FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear members of the Academy community,

Welcome to the 2019 School Year! May it be a happy and rewarding year for each and every member of our wonderful College community.

2019 is a new beginning for all. It is certainly an exciting new beginning for our Year 7 students. This year, for the first time in our history, we have five Year 7 classes, rather than the usual four. So 7 Purple has now joined 7 Red, Green, Blue and Silver.

This increase in the number of classes was due an unprecedented number of applications for enrolment this year. However, we do not anticipate this to be an ongoing arrangement. One of the significant factors of Academy life, is the smaller size of the school and thus the resulting strong sense of community.

I offer a special welcome to all Year 7 students and also to the many new students across other year levels. I trust that they are already feeling very much at home and enjoying life at the Academy of Mary Immaculate. A warm welcome, too, to our new parents and families.

A school without students is a somewhat empty place and it was delightful to see our girls back at the College and to witness the joy with which they greeted each other and their obvious pleasure at being back at the Academy.

Year 7 students have spent a significant period of time over the past couple of days with their Year 12 Big Sisters engaged in a number of activities including a tour of the College and support in setting up their laptops. Hopefully this positive relationship between the oldest and youngest members of our community will continue throughout the year with the Year 12 students offering support and friendship to the Year 7 students during their first year at the Academy.

Our College theme this year is, most appropriately, “Mercy – gratefully received, joyfully shared”. This theme was chosen by our 2019 Senior Student Leadership team and one which I believe we can action in many ways.

Mercy - gratefully received - an acknowledgment of the gift
Mercy - joyfully shared – an acknowledgement of the challenge – the immensity of the gift, the joy of sharing it with others.
Mercy is about giving and receiving God’s loving kindness in order to come to the fullness of life. Only then can we be mercy and live Mercy.

As Pope Francis states – Mercy is a verb – we cannot meditate on Mercy without turning it into action. We look to 2019 with a sense of optimism and hope because that is our gift to the girls in our care.

Prayer

We pray God’s blessing on the coming school year; on our work, our dreams and our aspirations. May each of us be filled with a spirit of cooperation and may we share our gifts so that the very best may be achieved.

For our teachers – that they will be given the awareness, insight and patience to lead us to new paths of discovery. May they be free from stress and anxiety and may peace flow through their work.

For our families and friends who love and support us. May the Lord bless them for their patience and generosity and may bonds be strengthened through mutual openness and care.

We pray for those who doubt their abilities. May their fellow students always be at hand to encourage, support and offer practical help when and where it is needed.

We pray that this year will be one blessed with care, love and generosity. May bullying and struggles for power be seen by all as destructive to everyone involved and may we always seek to stand up for the rights and dignity of others.

Creator God, we place this school year with all its plans, hopes and dreams before you. Pour out your spirit on all our endeavours. Let us never be so rushed or pressed for time that we don’t have time for one other or to reach out to one another. In spite of study and commitments, may we all find the space to ponder what guides our thoughts and decisions each day.

This we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.
We welcome to the Academy our new members of staff:

Ms Emma Spreckley – Director of Sport/Health Sciences Learning Leader
Ms Katrina Renouf – English teacher
Ms Mary Dean – Texts and Traditions teacher
Ms Laureen Lansdown – Visual Arts teacher
Ms Annette Williams – Science and Humanities teacher, replacing Ms Christine McLennan whilst she is on leave

We welcome back to the College, Ms Mara Brunato. Ms Brunato has been on leave for 2018 and we look forward to her contribution to the College again in 2019.

Our Careers Practitioner, Ms Amanda Siva resigned at the end of last year but will be with us for two days per week (Mondays and Thursdays), until we find a suitable replacement. Ms Siva has been an invaluable Careers Practitioner and staff member and will be sorely missed. I am grateful to her for remaining at the College until we can find a suitable replacement.

**Year 7 Parent Evenings**
At Year 7 level, we have made some changes to the gatherings we usually have at the beginning of the year. Instead of one Parent Information Evening, this year we will be having two events:

- Wednesday 6 February 2019: Year 7 Mass for parents and students. The Mass will begin at 5.00pm, followed by a barbecue.
- Thursday 28 February 2019: An information evening, with a particular focus on the area of Mathematics. This evening will begin at 7.00pm, with parents being introduced to the Mathematics Pathways program in order to enable them to better support their daughters.

We look forward to meeting all Year 7 parents at these very important events. These events are ideal ways to meet teachers, gain information specific to your daughter, meet the parents of your daughters’ friends and, in particular, meet her friends, old and new.

**VCE Parent Evening**
The VCE Parent Information Evening is scheduled to take place on Thursday 5 March 7.00pm. This important evening will provide parents with information about VCE and strategies for supporting their daughters during these two important years. Teachers of Years 11 and 12 will be present and there will be an opportunity for parents to meet staff on a one to one basis at the conclusion of the evening.

**Communication from College**
All parents should have received a letter from the College (via CareMonkey) outlining our expectations for 2019, along with College Contact Details for 2019. If you did not receive this important information, please contact Student Reception. The College Calendar will be distributed to all students via Homeroom rolls.

**VCE Results**
We are very pleased with our excellent VCE results with 15% of students achieving an ATAR over 90. Congratulations in particular to College Dux, Jennifer Kirkis. Jennifer has worked extremely hard over her six years at the College and is well deserving of her excellent result – an ATAR of 98.4. Congratulations too to Stephanie Bakedis who gained a study score of 50 for Visual Arts. Many of you who visited the Visual Arts Exhibition last November, would have seen the two beautiful dresses Stephanie designed.

Our High Achievers will be acknowledged at a special Assembly on Monday 4 February, where they will be congratulated on their excellent results. We extend best wishes to all members of the Class of 2018 as they move into tertiary education. It was pleasing and affirming to see that all members of the 2018 cohort gained a first round tertiary offer. Congratulations to all. In congratulating our high achievers, I also take this opportunity to thank, not only our Year 12 teachers, but all teachers whose work over the years contributed to these results.
### 2018 High Achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Dux</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Krikis</td>
<td>Sharon Guan</td>
<td>Tania Tuyau</td>
<td>Karina Finlayson</td>
<td>Stephanie Basdekis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siena Vanzella</td>
<td>Tiffany Dang</td>
<td>Sophie Ryan</td>
<td>Madeleine Mutter</td>
<td>Anne Truong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia Perri</td>
<td>Alexandra Bitsikas</td>
<td>Jayde Razlog</td>
<td>Eliza Hine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hot Weather

The month of February is always very hot weather wise. The College is well able to cater for students during the hot weather as every classroom in the College is air-conditioned. During periods when it is extremely hot an announcement will be made informing students that they are not required to wear (or bring) their blazer to school.

### Child Safe School

At the Academy of Mary Immaculate, we are committed to being a nurturing, child-safe school where our students are respected, their voices are heard and where they are safe and feel safe. Our commitment and responsibility to child safety is driven by Jesus Christ’s message of hope, love and care for all.

Listed below are several strategies currently in place in our school designed to keep students safe and to affect positive student learning, for example:

- Child Safety Code of Conduct – reviewed on an ongoing basis and signed by all staff
- Child Safety Policy - reviewed on an ongoing basis
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations - reviewed on an ongoing basis
- Child Safety Procedures - presented to students on an ongoing basis

As a school we will continue to reflect, review and approve our Child Safety strategies. Wellbeing and child safety is everyone’s responsibility. As always, we welcome your comments and would be happy to discuss any ideas or concerns you may have regarding the matter of student safety.
ANAPHYLAXIS – IMPORTANT NOTICE

I take this opportunity to remind the College community about Anaphylaxis.

For us to become a nut free school, we seek cooperation of all members of the College community in ensuring that no nuts are brought on to the premises at any time. Our canteen is a nut free canteen as is the Food Technology area of the College and our staff are aware that they are not permitted to bring any products containing nuts into the College.

I quote from our Anaphylaxis Policy:

Anaphylaxis is a severe, rapidly progressive allergic reaction that is potentially life threatening. The most common allergens in school aged children are peanuts, eggs, tree nuts (e.g. cashews), cow’s milk, fish and shellfish, wheat, soy, sesame, latex, certain insect stings and medication.

The key to prevention of anaphylaxis in schools is knowledge of those students who have been diagnosed at risk, awareness of triggers (allergens), and prevention of exposure to these triggers. Partnerships between schools and parents are important in ensuring that certain foods or items are kept away from the student while at school.

Adrenaline given through an Epipen® auto injector to the muscle of the outer mid-thigh is the most effective first aid treatment for anaphylaxis.

In the event of an anaphylactic reaction, the school’s first aid and emergency response procedures and the student’s Individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan must be followed.

Principles
The College is committed to:

- Providing, as far as practicable, a safe and supportive environment in which students at risk of anaphylaxis can participate equally in all aspects of the student’s schooling.
- Raising awareness about anaphylaxis and the Academy’s anaphylaxis management policy in the College community.
- Engaging with parents/carers of students at risk of anaphylaxis in assessing risks, developing risk minimisation strategies and management strategies for the student.
- Ensuring that each staff member has adequate knowledge about allergies, anaphylaxis and the College’s policy and procedures in responding to an anaphylactic reaction.

Recently Yarra City Council published an article about our Vice Captain, Christa Hubik and the wonderful work she is doing with our environmental group, Earth@Academy. The article can be accessed in the e-news section of our website at www.academy.vic.edu.au/in-the-media-2019-vice-captain-advocates-for-the-environment/

May the academic year begin well for you and may God favour us all with many blessings.

Sr Mary Moloney rsm
Principal
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2019 school year! I hope that the Christmas and New Year period was a joyful one for all and that the holidays were a restful time for your daughters.

Our College theme for the year is ‘Mercy – gratefully received, joyfully shared’. In our Leadership Team meeting last week we were each asked to reflect upon its meaning for us. For me, it is very much about listening to and embracing the story of others and calls on us to share our story. It is about giving hope to others, particularly in a world that can present the most difficult of challenges to each and every one of us. As such, we will seek to promote within the community the notion of supporting one another not as individuals, but as a collective.

The Mercy values of respect, service, courage, hospitality, compassion and justice have particular relevance to the College theme as it provides a framework within which members of the College community can make their mark in this 162nd year of Academy life.

I urge you to encourage your daughter to explore the possibilities and grasp the opportunities that await them. Often it is a possibility which opens a door to an opportunity and if our students can embrace the idea that they can contribute in so many ways then maybe they can move towards realising their own true potential.

Everyone has their own version of success. One person’s success can be very different to another’s and this is dependent upon the individual’s capabilities. I ask you to encourage your daughters to not be frightened by failure; rather, be excited about the successes they can achieve. Everyone can enjoy their own measure of success if they strive to be their very best in all that they do.

CareMonkey
As you are aware, the College uses this communications system to inform you of College events/excursions/incursions that take place throughout the year.

If you have not already done so, we ask that you create a CareMonkey profile for your daughter. The sooner we have your daughter on the system, the more information we have in ensuring her safety and wellbeing. Moreover, if your daughter does not have a Care Monkey profile it will impede her capacity to attend any excursion/event that is planned. General permission letters will be sent out in the coming days. We ask that you provide consent for your daughter to attend the various events by Friday 8 February.

Student Planners
Your daughter’s Student Planner is a key avenue of communication with the College. There are several key aspects of the Student Planner to which I wish to refer and they include:

Statement of Acknowledgement and College Policies and Procedures
On the first page of the Student Planner we have included a statement which we ask you and your daughter to sign. In asking you to sign this statement, it is an expression of your support of the College’s Policies and Procedures and the expectations and standards that we seek to uphold.

We thank you for your support in signing this statement.

With reference to the College Policies and Procedures (pp.8-11) in becoming familiar with them, please take note of the General College Rules and Uniform Requirements. Going through this information may alleviate the potential for any confusion about what is expected at the College.

Student Wellness Plan (pp.15-16)
Another aspect of the planner is the Student Wellness Plan which we hope to use as a reference tool in supporting your daughter.

The plan asks the students to consider when they are happy, calm, or frustrated and from what they draw strength. The plan is taken from the Berry Street Education Model which is focused on engaging students who are vulnerable and at risk of not reaching their potential.
Our primary purpose of using the Student Wellness Plan at Academy is driven by a desire to better understand your daughter’s mindset at any given stage throughout the year. We encourage parents/guardians to engage with their daughter in talking about and contributing to the plan. Homeroom teachers will also be working with your daughters in talking about this wellness plan.

The more we can engage your daughter and encourage her to develop a clearer understanding of herself, the better able she may be to navigate the sometimes murky waters of adolescence.

Parents Association Meeting - Monday 26 February
Once or twice a term the Parents’ Association conducts a meeting in which parents are offered the chance to contribute to the life of the College. It is an opportunity to continue an ongoing partnership between the College and the parents of the students in our care. I invite parents/guardians to play an active and crucial part at Academy and should you be so inclined you are most welcome to attend our first meeting of the year on Monday 25 February beginning at 7pm. Please email me directly at: paul.finneran@academy.vic.edu.au should you wish to attend.

Closing Remarks
Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any assistance or to raise any points of concern.

“God is the light that illuminates the darkness…and a spark of divine light is within each of us”

Pope Francis

I look forward to working with you throughout year.

Pope Francis
Deputy Principal

DIRECTOR OF FAITH AND MISSION

My purpose in this reflection is to invite parents and families into a full participation of the faith life of our College. To aid me in this endeavour I am going to share my reflections on our College theme for 2019 - Mercy, gratefully received, joyfully shared. This wonderful theme was developed by our Senior Student Leadership team.

We are all very familiar with the power that slogans and twitter handles can communicate. So it is with our College theme that when you go below the surface of these five words there are rich challenges and understandings to be mined. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that Mercy is an idea to which all members of our College community can relate. Numerous College reviewers have noted how readily students, parents and staff referenced the College Mercy values of Compassion, Courage, Hospitality, Justice, Service, Respect.

This willingness to place these Mercy values at the centre of the work and life of the College is what gives me the assuredness that I can extend an invitation to all members of our community to participate in the faith life of our College. For me, the notions of receiving and sharing are the entry point to the deep richness of this College theme. The theme that the students articulated is an active call to relationship. I am going to argue that there are deep faith or religious understandings to be identified under this call to Mercy and to action.

At the deepest heart of religious belief is the realisation of the other. I am not alone. I am not the central focus of my universe. I am not in full and complete control of my existence. A simple analogy leads us into this idea. Think of a marriage relationship, or a life partnership. The call to always live that relationship with Mercy, to receive gratefully and to share joyfully can readily come into conflict with moments of challenge and difficulty.

Think of the parent child relationship. Either as parents dealing with our own children, or as sons or daughters we can quickly identify times where it is difficult to receive gratefully or share joyfully. These two analogies draw on relationships with people we know. It is an obvious starting point and I expect that our students will initially respond to the College theme by thinking of family, friends or classmates.
But of course we have relationships with people we do not know and in literally billions of cases will never meet. A deep reflection on this theme of *Mercy gratefully received and Mercy joyfully shared* leads to the realisation of our relationship to every person living on this planet.

And beyond that, we are called to recognise our relationship with our earth, to ponder what it is that we receive from our environment and what it is that we share. The deepest level of contemplation of the other is meditation on the idea of God, of the spiritual, of transcendence. We are not the centre of our existence. Materialism is not the centre of existence. To ponder relationship is to reflect on the metaphysical. To reflect on the beyond.

The Catholic Church has a language to explain our relationship with the transcendent. God, Trinity, incarnation, angels, saints, miracles, parables. As the Director of Faith and Mission at a Catholic school, it should not be a surprise, that this is the language that I adopt when I prepare morning Homeroom prayers or College Masses. But what I hope that you all can, or will come to accept, is that this use of language, symbol and ritual is in no way meant to be excluding.

