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Newsletter 2 - Week 4, Term 1 - 22 February 2017

## LEARNING

### Welcome message from Dr Tim McDonald CEWA Executive Director

<http://news.ceo.wa.edu.au/welcome-2017-cewa-executive-director-dr-tim-mcdonald/>

## CLOSING THE GAP

Last year I wrote about the common elements of parental engagement that have an effect on student achievement and wellbeing for the young people in our care during the school day. There are six well researched and known strategies that work to personalise learning for your child. These strategies are helpful in the work that teachers and parents in partnership at SSP engage in to close the educational gap that may, or may not, exist in how learning happens for your child. Over the last two weeks we have conducted parent information meetings to set up this partnership between home and school. We had 77% of our parents attend these meetings.



### 1. Authoritative parenting

This one in fact underpins all six strategies. Families are critical to the work of educating young people and the style of parenting they choose affects their child's development. An authoritative parenting style is a good balance between love and warmth, and setting boundaries. "At home good parenting" (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003) has a substantial influence on children's achievement compared to other factors and is a good predictor of the intellectual and social and emotional outcomes that a child will experience (Emerson, et al., 2012).

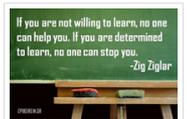
### 2. Know the value of education

Parental engagement has an indirect effect on "influencing children's orientation towards learning particularly their motivation and engagement to learn". Parental engagement is effective when parents model the behaviours of successful

lifelong learners to their children. The aim is that they develop the beliefs, attitudes, skills and routines required to become an autonomous learner with a sense of self-efficacy and academic competence that leads to becoming an autonomous adult.

### 3. Have high expectations and aspirations

The major area where the home makes a difference is in setting expectations while expressing encouragement. Parental engagement in learning is effective when parents hold high expectations for their children, communicate a belief in their potential to achieve and discuss their child's educational and career aspirations.



### 4. Family-led learning in the home

This year SSP has moved away from homework in its old context (a term used when you went to school) and more towards the idea of learning at home with you!

Research suggests that the greatest effect that parents can have is in making home an extension of schooling that consistently promotes children's academic achievement. "Academic socialisation" is an important aspect of family-led learning which goes further than setting the environment for learning in the home and influences social and emotional learning. It involves linking school work with current events, discussing learning strategies with the child and making connections between their current effort and achievement of their future goals of employment or further study.

### 5. Become engaged and stay engaged throughout their schooling

Early interaction can have long-term effects, as "vocabulary at 3 years of age has been found to be predictive of language skills at 10 years of age" (Hart & Risley, 2003 as cited in Goodall, 2013, p. 140). Parental engagement – regular talk about school and the value of learning (Clinton & Hattie, 2013) throughout schooling, particularly at transition points (Goodall, 2013) – is essential.

## 6. Family-school communication

While the home learning environment remains critical to a child's education, dialogue between parents and school is crucial to the child's success. Schooling is relationship based and requires quality two-way communication and meaningful dialogue between home and school (Elliott, 2003; Harris et al., 2009). Schools that successfully engage parents in learning tend to communicate with them openly, clearly and frequently and offer a wide range of reciprocal learning opportunities for parents and school staff (Elliott, 2003).

These six strategies form my conceptual model of effective parental engagement which takes on a different shape in different schools. If parental engagement is not an add-on, but rather a value-add, it will align to our school's strategic direction and enhance our framework for teaching and learning (Caldwell and Spinks, 2013) here at SSP.



### ENGAGEMENT

#### Parent Information Nights

All classes have now held their Parent Information nights. These were well attended and are an important part of setting the scene for the current school year. Thanks to those parents who have already volunteered to be a HOPE representative across the school. Your role is valued greatly by all in the school community.

#### HOPE Meeting

The first HOPE meeting for 2017 will be held in the staff room on Friday 3 March 2017 at 9.00am. Everyone is warmly invited to attend.

#### Save the Date

The Friends of St Simon Peter are holding their annual Sundowner on the Deck on Wednesday 15 March at 5.30pm. Please click on the link below for more details. We look forward to a big turn out to the event which is always a lot of fun. Come and hear about the plans of the Fundraising and Social Committee, KidsMatter, HOPE and Canteen & Catering. See you there.



#### Library News

At this time of year we are looking for volunteers to help in the library and also to do book covering at home. Thank you to those wonderful parents who have already volunteered. Book covering at home is a great way for people to help the school who may not otherwise be able to come to the school, either because they work or have young children at home. If you are unsure how to cover books, but would like to have a go, please contact the Library staff on 9301 6814 and we will help you.



Volunteering to help in the library can be at any time that suits you, for either an hour or two, in the morning or afternoon. As a volunteer, you can be taught the Circulation area, receiving books into the library, loaning books via the automated system (if you wish to) and shelving the books. There are many other jobs in the library. So whatever time and help you can give it will be most welcome. These volunteer hours are part of the "Give 10" program running at our school.

If you have not been on our volunteer list, or if you were on it last year and wish to continue this year, please fill in the volunteer slip which can be accessed by clicking on the link below and send it to the Library before Friday 3 March, or email:

Mrs Leonard at [leonard.vicki@cathednet.wa.edu.au](mailto:leonard.vicki@cathednet.wa.edu.au) or  
Mrs Boudewyns at  
[boudewyns.helen@cathednet.wa.edu.au](mailto:boudewyns.helen@cathednet.wa.edu.au)

**Thank you from The Library Team**

### ACCOUNTABILITY

#### Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care began on Monday for all children in Pre Primary to Year 6. The focus for semester one is Anxiety. We know that everyone at some point in time gets anxious. The only difference between the anxiety that one person feels and what others may feel is the degree of anxiety experienced. Meditation is one way that children can learn to control their anxiety. Many classes are using the Smiling Mind App which is free to download; developed by educators and psychologists and can help to bring balance to people's lives through modern meditation.



#### Family Details

If you have moved house, have new email addresses or telephone numbers please let the office staff know. In the case of an emergency it is extremely important that we have the correct up to date details. If you need to update the school on any medical conditions and action plans, please contact the school nurse.

#### ICAS Competitions

There have been decreasing numbers of students participating in ICAS over the last few years. Therefore, a decision has been made and the ICAS competitions will not be offered at SSP for 2017.

## DISCIPLESHIP

### Prendville House Mass Thursday 23 February

This Thursday at 9.00am in the parish church, we celebrate our Prendville House Mass. All parents and families are warmly invited to join us. Prendville House is named after Archbishop Redmond Prendville, who was the youngest Archbishop in Perth and known as 'The Builder'. He was responsible for overseeing the building of many parish churches and was a visionary man, purchasing many years ago the land on which our school, parish and Prendville College is built.



### Ash Wednesday 1st March

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the church season we call Lent. It is a special time of the year when we prepare for Easter by thinking about our lives.



Lent is a time of prayer.

Lent is a time to think about how we can change and become better people.

Lent is a time for saying 'sorry' and asking for forgiveness.

Lent is a time for coming back to God who loves each and every one of us in a very special way.

Lent is a time for getting ready. For being prepared and for living simply, so that we can give more of ourselves to others, as a way of showing God's love.

### Parish News

For Parish information and dates please click on the following link: