we have had. Please ensure all items of clothing are clearly labelled so if they do get misplaced, we will be able to give them to their rightful owners.

Vicki Ford - Acting Assistant Principal

From the REC

Welcome back! I hope you are well rested for an exciting year ahead.

We aptly begin our year with Agatha’s feast day, which is Sunday 5th February. St Agatha’s story speaks of her undying faith, her strength of belief under difficult conditions and her youthful courage. St Agatha was a young girl who chose not to marry but devote her life to God. As a result, she suffered dreadful persecution but remained steadfast in her love for God. She was willing to die rather than renounce her faith. She showed tremendous courage and it is this courage that can inspire us in our lives. From St Agatha, we can learn to place our trust in God and to fearlessly spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

St Agatha is also the patron saint of Malta, breast cancer and the prevention of fires. She could be a saint to turn to in prayer when seeking courage, help to remain committed to our beliefs and resisting pressure to conform to the status quo. St Agatha is a powerful role model so talk to your children about the importance of standing up for what they believe and not to be swayed by peer pressure.

Our first school mass will be held on Friday, 3rd February. Kindergarten children and new children to our school will be welcomed and blessed at the beginning of the mass. The Kindergarten children will not remain at the mass but return to their classes after the blessing. At the end of the mass we will have the blessing of our new school leaders and the presentation of their badges. You are all warmly welcome to attend.

The Parent Information evening for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held on Tuesday, 21st February at 7:30 in the church. Please note that this was originally scheduled for Wednesday so please make changes if the wrong date is already in your calendar.

Vicki Ford - REC

Pastoral Care

Welcome back to the beginning of another school year.

We are all very excited about our new playground facility. Not only does it look beautiful but it is specifically designed to enable students to develop their Social and Emotional Learning skills, (SEL).

The social and emotional skills that are important for children to develop have been identified by researchers as:

- **Self-awareness** - Understanding feelings, self-confidence.
- **Social awareness** - Respecting and understanding others, and appreciating differences between people.
- **Self-management** - Managing emotions, being able to set goals and stick to them.
- **Responsible decision-making** - Choosing wisely and thoughtfully.
- **Relationship skills** - Cooperating, communicating, making friends and resolving conflict.
Social and emotional learning is about learning how to manage feelings, manage friendships and solve problems. These are essential life skills that support wellbeing and positive mental health. Social and emotional skills promote children’s ability to cope with difficulties and help to prevent mental health problems. Children who have developed social and emotional skills find it easier to manage themselves, relate to others, resolve conflict, and feel positive about themselves and the world around them. (Kidsmatter website)

The new play area has been designed to allow children to interact through play which develops SEL skills. The wonderful workmen left a note for the children and painstakingly constructed a tepee! In the coming weeks I will include photos of the children at play.

One of the important components of KidsMatter is having a positive school community and ensuring everyone feels welcome and included. Research has shown that if parents and caregivers are involved at school children adjust and feel happier at school. One of the first opportunities to do this is through our welcome barbeque next Friday evening, 10th February. It is a fun, informal way for parents and staff to meet each other. If you are new to the school, it is a great way to meet other new families.

I have also included a fact sheet on belonging at school. Click here.

Fiona Tubb - Well-being Coordinator

P&F News

The P&F would like to warmly welcome all families to ‘Aggies’ for the 2017 School Year! We hope everyone had a great break.

At Aggies, we strive to achieve a welcoming community, and hope to help develop networks and friendships. Your involvement in the school is valued, both in the classroom and through events and functions throughout the year.

The Parents and Friends Association (P&F) provides an integral role in supporting the endeavours of the school. P&F meetings are held once a term and will be advertised in the newsletter and the skool bag app. These meetings are a great way to be involved in our school.

The first event on the calendar is the Welcome Back BBQ, which will be held next Friday 10th March at 6pm on the grassy area. If you are able to assist with set up, cooking, serving or clean up, please contact the school office or Jocelyn Hordern-Smith – 0412114038 / jhordernsmith@gmail.com

The Annual Disco is an event the kids always enjoy. This year the Disco is on Friday 31st March in the school hall.
5:15pm – 6:30pm Kindy – Year 2
7:00pm – 8:30pm Year 3 – Year 6

Jocelyn Hordern-Smith - P&F President

From the Sports News

Polding Rep Trials
Good luck to Lucy Dalton, Joey Symin, Ashton Bugeja, Abhijit Koshy, Anthony Abdow and Lachlan Woolnough who will all be representing Broken Bay at the Polding Trials for Basketball and Cricket to be held in Newcastle on Friday Week 2.

Please refer to the Swimming Program and Swimming Rules.

Kristen Vella
Welcome to our 2017 Kindergarten families

Taekwondo
After more than 20 years at St Agatha the Wednesday after school Taekwondo is to finish from this term onwards. Brenden Arthur, the instructor, is unable to make it due to change in his working hours. We are very disappointed that this class will not continue. Local classes can be attended by any students who wish to continue with taekwondo. Local instructor, Ben Loh (0401032022) runs classes every Tuesday and Friday at Castle Hill HS from 5.30pm. Alternatively, Ian Thomas (0414389923) runs a Saturday 9.30am class at Dural Squash Courts. Please feel free to call either or both of these instructors if you would like to continue with your taekwondo.

Greg Wyllie

Congratulations
We would like to congratulate Maya and Khloe Manjah on the arrival of their brother, George born on the 27th January 2017 and to Annie Anoop on the arrival of her brother, Zachary born on the 1st February 2017.

Congratulations to both families


Community News
AFL Demons
Art Xpress
Oakhill Art
Northern Beaches ADHD Support Group
Thornleigh Medical Centre
Milo T20Blast
Pennant hills Stags

TROOSH Contact
Greg on 0423 647 607