A Blessing for the School Holidays

Sustaining God, caretaker of life, you are always present. You live in us.

Watch over our staff and students during the break, and keep them safe in your watchful gaze.

Bless our school community as we celebrate our holidays.

We make this prayer through Jesus our guardian. Amen
MUSICAL
I think the photos and news contained today reflect what an incredible experience we shared yesterday at Redlands Performing Arts Centre.

Thank you to our wonderful parents, teachers and grandparents who helped our children put on such a memorable performance. Thank you especially:

Michelle Mair        Tracey Pareezer
Anna Gregori         Lucia Gigante
Melanie Preston      Danielle Golle
Tammy Kitching       Laura Day
Susan Harris         Amelia Clark
Disna Jayasinghe     Lilia O'Neill
Linda Davison        Stephanie Nolan
Sheree Ibbotson      Brylee Langley

MUSICAL THANKS
Thank you, thank you! Our amazing children really rose to the occasion yesterday. I can only say a huge thank you from the bottom of my heart to our cast for their patience, their willingness to listen, be guided and to learn from this experience.

The cast gave up lunch time after lunch time and morning after morning before school to work with Mrs Hardy and myself. Their constant enthusiasm kept us all going through the times when sometimes it seemed too huge a task.

A thank you also to Mrs Bakon for entrusting us with this task and to the wonderful staff at SOTS who were there to support us through it all.

I would also like to thank the amazing team of parents and grandparents for all of their hard work with props, backstage work and general support. I feel immensely proud of our SOTS community.

Terry Larsen       Speech and Drama Teacher

MUSICAL PHOTOS ON FACEBOOK
We have had requests from Parents that other families DO NOT put photos of the Musical on Facebook that include their children. This is particularly in relation to the year level Facebook pages.

Please don’t put up photos that contain children other than your own or with those students whom you do have personal permission from their parents to upload photos to Facebook.

SCHOOL FEES
The school fee schedule for 2016 will be posted on the school’s website and attached to Term 4 newsletters. However, there will be no increase to any tuition fees or levies for 2016.
A MESSAGE FROM SNUG HARBOUR

What a busy term it has been with our wonderful Life Changes program, Individual Education Plans and Chillout and Engine Zone activities taking place.

Our Grade 6’s have been fortunate to have 2 sessions with Mr James Ryan to explore their brains and how they get the most out of their ‘grey matter’. On that note, I have included in this week’s newsletter an article from ‘The Australian’ newspaper which explores how we can optimise our brain function to lead more productive and fulfilling lives, and ensuring our children have the opportunity for downtime. This makes for very interesting reading.

Next term, as has become our tradition at Star of the Sea, there will be a whole school focus on the Daniel Morcombe Curriculum as part of our Health education. Teachers will guide students through a series of lessons to explore many aspects of their safety.

As part of this process, students from Grade 4-6 will have the opportunity to participate in an information session on cyber safety on the 8th October. Thank you to Mrs O’Donnell for organising this. For more information about our Student Protection processes, please check the school website.

Kathy Casley
Guidance Counsellor

SAVE THE DATE

On Wednesday 11th November we will be having our annual Parent and Parishioner Retreat Day.

It will be at the beautiful venue of Santa Teresa Spirituality Centre at Ormiston. The focus of the day is on Compassion – towards others and ourselves! Our day will begin with a cuppa and chat just after school drop off and will conclude by 2.45 at the latest.

We will be blessed with the company of two amazing presenters – James Kirby and Catherine Foley. A beautiful morning tea and lunch will be served. The cost for the day is $25.

Those who have participated in the past have thoroughly enjoyed taking this time for themselves. Please save this date in your calendars. RSVP to kwillardson@bne.catholic.edu.au with an expression of interest. Final numbers and payment to the school office by Friday 6th November please!

FREE DRESS DAY TOMORROW

You may have read or heard about the Orange Laundry Van. This project was the initiative of two young men who were educated at St Joseph’s School, Gregory Terrace, in the CBD.

Their aim is to have these vans washing and drying the clothes of homeless people throughout Australia. It costs $70,000 to buy and fit out one of these vans.

Not only are the young men providing a practical service to our homeless, but as the process takes an hour to complete, there is ample time for their volunteers to engage with them and to provide a counselling service as well.

The Principals of the Primary and Secondary Schools in the Brisbane Archdiocese, which currently has just over 70,000 students enrolled in our schools, have embarked on a joint initiative. Our aim is to raise $70,000 for one van.

