Dear Parents,

WOW, the gardens and playground look fabulous. Thanks for all your hard work. A special thanks to Richard Harrison and the Environmental leaders Connor and Tom for co-ordinating our School’s Clean-up Day last Friday. It obviously went smoothly because you got a lot done. Thanks also to the parents who came along to lend a hand. It’s always nice to be involved when you can.

At the Principals’ conference in Yamba last week we read through Pope Francis’ ‘Evangelii Gaudium’ (The Joy of the Gospels) and I would like to share this section with you as we work towards making good choices during Lent.

‘The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. When our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades.’

This can happen to all of us from time to time. We find ourselves faced with conflict or feeling unhappy with something. It has certainly happened to me many times throughout my life, so many years ago I devised this little 4R checklist, to help me sort out the whinges from the genuine concerns in my life. I have shared this with the children and I thought I would share it with you. 

R no. 1 – I ask myself is the reaction / request rational? As a gauge I say if someone else came and said this to me, what would I think? 

R no. 2 – I ask myself is my request reasonable - would it be taken seriously in the wider social setting?

R no. 3 – Am I approaching this in a respectful way? Would I like to be spoken to like this or have an email sent to me like this?

Finally, R no. 4 – Have I reflected on my concern, prayed on it and thought it through overnight or longer? If I haven’t, I become reactive and that takes away from the other 3R’s.

If the answer to all of the above is yes, then I need to discuss the matter with the relevant person or people calmly, respectfully and with an open mind.

I have found when I follow through with this process it helps to build my 5th and 6th R’s – resilience and respect. Because I have followed through the process, I have found my voice, expressed my opinion and been heard, and then whether I get my own way or not becomes less important.

We are all on life’s journey together. We come with our own sets of baggage, faults and flaws but it is good to know God has an immeasurable love for each of us. A love that conquers all, forgives all, and brings healing to all who are willing to accept it. This love of God conquers all things, even our sinfulness, and brings about our conversion, transformation and healing. With Jesus, joy is constantly born anew.

Sue Darby
Acting Principal
CAR PARK SAFETY: At the moment we are experiencing some congestion in the car park in the afternoons and some parents have been parking front-on in the drop-off zone directly in front of the school. This is not a safe option as you need to reverse across an area where children are walking. Our school leaders in the photo below are demonstrating where NOT to park. We have tried to paint out the old parking lines with limited success.

If you arrive in the car park and there are no parking spaces in the parking area you can park in the drop-off zone / turning circle in front of the school as shown in the photo below. You then pick up your child and wait in line until the car in front of you moves off and then you continue around the circle and leave. This is NOT an overtaking area. All children in the carpark MUST be accompanied by an adult.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: The World Day of Prayer is being hosted by the Catholic Church this Friday 6th March (our pupil-free day). Some of our students will be singing in the choir at this event, which will be held at 2pm in the church. Participating students should wear full school uniform (blue shirts) and arrive at 2pm.

P&F MEETING: Our first P&F meeting for the year was held last Wednesday. Thank you to the parents and friends who attended. Our AGM meeting time has been set for Wednesday 25th March at 3:25pm. All are welcome!

For your calendar: We will be having one street stall each term. The dates are:
- Wednesday 4th March
- Wednesday 13th May
- Wednesday 19th May
- Wednesday 4th November

BULB FUNDRAISER: The P&F Association has decided to hold a spring-flowering bulb fundraiser again this year. Catalogues are being sent home today. Please note that there’s a printing error in the catalogue – item #34, Rannunculi Mixed has been incorrectly priced; it should read 40 bulbs for $14, NOT 10 bulbs for $14. All orders should be returned to school by Friday 27th March.

STREET STALL: Thank you to our lovely street stall helpers; Kim Brady, Gwen Turner, Alisha Fenton, Alisha Miller & Mel Lawler. We had a wonderful response to our call for saleable items, resulting in what must be our most successful street stall ever, with a profit of $626.10! Thank you to everyone who supported this, either by baking or sending in something to sell, making a donation, buying something from the stall or buying a raffle ticket. A big thank you to the Miller family, who donated the load of split firewood to raffle, which made approximately $250 (included in total above). The lucky winner of the wood raffle was the Dorrigo Support Centre.