At its heart, the faith life of this College is the mystery of the other. The beyond me. In our personal lives, it makes no sense to invite someone to sit at a table with us and then refuse to share the food and drink with them. We might also recognise that every time we share a meal with others, the experience of that identical food and drink will be different for every person at the table - be it the differing senses of taste, or maybe, our emotional, psychological or historical responses to the food and drink we are consuming. When it comes to the table of faith at our College, everyone is invited and everyone is welcome.

I conclude by welcoming you all to our College 2019 year. To paraphrase from the Gospel of John - may 2019 be a year in which hear the call of Jesus to have life, and have it to the full.

*Mr Mark Hyland, Director of Faith and Mission*

**DIRECTOR OF LEARNING**

**Confidence boosts learning!**

At a time of the year when summer sports dominate media channels, it seems obvious to say that confidence enhances sporting ability. What is not so obvious is that confidence also plays a huge part in learning. Children who are confident are motivated to attempt new things, and to persevere when tasks are difficult. An influential social psychologist, Albert Bandura, has helped to champion the importance of self-efficacy, a term which specifically relates to confidence in learning. His work shows that believing in your ability to do something, enhances your ability to do it.

Yet, we know from other research that girls’ confidence tends to fall below boys’ from about the age of nine, and the gap doesn’t close until they have turned 80! Therefore, it was heartening to see that over the holiday period there were a flurry of articles which flagged actions that we can take in supporting girls to develop confidence in general and learning confidence specifically.

Recently *The Age* reported ground-breaking research led by Dr Fitzsimons from the University of Queensland. The findings from this study highlight the important role single-sex schools play in building the self-confidence of girls. The study involved surveys of more than 10,000 secondary students in single-sex schools, and found “no significant differences in self-confidence between girls and boys in gender-segregated high schools”. Furthermore, the research showed that differences in confidence levels between girls and boys are strongly related to how students are socialised at home and school. Single-sex schools offered the key factor necessary for promoting self-confidence and this was related to the fact that girls in single-sex schools were constantly exposed to other girls and women in leadership positions. In a nutshell - girls’ schools like Academy are great for boosting the confidence of girls.

In addition to this Dr Fitzsimons was able to show that another factor that promotes self-confidence, irrespective of gender is the allocation of regular chores. Engaging in errands, helping the family out gives young people the sense that the adults around them trust them and expect them to be responsible and capable. On a light-hearted note, I was happy to share this with my own young adult children, reminding them they should thank me for the way in which the chores I had allocated had been so pivotal to both their learning and well-being.
Another prominent writer in the area of girl’s confidence is Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair, a clinical psychologist and school consultant who strongly advocates that we can build confidence in girls in five key ways. These are as follows:

1. **Focusing on what girls can do and not their appearance alone.** The advice she gives is that we should challenge ourselves and begin re-thinking some of our automatic responses and the subsequent messages embedded in these. She believes that for every compliment about appearance we should give two about effort, skills and or accomplishment.

2. **Modelling body acceptance.** Dr. Steiner-Adair focuses on the significant relationship between mothers and daughters. She counsels that mothers should be mindful of the way they describe and talk about their own bodies.

3. **Teaching girls to be media savvy.** Watching TV or other social media with your daughter and discussing what is going on will help her to develop a critical filter.

4. **Encouraging girls to develop their own voice** within the safety of appropriate boundaries. Ask, ‘What do you want?’ Then let your daughter make a choice and then honour her choice.

5. **Playing team sports as early as possible.** Girls who play sport learn about success, failure and effort. More importantly they do not focus on validation by boys, but are valued and affirmed by the team.

Finally, as an educator with over 36 years of teaching experience, I strongly urge parents not to imprint their own negative learning experience on their daughters. Avoid saying, “Well I was never good at Math!” “I hated Science” or even worse, “No-one in our family was ever good at school”.

Our Academy girls have enormous potential. We look forward to working in partnership with you as parents in harnessing that potential. Teaching our young women to be confident is one important step in enhancing their learning capacity and more importantly as the research shows equipping them with capacities that will have a positive effect throughout their lives.

I am looking forward to hearing from any parents about the myriad of ways they are supporting to develop confidence in their daughters. Looking forward to another wonderful year of learning.

*Ms Nada Jarni, Director of Learning*

---

**STUDENT COUNSELLOR**

“**Beginnings can be tricky**”

As we know the starting of school year is peppered with a myriad of emotions and excitement but is often underpinned with anxiousness. These feelings are to be expected and need to be considered as normal for anyone who is returning to school, changing school, beginning secondary schooling or in the process of commencing their final year. With the return to school there are emotional, social and educational challenges. There are concerns about peers and friendships, homework, new subject and general concerns about coping with all that is new. Adjustment difficulties are to be expected.

As your daughter starts to negotiate the terrain of her school life, parents can support the process in a number of ways. Gently establish routines which take into account homework, meal time, leisure time, the necessary preparations for the next day and bed time. (Negotiating these with older adolescents). Encourage conversation about school with an attitude of interest. Invariably your daughter will make mention of positive and negative elements. Allow her space to express her concerns and then gently remind her that adjusting to new situations takes time for most people. It sometimes helps to talk about your own positive school experiences as a way to normalize things.

And thirdly, if it becomes apparent that your daughter is struggling with any aspect of her school life, be proactive by putting in place support structures and strategies or seek the appropriate help. Early intervention is sometimes necessary. Wellbeing Leaders, Homeroom teachers and subject teachers are easily contactable and will readily assist, as will I as the Student Counsellor.

If you have a concern or just need a sounding board please feel free to contact me. I am available to have a conversation with you anytime throughout the week. You may phone, email or make an appointment.

*Ms Giovina Costantini, Student Counsellor*
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Everybody Dance Nao – a STEM project
In the 7 December 2018 edition of our newsletter, I advised that our Nao (now pronounced now) girls had been selected in the final 10 groups for the Dance Off at Bialik College in Hawthorn.

The students performed very well on the day and overcame many challenges working with the actual robot. Their original music and movement composition was very well received and they were each presented with a certificate for this performance.

Congratulations girls!

Ms Kate Jones, Technology (IT) Learning Leader
Secondary School vaccinations in 2019

The Secondary School Vaccine Program offers free vaccines to Year 7 and 10 students. These vaccines provide protection against:

- Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough) – one dose for year 7 students
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) – two doses for year 7 students
- Meningococcal A,C,W,Y – one dose for year 10 students

Parents/guardians of Year 7 and 10 students should look out for the vaccine consent card booklet coming home from school with your child. You need to read the information, complete and return the card regardless of whether your child is being vaccinated at school.

The Yarra City Council immunisation service may contact you about the Secondary School Vaccine Program. Schools are authorised to provide basic parent/guardian contact details to local councils for this purpose. Contact the school by 28 February 2019 if you do not want your contact details given to the Yarra City Council immunisation service.

To learn more about the Secondary School Vaccine Program, the vaccines, the diseases they protect against, or how you can prepare your child for vaccination, go to betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Additionally, the Commonwealth government is funding vaccinations for all children under 20 years of age who missed any scheduled vaccines, including a catch up program for Meningococcal ACWY vaccine for adolescents aged 15-19 years of age who have not already received the vaccine in school. If students have missed vaccines, either in childhood or adolescence, and require catch-up vaccines, they should speak with their immunisation provider. (ie. local council or GP).
Girls and Boys wanted

Get your 2019 Football career started in the right direction and head down to St Bernard’s to register for the 2019 Junior football season. The club is celebrating after last year’s first Girls U/15 premiership. The juniors represent a great environment for both girls and boys to become future football stars as demonstrated this year with Xavier O’Halloran (GWS) and Lachlan Sholl (Adelaide Crows) both drafted. Further, Ben Ronke (Sydney Swans) and Aisling Utri (AFLW Western Bulldogs) were drafted in 2017. The club fully supports coaches and players with experienced staff continuing to develop all facets of the game with the assistance of Ex-TAC coaches and collaboration with an Elite Skill Development group who have partnered with North Melbourne and St Kilda.

Don’t delay, come and be a part of something you can share with your friends and even make new ones.


Prices: New to AFL $100; Transferring from another club $240. Family discounts apply. Contact juniorpres@stbernardsfc.com.au for details.