Dear Parents and Friends,

Welcome back everyone for the 2015 school year. Along with our existing families, I would also like to warmly welcome the 25 new families who began at St Matthew’s this week: Blumenfeld (Ava), Boniwell (Isabella), Burridge (Tia), Causer (William), Cheah (Jack and Mark), Custodio (Sofia), Donges (Luke), Drage (Harmony), Freestone (Piper), Ernst (Ethan), Foster (Imogen), Koina (Bryce), Larobina (Gus), Lyras (Xanthe), Maly (Noah), Mattiske (Max), Mullin (Olive and Grace), O’Connor (Abby), Pearson (Harry), Pindral (Annie), Scicluna (Ava), Sephora (Amy) and Szabo (Noah). We also welcome back the Pine family (Jessica, Emily and Sophie) who have returned to us after a couple of years on Norfolk Island. A very warm welcome to you all, and I wish you all a long and happy association with St Matthew’s.

It has been a wonderfully smooth start to the school year. Parents and carers, I thank you for the support and encouragement you have given your children to allow them to start the school year in such a positive and organised way. They came back on Monday with big smiles and such a positive mindset, ready to make 2015 their best year ever at school. Thank you for your continual support of the work we do with your precious children.

Calendar

Tomorrow you will receive a paper copy of our whole year calendar. These details can also be found on our Google calendar on the school website, and a digital copy of the calendar can also be found in our communication tab on the website. All notes sent home from school can be found at http://stmattsps.act.edu.au/communication/notes.html.

Start of School Year Social

SAVE THE DATE!!! Every member of our school community is invited to come to the Community Council Start of Year Social Afternoon on Friday 27 February from 3.30 to 5.00 pm. It will be a great opportunity for the kids to have a play, for you to meet all the teachers in an informal setting and to keep building our wonderfully inclusive and supportive community. The Community Council will provide a sausage sizzle and some afternoon tea snacks. Bring along some drinks to share.

Mrs Wilks’ Farewell

You will have received my letter about Mrs Helen Wilks’ resignation from the St Matthew’s staff, and I know that you will join me in wishing her every blessing in her new adventure at her new school. Please join us for the Opening School Mass next Friday 13 February at 9.30 am so we can farewell Mrs Wilks and bless her on her way.

Sports Days 2015

Sports days will continue to be Tuesday and Thursday for all children at St Matthew’s in 2015. This allows for a washing day between each uniform day, and allows for even spacing of fitness and physical activities in the school timetable. Please note the sports shirt, introduced at the start of 2013, is a compulsory item of school clothing. McDonald’s Childrenswear at Jamison is our preferred uniform supplier for the St Matthew’s uniform.
New Counsellor
We welcome Nicole Villatobas, our new counsellor, to the St Matthew’s community. Our counselling service is provided by CatholicCare; more information about this service can be found on page 4 of this newsletter. Nicole be working with us every Wednesday for a total of 9 hours per fortnight.

Term 1 School Fees
Term 1 school fee statements will be sent home next week. If you have set up a direct debit, these statements are for information only to see the term’s account. If you have not made adjustments to your direct debit to cover the 2015 fees, please come in the office to amend your payment schedule.

Swimming Carnival
Our Year 1-6 children will be taking part in the annual swimming carnival at Big Splash in Jamison next Tuesday 10 February. Permission notes and all race entries are now OVERDUE. Please check the windows outside the Year 4 classrooms for correct entries. Thank you to parents who have volunteered their services to assist on the day. Once again, children will be permitted to have free time on the slides provided they pass the assessment in the morning as outlined on the permission slip. A huge thank you in advance to the wonderful carnival organisers Ms Bew, Mrs Leonard and Mrs Ewyk, along with Miss Fish, for all of their hard work.

Cyber Safety Presentation
St Thomas Aquinas Primary School in West Belconnen is hosting a cyber-safety information night for parents on Monday 16 February at 6.30 pm. Parents from St Matthew’s community have been cordially invited to join this presentation. If you would like to attend please ring St Thomas Aquinas on 6258 4077 so they know how many people are attending.

I wish you every blessing as we begin our school year together. May our God of peace and love be in your homes this coming week.

Brenda Foley
Principal
brenda.foley@cg.catholic.edu.au

In Sympathy
I ask you to keep the Sly family (Jessica, Year 5, Benjamin and Lachlan, Year 2) in your prayers after the death of Nevenka’s sister in the holidays.

† Eternal rest, grant unto her O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon her.
May she rest in peace. †
### Leadership Team

- **Principal**: Ms Brenda Foley
- **Assistant Principal**: Ms Cathy Talbot
- **RE Coordinator**: Mrs Sylvia Campbell
- **Curriculum Coordinator**: Miss Rachel Fish

### Teachers

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<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder Blue</td>
<td>Mrs Louise Egli</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kinder Maroon</td>
<td>Mrs Karen Evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 1 Blue</td>
<td>Miss Kerrie Buckler</td>
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<td>Year 1 Maroon</td>
<td>Miss Louisa Vance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2 Blue</td>
<td>Mrs Fiona Debenham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2 Maroon</td>
<td>Miss Claire Campbell</td>
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<td>Year 3 Blue</td>
<td>Miss Domenica Laria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3 Maroon</td>
<td>Mrs Michelle Johnson</td>
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<td>Year 4 Blue</td>
<td>Mrs Alison Ewyk</td>
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<td>Year 4 Maroon</td>
<td>Mrs Millie Leonard</td>
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<td>Year 5 Blue</td>
<td>Ms Tegan Bew</td>
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<td>Year 5 Maroon</td>
<td>Mrs Victoria Taber (Mon-Tue), Mrs Michelle Mason (Wed-Fri)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 6 Blue</td>
<td>Miss Rachel Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 6 Maroon</td>
<td>Mr Mr Jeremy Stevens</td>
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### Library

- Mrs Margaret Watt

### Music

- Mrs Susan Curbishley (Mon-Wed)

### Japanese

- Mrs Anne Hodgkin (Mon-Tues)

### Learning Support Team

- **Learning Support Teacher**: Ms Cathy Talbot
- **Reading Recovery Teacher**: Mrs Sylvia Campbell
- **Learning Support Assistants**: Mrs Donna Apps, Mrs Janice Colley, Mrs Kerry Tozer

### Office Administration

- TBA

### Out of School Hours Care

- Verna phone 02 6254 9815

All staff at St Matthew’s can be contacted by email using firstname.surname@cg.catholic.edu.au

e.g. brenda.foley@cg.catholic.edu.au

or contact the school on office.stmatts@cg.catholic.edu.au
CatholicCare Student and Family Counselling Service

What?
As part of their pastoral care program for students, Catholic Schools have access to a Student and Family Counselling service provided by CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn (CCG). CCG are contracted by Catholic Education and Congregational Schools to provide a counselling service to students and their families. There is no fee to access this service.

The role of the counsellor is to focus on the emotional, social and educational well-being of the students. Counsellors welcome contact with students having difficulty with some part of their life, whether or not it affects their school work. The problem does not have to be a big one. It is better to seek help sooner than later. Some typical concerns that counsellors work with include: anger, anxiety, behavioural problems, depression, eating problems, family breakdown and family conflict, grief and loss, learning and educational challenges, parenting challenges, peer and other social relationships, school avoidance, stress and study skills. As well as individual sessions with students, counsellors can run groups, do family work, consult with parents and teachers and make referrals to other services and supports.

Counsellors are not employed as specialists in any area and at times will suggest referrals for specialist services. Counsellors also do not provide cognitive or learning assessments or court reports. Families requiring these will be referred to another service.

Who?
All Student and Family counsellors are professionally qualified Social Workers or Psychologists who participate in regular clinical supervision and professional development.

Student and Family Counsellors subscribe to a set of professional ethics that include duty of care and respect for the individual's right to privacy and confidentiality. The counsellors’ obligation is to ensure the safety, wellbeing and confidentiality of the student they are working with. All counsellors are mandated to report any disclosure or sign of abuse (including self-harm) or neglect to Child Protection Services.

How?
Students can refer themselves, be referred by family, school staff or other agencies. Primary school students require the consent of their parents or guardians to access counselling. The consent of both parents is required where there is separation/divorce and both parents have parenting and decision making responsibilities. High school students do not require parental consent to access the counsellor. Where it is in the best interest of the student and with the student’s consent counsellors will facilitate the involvement of a parent or guardian.

Counsellors use the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) as part of assessment and monitoring of change during counselling. Use of these measures is considered best practice and measures such as this are widely used in counselling services. In high schools, the counsellor will request students to complete an initial questionnaire in one of the first sessions and a follow up questionnaire during and/or towards the end of counselling. In primary schools, counsellors will request parents/guardians to complete an initial questionnaire before seeing the student and again during or before completion of counselling. Counsellors may also request teachers and high school parents to complete questionnaires. This will be done with the knowledge and consent of parents/guardians and high school students. More information on the questionnaire is available at http://www.sdqinfo.com/.

The counsellor’s presence in schools varies from two days per term to 5 days per week during school term time. Counsellors can be contacted directly in person at the school, through the school front office or staff or through the CCG Red Hill office on (02) 6162 6100. Feedback on the service can be provided directly to the counsellor, by phoning the CCG office or anonymously on the CCG website.