

Dear Rosary Community

Welcome back to Term 4. I have listened to lots of holiday stories of visits with cousins, visits to the beach and a couple of children and myself even managed a trip interstate!

Last term I wrote about the importance of wearing the school uniform and it has been wonderful to see the correct uniform being worn. I thank the parents for their efforts in ensuring children are wearing the uniform correctly and thank the teachers for their follow up with families as required.

This year Mr Brenton Campbell has organised a number of Sporting Schools Grants to provide additional sport sessions for children. This term the Year 1-6 children will have gymnastic sessions provided by a specialist gymnastics coach. Sessions commenced yesterday and I chatted with Alethia and Seb in Year 2. Both said that it was great and they enjoyed the air track trampoline the most. Alethia also commented that Sarah organised the session really well as they worked in groups, the lines were short and we got lots of turns.

This year Kim Coad coached a small group of children to participate in Robo Cup. Following their success in the South Australian competition they submitted a video performance into the national competition and were awarded third place. What a wonderful achievement. Congratulations to Cameron, Cooper, Barnaby and Jessica! Thank you also to Kim Coad for her time and expertise. With the support Simon Coad we have been able to purchase 10 Ev3 robots and in 2022, the Robo Cup program will be offered to all Year 3 children. These opportunities are possible because of the extraordinary work of our Parents and Friends Committee who, this year, have raised money to purchase resources to support the Digital Technologies curriculum.

Term 4 is always busy and a very special time for our Year 6 graduates. I look forward to all the events that are part of the conclusion of a school year. Please check the calendar for dates – we hope that we are able to open up whole school assemblies and masses this term for families.

Class Placements

We will soon begin allocating students to classes. This process takes some time and teachers work very hard to consider the learning needs and social and emotional needs of students within the practical constraints of numbers of students per class. As part of this process, children are invited to identify five peers who they believe have a positive influence on their learning. This enables us to ensure that all children are placed with at least one of their chosen peers.

Although the ultimate responsibility for assigning class placement rests with the school, I invite parents to write to me regarding learning needs and/or social emotional needs your child may have. We do not, however, consider requests for specific teachers. All correspondence regarding 2022 classes should be addressed to me and received by **Friday 5 November 2021**. Once I receive your correspondence, I will only contact you if I am unable to accommodate your request for any reason. Therefore, if you do not hear from me you can assume that it has been accommodated.

Class Structure

In 2022, Rosary School will commence the school year with 19 classes:

4	Reception
4	Year 1
3	Year 2
3	Year 3
2	Year 4
3	Year 5/6

Next year we will move to 5/6 composite classes. In reality every class is a composite class as each child's development occurs in different stages. There are opportunities for younger and older children to develop skills such as confidence, social interaction and independence and to make friendships outside their standard age group. Research has shown children in composite classes do no better or worse academically. Attached to this newsletter is an article developed by the Federation of Catholic Schools Parent Communities (SA) Inc. in consultation with educators from Catholic Education SA. I invite you to read this article and contact me should you wish to discuss issues you may have about our 2022 structure.

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Regards
Susan

COMPOSITE CLASSES

Ask any school principal - if there's one issue that will create angst amongst parents, it's when their child is allocated to a composite class. Parents may believe their child will be disadvantaged in some way - either by being 'held back' if they are in the higher year level or that they may find it hard to keep up if they are in the lower year level.

Every class is a composite class...

In reality every class is a composite class - as each child's development, whether it is physical, social, cognitive or spiritual, occurs in stages and children move through these stages at varying rates.

There are variations in the physical development, social skills and academic abilities of students in 'straight' year level class groups. Put 25 Year One students in a room and you will have 25 individuals with needs that reflect these variations in development as well as individual strengths, challenges and interests.

Contemporary teaching strategies accommodate the individual needs of a student whether that child is in a 'straight' class or a composite class.

Schools are social environments. Composite classes, buddy classes and vertical learning groups all provide settings for social development across ages. There are benefits for younger and older children in terms of "learning to learn" skills such as confidence, social interaction and independence and they also make friends outside of their standard age-groups.

Importantly, research has shown children in composite classes do no better or worse academically than their peers in straight year level classes. Teachers and school leaders take many factors into account when determining class structures and composition. These include the academic needs, social needs (including friendship groups) and physical development of students. Schools also need to consider logistical factors such as enrolment numbers in each year level so that class sizes do not contravene workplace agreements. They also consider parent input about the specific needs of their child. With this myriad of factors to take into account, it is not a simple task.

What you can do....?

Meet with the teacher or principal to discuss issues you may have about composite classes and respond positively to any invitations to contribute information about your child which will inform their class placement.

Talk to your child's teacher about what is expected of children in your child's year level to find out if your expectations are realistic.

Share information with the teacher about what you know about your child that may enhance or hinder his/her learning.

Keep informed by participating in the range of information sessions, expos, workshops and programs offered by your school.

Be in regular contact with your child's teacher about his/her progress throughout the year.

As partners in the education of their children, parents:

- Work collaboratively with teachers and staff
- Respect the skills, knowledge and experience of school leaders and teachers
- Access information and resources provided by the school to support them in their role as the primary educators of their children

This article was developed by Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities (SA) Inc. in consultation with educators from Catholic Education SA and may be used or adapted without permission only with acknowledgement of the source and associated references (below).