



2 APRIL 2015 UPDATE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers,

I hope Term 1 of our 2015 academic year has unfolded well for you. I particularly hope our students and families who are new to the College have felt warmly welcomed into our community. May your association with the College community be a life-long and happy one.

Bicentenary of Birth of Don Bosco

As you are aware, 2015 marks 200 years since the birth of our founder, St John Bosco. It is a time to give thanks for Don Bosco's life and mission; to celebrate the worldwide Salesian movement serving young people and to be inspired in creating the future with joy and hope.

At Dominic College we are marking and celebrating this occasion in a number of ways. The most important will be through a community Feast Day which will be held on Sunday 17 May, 10.30 am – 2.45 pm (not 3 May as previously advertised). This will be a day of celebrating mass, fun games and picnicking as Don Bosco did with his students. It is our hope that all students and families and staff will join us for this very special occasion.

College Facilities

Over last summer we were able to undertake a significant development of our former Dance Studio. It has been in our Master Plan to develop this space into a black box theatre. The final touches are currently being made to this facility.

This space is a Creative Arts learning area, now to be known as The Oratory Space. In marking the Bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco, this space will be named as such after Don Bosco's first school and home for his students in Turin, Italy – a place where students can create, learn, excel and have fun with friends. We are all looking forward to the last stage of completion of this facility.

Centenary of Anzac to be marked at Dominic College

Our first production in the new Oratory Space will be staged in the first and second weeks of Term 2 and will be our ANZAC Centenary production *In Their Own Words*.

Dominic College has received both a Commonwealth and State Anzac Centenary grant to develop a wonderful original production commemorating this historic event. Included in this letter is an invitation to purchase tickets to see to *In Their Own Words*. We have had unprecedented demand for tickets and a number of performances are now sold out. We have therefore decided to add two evening performances at 7pm Monday evening 27 April and Tuesday evening 28 April.

Attendance & Absences

I wanted to take the opportunity to remind parents of the importance of continuous, uninterrupted attendance at school being a basic foundation for successful student achievement. The correlation between good academic achievement and attendance is well researched and known. Holidays taken by families in term time are not favoured or supported at the College because of their potential detrimental impact. Students miss far too much work and gaps in their understanding can emerge quickly or much later.

Matters around absences and requests for planned absences have now been centralised in Mrs O’Hea, our Deputy Principal’s office. My aim is to have our K-10 student attendance at 95-97%. Mr Andrew Pritchard, our Director of Pastoral Care K-6, oversees issues around attendance and patterns of non-attendance. If you need any support, please contact Andrew and our Pastoral Care Team.

Parent and Teacher Meetings and Goal Setting

Early in the term we will hold the first of our parent and teacher meetings K-10. These are excellent opportunities for parents and carers to discuss their child’s progress. I was surprised two years ago to find some of our best academic students had never attended a parent and teacher meeting because their parents had not been requested to attend. Unfortunately they had missed out on receiving great affirmation as well as further advice for improvement.

Students need to receive positive feedback as well as constructive feedback. I encourage all parents and carers to attend these meetings and see as many teachers as possible.

Once again this year we will hold goal setting meetings with our Year 3-10 students and their parents and carers in Term 3. This is another excellent opportunity to support student focus and mutual interaction on helping students progress and achieve their dreams.

Communication

Good relationships in our community in the interests of our students, staff and families are maintained through a mutual commitment to effective contact. Email, phone and face to face meetings are always encouraged, particularly the latter. We are only ever a phone call away; please never hesitate to contact your child’s teacher or leaders in our College administration.

I would urge all in our community to be cautious users of social media in regards to commentary about issues, especially in relation to the College. If you have concerns, suggestions or general feedback, we welcome hearing from you. Many good initiatives are undertaken in our community because of the goodwill and leadership of individuals.

May you and your family continue to feel an integral part of the Dominic family. My prayers and blessings continue for you in your important role as the primary educators of our students.

Yours Sincerely,



Beth Gilligan
College Principal