CAR BOOT SALE: At last week’s P&F meeting, we discussed the possibility of holding a Car Boot Sale as a P&F fundraiser. A sub-committee has been set up to organise this, consisting of Alisha Fenton, Alisha Miller & Megan Francis. If anyone else is interested in being part of this sub-committee, please let us know at school.

LINK TO SCHOOL WEBSITE: http://moodle.dorplism.catholic.edu.au/

PARISH MASSES: Sunday Mass – 10:00am.
All are welcome.

SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY: Our school cross-country will be held next Thursday 12th March at 10:30am. Students in all classes will compete in races of
varying distances. We will need some parent helpers to assist with marshalling on the day – please let us know if you’re available to help. The cross country is always a really enjoyable event, especially watching the littlies run and cheering everyone on! Sports uniform is to be worn on this day.

CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATE: A green form was sent home with your child yesterday (unless you have a child in Kindergarten – in that case your contact details should be up-to-date from the Kinder enrolment forms) to enable us to update each family’s contact information. We particularly need to know if you have access to the Skoolbag app, as in emergencies, such as the recent school closure, it’s essential for us to be able to contact everyone. Please complete and return the form ASAP.

MASS: K/1 attended Mass today. Years 4/5/6 will attend next week.

ASSEMBLY: Tomorrow’s assembly will be held at 2:40pm and will be led by the Year 4/5/6 class. All are most welcome.

MASS WITH FATHER JIM: Father Jim would like to come up and say Mass for the children one last time. This will take place on Friday 27th March and all are welcome.

SCHOOL SOCIAL: As discussed at the beginning of the year at our parent / teacher information meetings, we are trialling class-organised socials this year. The first class to be organising a social is K/1. If your child is in Kinder or Year 1 and you would like to be on a committee to help organise this, we will be meeting on Tuesday 10th March (next Tuesday) at 5:15pm. Please come along and we will make it happen.

LENTEN PROGRAM: This program will be held on Thursday afternoons at 2pm and go for about an hour. If you would like to follow the program at home let Mrs Darby know and she can organise that for you. Liz Crane also runs a program on Monday evening in the Church at 7pm. All are most welcome – you do not have to be Catholic to participate. Please let us know if you would like to be part of this program.

CANTEEN: There is no canteen this week, as Friday is a pupil-free day.

CAPTAIN’S AWARD: Congratulations to Cash Gibson, who received a Captain’s Award for settling in to school very well.

GOOD LEARNING AWARDS: Class awards went to Kiara George for responding to direction in a timely manner; Brydi Fittock for consistent application in all tasks and a very good effort with home reading; Jasper Fischer for always putting in 100% effort in all learning activities; and Jorja Gilbert for showing an ability to use technology to improve the appeal of published content.

STUDENT ABSENCES: If your child is absent from school for any reason, please make sure you notify the school. There are several ways you can notify us:
- By phone
- By email to msjpdr@lism.catholic.edu.au
- Via Skoolbag app
- By written note

LIBRARY: Thursday is library day. Students will need to bring a cloth library bag (an old pillowcase is fine) to transport their books to and from school. This keeps them protected from mishaps.

ST PATRICK’S DAY: Tuesday 17th March is St Patrick’s Day – St Patrick is the patron saint of the Lismore Diocese. All students and staff are invited to come to school wearing mufti with a St Patrick’s Day or “green” theme on this day; please bring a donation of a gold coin (or however much you can afford) which will go to Children’s Mission Partners. Parents and children are invited to write a limerick or St Patrick’s Day riddle to share at school.