Tomorrow, Friday 18th September, children are invited to wear ORANGE for the day in return for a gold coin donation to the bus. We look forward to your support of this worthwhile charity.
TERM 4
Kylie Williamson will assume the role of Acting Principal next term during my leave. Kate MacArthur will move into the Acting Assistant Principal role.

Term 4 is another jam packed term with Dance Fever lessons, Swimming lessons, Inter-House Swim Carnival, Times Tables Challenge, Book Fair and Book Week and Reporting.

VOLUNTEERS’ MORNING TEA
Our Whole School Musical was another wonderful example of the support our parents provide our students and school. We would like to invite all our wonderful helpers to a morning tea on Friday 20th November from 8:30am in the staff room.

DATE CLAIMERS TERM 4
New Parents and Staff Social Function  Monday 23rd November 6pm – 7pm in The Lighthouse.
Graduation Celebrations Thursday 26th November
Orientation Day for new Preppies and Transition Day for all students in other year levels  Friday 27th November

UNIFORM SHOP
Due to the public holiday on Monday 6th October the last day the Uniform Shop will be open for the first time in Term 4 on Monday 12th October. The Uniform shop will be then open every Monday from 8:15am to 9.15am in Term 4.

Don’t forget if you can’t make the opening times just complete an order form (on our website) and send into the office with payment and the uniform items will be sent home with your child.

BRISBANE BILLYCART CHAMPIONSHIP
Congratulations to Trey Drennen and Liam Austin who participated in the Brisbane Billycart Championship which was held at Carindale Recreation Reserve last Sunday.

The boys used Billycarts that were built during Year 4 Discovery Learning this term; where the Year 4’s learnt how speed is affected by the size of a force and the effect of friction on different surfaces, such as tyres.

It is great to see our Discovery Learning projects being taken into the local community in real life situations.

LOST PROPERTY
We have a lot of unnamed items in lost property. The holidays are a good time to check that ALL uniform items are clearly named.

What an amazing week our Prep All Stars have had - starring in their first ever School Musical and doing it with such style and confidence, making their teachers and parents so proud of them. Well done Preps, your Little Stars shone brightly.

You definitely deserve a holiday after a wonderful action packed term. Our Books by the Bay Library and Café Corner have been very popular this past week, congratulations!

Enjoy your holidays and we will see you back in Term 4 for an exciting end to your Prep year.
A big congratulations to all the students in year 1 for an amazing term. Mr Waters and Mrs Kirby are extremely proud of the maturity, hard work and great behaviour you have displayed.

A highlight has definitely been our narrative writing! The determination and enthusiasm we have put into our writing has shone through with amazing results.

A massive congratulations to the whole school community, in particular Mrs Hardy, Mrs Larsen and Mrs Golle for putting on a stellar performance yesterday. The little stars of the show definitely became big stars by the end of the night.

Have a great holiday everyone!

Wow, what an incredible final week to Term Three! On Monday, year two knuckled down completing a few assessments on our story writing skills, reading skills and progress in mathematics.

Tuesday, we spent the entire day at RPAC rehearsing for our School Musical. It was a long day but our teachers couldn’t be more impressed with our fantastic listening skills, behaviour and overall effort to try our best on stage.

Finally, the day we had all been waiting for arrived! It was so exciting to see all of our friends turn up dressed impeccably in our costumes with neat hair and gorgeous make up. We were all very excited and a touch nervous for the two shows we were about to put on.

We think you will all agree, we were amazing! Our teachers even had a little tear in their eye during the final song because they felt so proud of each and every one of us. We will be finishing off our week with some calm, relaxing and fun activities as we are all very tired after the busy start to our week.

We hope that everyone has a safe and happy holiday and we look forward to sharing in new and exciting learning experiences for one last term in Year Two when we return!

This week has been a very exciting, busy week! We performed our whole school musical called ‘Little Stars’.

We had so much fun on both Tuesday, at the rehearsal and Wednesday at the matinee performance and the night time show.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to make our musical a success – including our awesome Year 3 parents. We even received some rave reviews! In Discovery learning, we have continued to work on our dioramas – made out of a shoebox and craft materials. Most of us have created our unique environment, and now are constructing the animal that lives inside! Take a look at some of our original creations so far...

Lastly, we wish everyone a wonderful and relaxing holiday break!
Keep safe.

What a week! Our Little Stars musical was so much fun! All our hard work had definitely paid off when we heard the cheers of the crowd.

As our term wraps up we have been finishing off our oral presentations and drama performances as well. We have learnt so much about confidence on stage this year and are still improving!

Don’t be surprised if we want to put on some performances for our families on the holidays. We hope everybody has a safe and enjoyable break and look forward to returning to school refreshed for next term!
What a cracking last week of the term at school. Last night was our school musical and there were little stars everywhere who were amazing.

Both shows were incredible and that the audience couldn’t stop laughing at some of the funny lines and delivery. All that practice had paid off and our families thoroughly enjoyed watching our performances.

Tomorrow is the last day of the term and a lot has happened. We are going to recharge the batteries over the spring holidays and gear up for an action packed last term of Year 5. Some of the exciting things happening are Dance Fever, Swimming and the highlight for most of us, Camp!!!!

Over the holidays, check out Moodle to find out where we are going on camp, if you haven’t done so already. Our teachers are hard at work preparing a fun filled term after the holidays for us to enjoy. Be safe over the holidays and we are looking forward to finishing off Year 5 in style and becoming the next leaders of SOTS.

Wow! Wow! Wow! What more can we say??? Our first full school musical, “Little Stars” was a huge success and this was due in no small part to our wonderful seniors. From beginning to end, our Year 6’s shone! Mrs Clough and Mrs McLucas could not have been more proud of them all.

Well done to our talented leads –

⭐️ Alexander Terry
⭐️ Alex Austin
⭐️ Anna Bradley
⭐️ David Day

⭐️ Tahlia Henderson
⭐️ Grace Clarke
⭐️ James Neumann
⭐️ Catelyn Kenmuir

⭐️ Micah Robertson
⭐️ Rumi Ryan

And to those children who played the parts of the parents and Hello Cleveland host –

⭐️ Dilan Winslow
⭐️ Charlotte Hillman

⭐️ Charlotte McMorrin
⭐️ Orla Wright

Thanks to Jack and Harrison who made sure every minute was captured on film, and to everyone else who, despite some initial hesitation, performed beautifully. You all certainly made our job much easier!

The entire show was an absolute credit to Mrs Hardy, Mrs Larsen and Mrs Golle. Thank you ladies for all your hard work. We hope everyone now enjoys a well-earned break and that you all come back refreshed and ready to hit the ground running for our final term together.
HELPING STRESSED KIDS SWITCH OFF FROM BUZZ OF MODERN LIFE

Cheryl Batchelor works with Jaxx Milanovic, 8, who has dyslexia, at the ‘brain fitness lab’ at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane. Picture: Lyndon Mechielsen. Source: News Corp Australia

Chilling out in a technicoloured tent, Jaxx Milanovic traces the outline of a flower in red pencil. The eight-year-old Brisbane boy has dyslexia and struggles to keep pace with his peers in reading and writing.

Each week he attends the “brain fitness lab” at the Queensland University of Technology to do computer and paper-based cognitive exercises to strengthen the neural pathways in his brain. The tasks include “old school” skills such as colouring in, joining dots and creating patterns — features of the bestselling “mindfulness” colouring-in books that seem to be the latest de-stressing fad for adults.

“It’s helping his memory retention and his reading,” says the boy’s coach, Sheryl Batchelor. “It gets his eyes to focus on what they should focus on. We work on the neurological connections that need to occur in the brain for learning. When you keep going down a neural pathway it becomes like a highway; we need to create an off-ramp.”

The NeuroSpark Lab is at the frontier of 21st-century learning, integrating neuroscience with education. It’s an antidote to the busy schedules we continually put our kids through. Advocates predict such “brain health” training will become as common as exercise classes, and profoundly change the world.

Batchelor, who directs the lab, worked as a remedial teacher for 25 years helping children with learning difficulties and behavioural problems. “I was implementing evidence-based literacy interventions in schools but it wasn’t helping a lot of kids,” she says. “Now I know why. You need to work on the neurological connections that need to occur in the brain for learning. If kids are emotionally traumatised, they’re not going to learn.”

Batchelor explains to children that their brains have a “thinking part” and an “emotional part”, and teaches them techniques to self-calm — such as deep breathing or taking time out — when they feel stressed, frustrated or upset. “Once we explain to children how their brain works and that their behaviour is caused by parts of their emotional brain taking control, they can take a step back,” she says. “They can blame their brain, instead of themselves, and realise they can control it.”

