Dear Parents & Carers

You may have heard Julia Gillard’s announcement recently about the Federal Government’s ‘Reading Blitz’ for all young Australians. While information and specific details about this initiative are very limited at the moment, three things struck me.

Firstly, great - more money and resources for schools is always welcome and much appreciated.

Secondly, many of the strategies outlined in the press release, good schools are already doing. Running records, teaching phonics, reading programs, targeting specific students, information about how to help at home, Learning Assistant support, etc are all currently in operation at Good Shepherd.

The final point I would like to make is what about creativity? Whatever happened to creativity, independent thinking, music, drama, dance, etc. While I acknowledge Literacy and Numeracy are our core business in schools, we should not undervalue the creative aspects of the primary school curriculum. Students in the 21st Century need more than just literacy and numeracy, they need a broader knowledge base; skills such as creativity, critical thinking, resilience, communication and collaboration, and character-related and values based morals. It is about maintaining a balance, not a focus on NAPLAN scores and world educational rankings.

Good Shepherd has always had an emphasis on the Arts, and over a year every child has a concentrated program on Art, Drama, Dance and Music.

INTERESTING DATA
Recently we had our beginning of year census and I thought you might be interested in the basic statistics. At Good Shepherd in 2013 we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL students</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islanders</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Catholic students (25%)</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SICK CHILDREN
We have had numerous cases of children feeling unwell in the stomach and/or vomiting. We will continue to encourage children to wash their hands and use hand sanitiser in order to minimise the spread of infection but if your child complains of these symptoms please keep them home.
**Parent Network Contacts**

Please consider becoming the Parent Network Contact for your child’s class. This is an important role in the community and helps us build the wonderful community we all want here at Good Shepherd. Please complete the form below.

Have a good week.

Brad Gaynor
Principal
brad.gaynor@cg.catholic.edu.au

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**Swimming Carnival**

Congratulations to all of the students who participated so enthusiastically during our Swimming Carnival. We were blessed with magnificent weather, matched only by the outstanding behaviour displayed by each and every child.

A huge thanks must go out to all of the parent helpers who assisted on the day... Without your ongoing support these days would not be possible.

The winning house will be announced this Friday.

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Boys summer and winter uniforms for sale. In very good condition. Sizes 12/14/16. Please ring 0438 512 119

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Are looking for new ways to engage your children or new strategies to assist during those challenging times all parents have?

If so, then you may be interested in attending the Australian Childhood Foundations’ Bringing Up Great Kids’ program for parents/caregivers of children aged between 2 and 10 years.

Catholic Care hope to offer greater flexibility to parents by running the program during school hours and in the Gungahlin area if we have enough interest.

Dates and times TBA based on parent’s availability but will be in Term 2.

If you are interested please email me Helen.Gunter@catholiccare.cg.org.au

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**Parent Network Contact Nomination Form**

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Child’s class: ______________________________________________________

**Contact details:**

Home Phone: ______________________________________________________

Mobile Phone: _____________________________________________________

Email (Please print clearly): _________________________________________

Preferred Meeting Day: ____________________________________________
Mini Vinnies

Mini Vinnies is a program of the St Vincent de Paul Society and creates awareness among young students about issues that exist around them, whether that is in their community or beyond. It reinforces the mission of Vinnies and instil in them the opportunity to be compassionate and run simple, yet effective initiatives with their school peers so together they can make a difference.

One of the projects they are working on at the moment is the collection of the food donations. As the colder months approach many in our Gungahlin Community are feeling financial pressures and are having difficulty putting meals on the table at night for their families. St Vincent de Paul do a wonderful job providing assistance, but their resources are now stretched to the limit. But We Can Help!

Every week, we are asking each family to bring just one item of non-perishable food to school to distribute to these people in need. For example, a can of soup, a bag of pasta or a bottle of pasta sauce. There will be a collection box in your child’s classroom where you can send your gift of food.

Confirmation

If your child is in Year 6 (or older) and would like to make their Confirmation, a Parent and Child Information Sessions will be held on Tuesday, 5 March at 1:00 pm or 7:00 pm at Holy Spirit Church.

The Commitment and Enrolment Masses will be held on Saturday, 9 March and Sunday 10 March Celebration of Confirmation Masses will be held on Tuesday 28, Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 May (Times to be advised).