COMING EVENTS:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 4th</td>
<td>Diocesan Swimming Carnival</td>
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<td>Wed 4th</td>
<td>P&amp;F street stall</td>
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<td>Fri 6th</td>
<td>Pupil-free Staff Development Day</td>
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<td>Tues 10th</td>
<td>K/1 Social meeting, 5:15pm</td>
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<td>Thurs 12th</td>
<td>School Cross-Country</td>
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<td>Fri 13th</td>
<td>Term 1 school fees due</td>
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<td>Tues 17th</td>
<td>St Patrick’s Day</td>
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<td>Wed 18th</td>
<td>Confirmation</td>
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<td>Wed 25th</td>
<td>P&amp;F AGM</td>
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<td>Fri 27th</td>
<td>Final Mass with Father Jim, Bulb orders due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 31st</td>
<td>“Macbeth” performance in Bellingen</td>
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GFS KIDSPLUS meets every Wednesday during term time from 3-5pm in the Anglican Church Hall. There is food, fun, games, worship and craft. Students from Kinder through to Year 10/11 are welcome. Cost is $1 per session – new pupils always welcome. Contact Rev Mike on 6657 2015.

DORRIGO HIGHLANDERS FC has nominated six junior teams in the North Coast Football competition for this season, but we are still looking for players to fill a few remaining spots. We've nominated both a 14 and a 16 years girls team and invite all girls between 12 and 16 years to come and try a soccer training session with renowned girls football coach Kim Preece on Thursday afternoon (5th March) at the Rec from 3:30pm. We're confident if you try it, you'll love it and want to register immediately. Bring a friend and give it a go. We're also looking for 10, 11 and 12 year old boys and girls to play in the mixed 11 years team. Please register on-line or contact Rosalie Smith on 6657 5255 or Melissa Pitkin on 6657 2032 if you think you might be interested. To register go to www.myfootballclub.com.au. Just select "Register Now" from the home page to complete on-line registration. Payment can be made on-line or select manual payment to pay locally. Its really easy and there's help available. So get together, get online and get registered. Mums, Dads, past players, new players – we need you for the men's and over 30 women's team so don't forget to do your own registration online too. If you need more details contact registrar Rosalie Smith on 6657 5255 or treasurer Barbara Webster on 6657 2703.

SHOP FOR SCHOOLS PROMOTION: When doing your shopping be sure to shop at Park Beach Plaza for your chance to win big for our school! You simply need to shop at any store at Park Beach Plaza, present your docket to the Customer Service Desk located outside near Noni B and nominate Mt St John’s School. The schools with the highest point tally (divided by the number of families with students enrolled at our school**) will win 1st, 2nd and 3rd place and share in the fantastic prize pool of cash and goodies. Be sure to look out for shops displaying a “Shop for Coffs Coast School’s Triple Point Poster”. If you shop at these stores you will receive bonus triple points for our school’s tally to the value of your shopping docket!

** Full terms and conditions can be found at www.parkbeachplaza.com.au
WORDS Michael Grose

10 golden rules for parenting success in 2015

As the requirements for effective parenting shift and there seems even less time to juggle family life, here are 10 golden rules to guide you on your parenting journey.

The requirements for effective parenting are changing rapidly, just as the profile of parents is changing. Australian parents are now older than ever (30-34 is now the peak child-bearing age group). Families are smaller than ever (over 50% have two children or less). And as children as a percentage of the population shrink (1 in 6 of our population is under 15, compared to 1 in 3 in developing countries), we are less knowledgeable about children than ever.

If you add to this mix that children are growing up at the speed of light, information technology can make parents seem redundant, and increasingly parents claim lack of time is their biggest impediment to effective parenting. So what is a parent to do?

Here are 10 golden rules to guide you along your parenting journey in 2015:

1. Talk more
With families shrinking, kids getting busier and tech devices rapidly multiplying the opportunities for family members to engage in face-to-face talk is under serious attack. Regardless of their age, the best way to influence your children is to talk to them. The kitchen table is one place to do this, but there are plenty of other places where you can talk. If talk becomes difficult, try driving with a child or young person in the car with the radio off. They are bound to break sooner or later.

2. Lean on others
A recent Australian survey found that 50% of parents are seriously struggling with their parenting; yet only 10% of this group would ask for help. I suspect there are many reasons for this including fear of being judged a poor parent; that parenting is expected to be hard; and lack of trustworthy support networks. Author Steve Biddulph once said that parents don’t parent well in isolation. He’s right. It’s incredibly important to build your support networks and get ‘sparents’ into your child’s life. Start by working closely with your child’s teacher; a natural ally!

3. Build confidence
With so many parents reporting that they have a child experiencing anxiety it would seem that we are currently experiencing a crisis in children’s confidence. It would also seem that we have somehow forgotten how to absorb children’s fears, insecurities and anxieties, and install a sense of confidence that these can be overcome. Using a mixture of coaxing, coaching and cajoling parents need to find a way to impart in children a sense of courage to put themselves in new or potentially awkward social situations; to have a go at activities where failure is a real option; and to contribute to the wellbeing of others, which reduces anxiety and fear.

4. Aim for redundancy
The great irony of modern parenting is that as families have shrunk parents actually do more, rather than less, for their kids. There are many reasons for this including lack of time to teach; it’s simply easier to do a job ourselves, and the new expectation that ‘good’ parents do everything for their kids. The new ‘strict parent’ is someone who expects their kids to wash their own clothes, cook a meal, and read a book to a younger sibling. The impertinence! Here’s a six-word slogan to help you remember: “When kids can, let them do!”

more on page 2


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Lead the gang
Parenting is now an individual endeavour. There is a place for parenting the individual child, but there is also a place for parenting the whole gang (even if you and your child make up the gang). Your ability to pull your family together and get them singing off the same song sheet will impact on your family’s harmonious relationships; your children’s sense of other (empathy) and their general resilience and coping mechanisms. There is nothing so magical to witness as a family pulling together when the chips are down. This doesn’t just happen. It takes real leadership by parents to make a family act like a family!

Build developmental knowledge
Many challenges parents experience with their children are due to a developmental mismatch. That is, parents raising their ten year old as if they are eight. The nuances of parenting are age-related, yet due to inexperience we so often don’t read the cues. Recently, I witnessed a mum and dad tearing their hair out trying to communicate with their nine year old son. But the first time he was saying no to them. They thought him stubborn and disobedient. I thought him normal, as nine can be a problematic age, where usually malleable children suddenly start changing. Puberty is stirring. When this couple’s second child turns nine she will experience the benefits of her elder brother paving the way and breaking her parents in for her.

Practice problem-ownership
Please, please, please allow children to own their own problems. Children of all ages can be creative when they have problems to solve. Everything is a potential problem to kids and they need opportunities to resolve them themselves. By all means, coach, guide, give hints but give them a chance to sort out relationship issues; challenges with teachers and academic challenges themselves.

Swim against the tide
Listen to talkback radio, read the headlines of a newspaper or watch a current affairs TV program and you’ll realise that, right now, we live in an incredibly judgemental society. Parents are harshly judged as well. Allow your kids to walk to school and you risk being judged as neglective. Drive your kids to school and you risk being told that you are spoiling them and neglecting their physical wellbeing. It takes a strong parent to swim against the tide of popular opinion. It also takes a strong parent to deny her child say a mobile phone when every other child has one. It helps to say “This is the way we do it in our family.”

Be brave
Perhaps the biggest challenge facing parents, and their children, is the ability to let go of their parental reigns and give kids the freedom they need to develop autonomy. It’s relatively easy to develop children’s independence at home as the stakes aren’t as high. If they can’t cook a meal then you just have to do it for them. However, developing children’s independence outside the home is a different story. Many parents feel decidedly wary about granting children and young people more freedom. There is the perception that the world is a dangerous place. Granting kids freedom has an element of risk; that’s why parents need to be brave. Having the courage to let go is a basic requirement of parenting. It won’t stop you worrying, but that’s part of the game.

Add emotional Intelligence to your parenting mix
With kids experiencing mental health challenges at a depressingly high rate it’s time to add some emotional intelligence to the parenting mix. While many schools are now introducing emotional and social programs on the curriculum, it’s important that parents develop a deep understanding of how emotions work: how emotions can be recognised; how they can work for us and against us; how we can regulate our emotions so they don’t overwhelm us; and how to recognise and respond to the emotions of others. These sound like life-changing skills that if learned, are capable of impacting significantly and positively on future generations.

Michael Grose

parentingideas.com.au