

2021 Principal's Report

The 2021 school year was one which we wished, hoped and prayed would see normality return and our school full of students and families once again. While we began with this enthusiasm (in amongst following new guidelines) our deepest desires were short lived with numerous lockdowns enforced throughout the year.

The move into remote learning was not new, however as a school we knew from feedback in 2020 that we needed make changes for the children and the families at home who were needing contact and communication with their peers and their teachers more than the previous years. We needed to be more visible as the educators from F – 6.

A new Remote Learning Framework was introduced to staff and families to ensure clarity about the expectations of the students when learning from home. The staff have contributed to this document which provides clear direction about the work children will complete, the way students access this work and the support teachers will provide to students and their families during Remote Learning times.

STUDENT OUTCOME TEAM (previously known as School Leadership Team)

During the 2021 year this team consisted of:

- Principal / Catholic Identity: Jessica Carmichael
- Deputy Principal / Learning and Teaching: Susan Kerlin
- Learning Diversity: Cheryl Schwab
- Wellbeing (SWPBIS): Jessica Allen

GRADUATE OUTCOMES:

Our Graduate Outcomes were put to the test this year as we embarked on another year of up and down moments. The language that has been so beautifully embedded into our story and who we want our students to be can be witnessed through daily interactions with each other, listening to conversations between students with the language being used in an authentic manner and celebrations that teachers have with their students during their learning – paying attention naming the Graduate Outcome to their learners.



At St Joseph's Primary School, we seek to educate our students to be;

- Confident – *to be themselves, to achieve great things and be resilient in their learning*
- Collaborative – *to be open to new ideas and learn with others*
- Inclusive – *to always be welcoming and be respectful to all*
- Compassionate – *to consider each person and to take action for those who are unable*
- Courageous – *to be a risk taker, to challenge themselves and to lead with a just heart*

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

St Joseph's has a proud Catholic tradition within the community of Rochester. This year our motto of "People of Strength, People of Gentleness" was given more emphasis as we celebrated the Year of St Joseph.

Children in Year 3 celebrated their First Reconciliation at a Mass with Father Caldow and close family.

St Joseph's prides ourselves on being welcoming to the wider community and treating all with dignity and kindness. Despite the restrictions of Covid, we were continually committed to the spiritual development of our children and opportunities to participate in Masses, liturgy and the Holy Sacraments.

GOVERNANCE

This re-definition of the governance structure of Sandhurst Catholic Schools coincides with a time of increasing challenge within Church structures and calls for us to read the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel, to imagine ways in which new structures will meet the needs of a changing Church profile and to remind ourselves that our central task is to live the Good News of Jesus Christ in our schools and in our governance. In a real sense, our task is to continue the work of all those who have gone before us in Catholic education.

Over the year Governance has been a major focus for schools across Sandhurst. As we moved into a new way of being staff worked through frameworks to ensure their understanding of all areas that create the school community.

LITTLE JOEY'S

Missing from our community this year was Little Joey's. A program that gave our community that little bit 'extra' when it came to transitioning into a school setting and assisting families to choose a school for their child. With the unpacking of Governance this successful venture of ours has concluded but we continue to build a new way of transitioning and creating opportunities for connection to the school for families.

PARTNERSHIP WITH REDHS

St Joseph's continued their partnership with REDHS during 2021. Rachael Else started the roll and continued building our partnerships with community organisations such as 'Ride to School' campaign and Munch Mondays. Her role took her into the classroom where she was able to work with children and gain more insight into what grants and incentives would best cater for the students.

In the earlier part of the year, Rachael started maternity leave and the work she started continued with a new welfare officer, Vanessa.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students (and families) were invited to attend the annual 'Welcome BBQ' for the year. With new COVID guidelines in place creativity was required. No longer could shared salads and

desserts be the norm. By reaching out to parents in our community who had food businesses (Brad O'Brien, Michelle Acocks and Becky O'Sullivan) we were able to offer families the option of ordering food and collecting on the evening. A wonderful evening was had by all and feedback was that families enjoyed the new layout.

Year 5/6 Leadership Day, an outdoor Mother's Day breakfast, Crazy Pants Day, Crazy Hair Day, Golden Hammer Day, Footy Colours Day, Colour SJPS with Kindness Day and R U OK day were all crowd pleasers for the students.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

During school closures it was important to the school staff that all the children understood that while they were not together onsite, we were thinking of them daily. Opportunities to be part of the fun were given to those who were learning from home with Funny Filter Day, Splash of Yellow photos and interactive Book Week.

During R U Ok week families were invited to collect a yellow flower to complete and it was hung from a tree at the front of the school for them to see as they walked or drove by.

STAFFING

At the beginning of the year we welcomed Fiona McKiernan to the staff as a Specialist teacher; STEM and LLI.

At the end of year we farewelled:

- Jessica Allen; after three years at St Joseph's, Jess returned to her home state of NSW and was successful in a teaching job.
- Fiona McKiernan; personal reasons saw Fiona move on to another Catholic school in our diocese.

At the end of year we welcomed:

- Liz Trewick; Principal beginning 2022.
- Emily Holmes; classroom teacher
- Yvette Lupa; classroom teacher

We wish all those who have been in our school the very best of luck and hope that their adventures at their new schools leave them with as many beautiful memories as they have created with us.

We welcome our new staff and look forward to learning with them, working with them and creating exciting times in the school for students, families and staff alike.

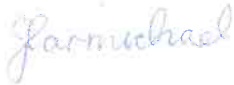
PARENTS AND FRIENDS CONTRIBUTION

All schools (Catholic in particular) rely heavily on their P&F to contribute both physically and financially throughout the year. We are blessed with a wonderful team of parents who both fundraise and give so much of their time and effort to ensuring everyone feels welcome and supported within the St Joseph's school community, in particular supporting the end of year event for our leaving year 6 students. It was a wonderful way for these students to end their time at school especially given how disrupted their final years had been. Missing camps was a gap we were not able to fill but their fun day filled that void amazingly!

With the loss of two prominent Rochester figures, Leo Pain and Bill Leahy who were closely connected to the school – another thank you to Sarah and her catering committee for supporting the families in organising and providing food.

I feel sincerely blessed to be given the opportunity of leading St Joseph's during 2021. Having people see something in you that you don't see is always both humbling and daunting at the same time. During the year I have been given opportunities that I could have only dreamed of. I have spoken to people that have given me inspiration and direction in situations that I have always been the co-pilot of.

Thank you for your support in all the endeavours that have been embarked upon during 2021 – I am excited to see what 2022 has in store for us and be part of the new chapter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jessica Carmichael". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessica Carmichael
Principal (2021)