Understanding Change, Loss and Grief

This three hour seminar is an education program which aims to build resilience in adults who are also seeking to deepen their general understanding of the nature and impact of change, loss and grief on their lives.

When: Sunday 24 March, 2013
Time: 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Venues & Registration
Holy Spirit Parish Centre, Burdekin Avenue, Ambaro To register contact: Nathan Wood
Email: nathan.wood@maskillop.unitec.edu or Phone: 6209 5197

Cost: $15

...the heart of God.

Religious Education Term 1

On the Road to the Heart of God

In 2013 our theme for the year is “On the Road to the Heart of God”. In every aspect of our lives at Good Shepherd we aim, to be together the Heart of God.

Thank you to the students and teachers of 4 Hart and 3van Meurs for the beautiful and thoughtful way they presented the Prayer Celebration on the gospel of ‘The Good Shepherd’.

Our next Prayer Celebration will be on Friday, 8 March and will be lead by 6Kelly and 2Oldfield. They will be sharing the gospel of ‘The Baptism of Jesus’.
Shepherd Spy

To be together .....
26th February 1913 Birthday

Dear Diary,

Happy Birthday to me! Today I turned 11. Double digits both the same. I wonder how many birthdays I will have like this? Who knows? But today has been the best birthday I can remember so far.

I got some gifts from Ma and Pa and from the boys. Ma had made me a new dress. It is pink, green and cream. It has some lovely lace at the collar and some ribbon on the cuffs. I also got some hair ribbons to match, which I was allowed to wear to school today. Pa made me a leather cover for my diary. The boys gave me a skipping rope. Henry and Joe had found some branches and had smoothed them over to make the handles, then they oiled them so they were glossy. I think Pa may have helped them a bit.

I also got some scraps of fabric so that I can make some clothes for my doll, or I may make a little quilt for her bed.

At school Mr Davis gave me a bookmark. It is a lovely blue ribbon. It will sit very nicely in my diary. Mr Davis also gave me a day off homework because he said people who had birthdays during the holidays or on weekends didn’t have to do any. I also got to pick what we played for sport. I picked skipping so I could use my new rope. The boys were not very happy, but they will have their turn to pick sport when it is their birthdays. I am beginning to think that Mr Davis might not be as gruff as he wants us to believe he is.

Ma made some biscuits for me to take to school to share. They were shortbread biscuits with sugar sprinkled on top. Everyone loved them.

When it is our birthday we get to pick what we have for dinner. Henry and Joe were trying very hard to get me to pick their favourites, but I chose mine - rabbit stew with dumplings! Pa had set some traps for the rabbits. He thinks it is a great dinner because rabbits are a pest around here. So we are having Ma’s delicious rabbit stew and sponge cake with jam and cream for sweets.

I got to wear my new dress for my birthday dinner. Everyone has to wear their best for birthday dinners. The best table cloth was on the table and there was a vase with flowers in it. Everything looked lovely. Dinner was as good as I had expected. Henry and Joe had to clean up while Ma bought out the cake. I got to cut the cake and serve it.

Bess was whining at the door to be let in. She is not allowed in during dinner time. Pa told me to let her in as we were up to cake. Bess used to be Pa’s working dog, but now she only goes in the home paddock and the house. Pa whistled and Bess settled under his chair.

Then the possums started. Joe jumped up, he has been after the possums for weeks. He tipped over the bench he was sitting on and dropped Henry on the floor. Henry cried out and Bess jumped up and raced to see what had happened. Pa called out for Joe to stop and slapped his hand down do the table for effect. Unfortunately his thumb hit the side of his cake plate and the cake left the plate and soared through the air. We all sat and watched as if we were glued to the spot. The cake flew over the table and towards Henry’s face, were it landed with a splat!

At first there was utter silence, but Bess was on the scene in quick time cleaning up Henry’s face. He couldn’t stop laughing.

Joe said, “Did you see that? We should call it ‘Flying cake’ not sponge cake”.

Pa looked at his hand and then at Ma, then he shrugged and said he was sorry. By the time he got Henry off the floor Bess had done a great job of cleaning him up. Henry went to wash up and I cut Pa a new piece of cake.

I love birthdays!
Mary