Dear Parents,

Last Friday we had a wonderful celebration for our Mother Teresa Feast Day. We all were able to participate in a beautiful prayer, led by Father Dado, at St Patrick’s Cathedral, Parramatta. Our newest students (KLS & MLS) had a tour of the cathedral before our liturgy led by Sister Susan. We thank her and Father Dado for sharing their time with us. A big thank you to all the parents who were able to share in the prayer and the picnic lunch held back at school. To have a glimpse of the highlights of the day click here.

At Mother Teresa Primary, we promote a balanced use of technology. We advocate physical activity, face-to-face contact with peers and encourage students to use the best tool for the task at hand. If that is a pencil and paper, no problem! We’re not forcing kids to use technology. Instead, we see it as one of many tools they can use for learning. Often when parents call me concerned about their child’s use of technology, their main point of concern is that they “just have no idea what their child is doing.” I can understand that this is a scary feeling as a parent. Often the students I notice who understand how to use technology wisely – come from families who talk about what is happening in each other’s life. Here are some ways to help talk to your child about their use of technology.

Embrace their world
Involving yourself in the activities your child enjoys through technology can go a long way towards mutual respect and understanding. Why not try that game your son/daughter has been hooked on lately? Find out why it is so engaging. This may just open doors and break down resistance to important conversations around time management and many of the issues discussed in articles last term. Ask them to teach you some of the things they know – they may well have discovered many shortcuts you could benefit from! A parent recently shared with me her strategy around dealing with social media and her teenage daughters. This parent embraced the tools her daughters were keen to use. She became familiar with Facebook and created her own profile. She then had a basis to create some ground rules as to what she expected from her children on these sites. Furthermore, the parent became friends with her daughters and began keeping an eye on discussions they were having online. They share a life online as well as offline – rules and expectations don’t change due to the different space. I really like the way this parent has embraced her child’s world while still setting clear boundaries and expectations around their behaviour.

Encourage Balanced Use
Help them understand the importance of outdoor play, varied interests and face-to-face interactions with friends.

Dialogue
The Common Sense Media Agreement (click here) is an excellent starting point for beginning the conversation. Maintaining an open line of communication with your child is crucial for your parent/child relationship in the years ahead. Ask them to show you what they are doing with their computer in relation to school work and their social time.

Set Boundaries
Parents sometimes hesitate in setting boundaries for technology use because technology can be used as a tool for learning as well as for entertainment and social activity. Setting terms of use guidelines, such as no laptops in bedrooms, time limits or keeping mobile phones in a central place at bedtime are suggestions you may wish to consider as a starting point.
WE CARE FOR OTHERS

As part of our outreach some of the children in MLS have been researching the problems of severe drought in Africa as part of their Inquiry into the Impact of change. You may recall the wonderful response our school community made last year, when the children of JLS proposed a ‘Reach out to Africa’ campaign. The children have learned that the situation has indeed worsened due to many factors such as: Climate change, civil unrest and ongoing and crushing poverty.

http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s3279434.htm The children have been given permission to hold a MUFTI DAY to raise money for this great cause. Next Friday, 21 September, the last day of term, children can come in Mufti for the price of a GOLD COIN. Of course you can give as much as you can and if your child will not be attending school that day, for any reason, you can send your contribution before Friday. Let’s show the children that we can make a difference and the greatest change must first happen in our hearts. We are teaching the children to see and to care about the world beyond themselves; Gentle hearts in action.

PARISH CONNECTION

It was wonderful to have Father Dado visit the children of MLS on Wednesday and explain parts of the Catholic celebration of Holy Mass. People of all faiths can learn so much from one another as we build a future of respect and reverence for one another. Maria Boyd REC

‘If we want a love message to be heard, it has got to be sent out. To keep a lamp burning, we have to keep putting oil in it.’

Mother Teresa

Role Model

You are your child’s most important role model with technology. It is unfair to ask them to switch off devices if you won’t do the same. Show them how you maintain balance in your life and ask them to help monitor your technology use as well. We all need to switch off from time to time!

No Bullying

Let them know that bullying is not to be tolerated, whether in person or online. We frequently say, “If you wouldn’t say it in person, don’t say it online.” Reinforcing this message helps students see how serious it is.

Privacy

Help your child understand that in today’s cut-and-paste world, they need to be especially careful about what they ‘say’ online. Navigating and setting up appropriate privacy settings on any social networking site they may be using is important, as is having strong passwords and keeping them private.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our Term 4 Parent Meeting on Tuesday October 16 at 6.30pm where we will outline the school’s vision and future directions in technology.

I will be on long service leave from September 17 till October 12, 2012. Ms Zadro will be Acting Principal during my time of absence.

Have a great week,

Gary Borg

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Term 3 School Fees
Term 3 school fees are due and payable. Thank you to all families who have finalised the 2012 school fees. If you are experiencing any difficulty with payment, please contact Margaret Hopley to discuss available options.

Vacation Care
If you need to arrange care for your child during the school holidays (Monday 24 September to Friday 5 October), please contact Natasha Foenander on 0418 153 894. A schedule of activities planned has been emailed to all families.

Volunteers Needed
Chisholm Cottage, Westmead
Chisholm Cottage provides ‘a home away from home’ for country families attending hospitals and clinics in Westmead. This low cost, short term accommodation is managed by Sisters of Charity Outreach and owned by the Catholic Women’s League (Aust), Diocese of Parramatta Inc. The Cottage needs volunteers who assist with house duties, answer the phone and provide a welcoming presence to residents. For more information, please call Maria McNuff, Volunteer Coordinator on 8382 6437 or 0404 861 523 or email mmcnuff@stvincents.com.au

Go for Fun Program
Go4Fun is a FREE nine week healthy lifestyle program for children to become fitter, healthier and happier. The program is fun and interactive and supports 7–13 year old children and their families to adopt a long lasting and healthy approach to living. Go4Fun will be running again in Term 4, 2012. Sessions will run every Monday and Wednesday at Granville from 4pm to 6pm for nine weeks. Go4Fun Rydalmere will run every Tuesday and Thursday from 4pm to 6pm for nine weeks. To register your family or for more information Call: 1800 780 900 Visit: au.mendcentral.org

Performing Arts Holiday Programmes
Looking for something fun to do these holidays?
Join a3 – Australian arts alive as we present two exciting school holiday programmes for girls and boys in Kindergarten to Year 8. Sessions focus on building performing arts skills and activities include singing, drama, dance, craft and magic.
Wednesday October 3 and Thursday October 4
Epping West Public School, Epping
Contact a3 – Australian arts alive for more information www.aspagroup.com.au or 9922 6733

Spot On Family Fun Days at Riverside Theatre
This school holidays Riverside Theatre is providing an oasis of FREE play activities for the whole family to enjoy from 24-29 September 10am -2pm.