Brain-training techniques have been embraced by a handful of Australian schools, which use the commercial program devised by Barbara Arrowsmith, author of The Woman Who Changed Her Brain. The Catholic Education Office in Sydney has trialled the Arrowsmith Program for three years at Casimir College in Marrickville, and the Holy Innocents Primary School in Croydon. Students spend 40 minutes, twice a day, on supervised cognitive exercises.

“It is absolutely amazing how it has changed young people’s lives,” says Kate O’Brien, assistant director of teaching and learning at the Sydney Catholic Education Office. “Every single student has changed the way they learn, even though they were unsuccessful at school, and had poor self-esteem which impacted on their emotional wellbeing. It’s extraordinary.”

One girl had failed every English test she was given until she started the Arrowsmith training in Year 9. Last year, she topped Year 10 English. Two Year 6 boys, who had never passed a maths test, achieved a 75 per cent pass score after the training.

Natasha Bita
National Education Correspondent
Brisbane
Brisbane Girls Grammar School is promoting the health benefits of “mindfulness” in students, and even has three staff psychologists to help coach them in relaxation skills. Girls are encouraged to knit, colour in or meditate during their lunch hours to calm down and control stress.

QUT neurologist Selena Bartlett predicts that brain health programs will soon become as common as physical fitness regimes. In the 21st-century knowledge economy, she says, workers will be prized for their ability to work effectively, manage emotions and communicate.

“Emotions are not soft skills,” she says. “They are part of the brain, they’re hardwired and you can train them. The emotional brain can work in very unhelpful ways: taking that extra doughnut, thinking endlessly about how sad we are and being anxious about the future. Neuroscience, education and brain imaging are coming together to solve mental health and learning issues. It’s going to change the world.”

For adults, the QUT lab helps with recovery from post-traumatic stress disorder and alcoholism.

“I’m working with a 39-year-old tow-truck driver who attended a horrific traffic accident in Brisbane last year, which left him isolated and seeking refuge in alcohol,” Bartlett says. “Alcohol dependence is a common reaction to trauma. But with strategies in place to retrain his brain, this man is now getting his life back in order.”

Pioneering neuroscientist Michael Merzenich — who featured in the ABC television series Redesign My Brain — met officials from Queensland’s departments of Education, Health and Police, as well as the Family and Child Commission, last week. He insists that brain training can “turn on the lights” for children suffering trauma, or with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or autism. Stress, he says, shrinks the brain networks. “The emotional brain is something you can train,” he says. “When people stop blaming themselves and start blaming their brain, everything changes.

“Children need to understand their brain is plastic and they’re not stuck in a rut. Two weeks of training for 15 minutes a day can be enough to ‘turn on the lights’ and make kids more alert.” Merzenich trumpets the importance of rest, relaxation and mindfulness for healthy brains, noting that experiments prove rats’ brains age faster when they are raised in “chaotic environments”. Bartlett agrees that “brains need down time”.

“People think if you need sleep you’re lazy,” Bartlett says. “But we clear toxins from the brain when we sleep. In this crazy world, you need to be able to focus your brain on one thing. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists says children require chill-out time. Nick Kowalenko, who chairs the faculty of child and adolescent psychiatry, says some kids cannot cope with busy schedules.

“Some kids are very susceptible to getting distressed,” he says. “I see a lot of adolescent girls who get distressed and they do benefit from old-fashioned relaxation techniques. One of the activities in mindfulness is all about breathing and being in the moment. This is known to relax people and reduce stress.”

Kowalenko says sleep is vital for healthy brains. “Adequate rest is needed to learn and consolidate learning,” he says. “Downtime, in a sense of children not being too hurried and not doing tasks all the time, is very important. Kids will say to me they just want their parents to be in a room with them watching a DVD or out kicking a ball around. They want to spend time just hanging out.”

Batchelor is convinced that technology and busy schedules are sabotaging children’s emotional health — as well as their learning.

“They don’t do enough play, or dancing, or clapping,” she says. “It sends the emotional brain crazy if there’s no downtime, no coming back into ourselves to calm ourselves down. Anxiety is through the roof. Kids are always trying to live up to other people’s expectations, and girls in particular get depressed when they can’t meet them.”

Handwriting and colouring in — skills that are slowly being lost to attention-grabbing technology — are important for cognitive development. “We’ve crammed so much into the curriculum,” Batchelor says. “Children need to get back to the basics at school — writing, laughing, playing and being kind to each other. “Kids can’t sit still, but that’s because when you’re five years old you’re supposed to be playing. Play is important right across the lifespan. We all need it.”

Natasha Bita is The Australian’s national education correspondent.