



SAINT MARK'S COPTIC ORTHODOX COLLEGE

To live is Christ



NEWSLETTER

Tuesday, 31st March 2015

Volume 20 Edition 1

Upcoming Dates Pentecost Term

APRIL

- 20 Mon Staff Professional Development Day
- 21 Tue Lessons Commence Yrs K – 12
- 22 Wed Event: Meet the Principal
6 – 7 pm, School Hall
- 25 Sat ANZAC Day

MAY

- 1 Fri Teddy Bear's Picnic
- 4 Mon Mothers' Day Stall
- 5 Tue Mothers' Day Stall
- 6 Wed Mothers' Day Stall
- 7 Thu Mothers' Day Stall
Combined Coptic College Senior College
Debating
- 10 Sun Mothers' Day
- 12 Tue NAPLAN Yrs 3,5,7,9
- 13 Wed NAPLAN Yrs 3,5,7,9
- 14 Thu NAPLAN Yrs 3,5,7,9
- 18 Mon Parent Info Evening,
Yr 11- 2016
- 19 Tue BOSTES Review
- 20 Wed P & F Meeting, 7 pm
- 21 Thu Yr 10 Macbeth Excursion
- 22 Fri Combined Coptic Colleges Junior
Debating
- 28 Thu Yr 12 English Advanced – Hamlet

JUNE

- 6 Sat St Mark's Fair TBC
10 am – 3 pm
- 8 Mon Queen's Birthday Public Holiday
- 11 Thu HICES Debating Round 4
- 15 Mon ICAS Writing Competition
- 16 Tue ICAS Spelling Competition
- 17 Wed P & F Meeting, 7 pm
- 22 Mon K-6 Parent-Teacher Meetings
- 26 Fri Lessons Conclude

*During Passion Week, the College Offices will
be CLOSED.*

*College Offices will be Open 14-17 April
between 9 am – 3 pm.*

*Uniform Shop will be OPEN on Friday, 17 April
between 10 am – 2 pm.*

Head of College (Acting)

Greetings to all!! What a wonderful welcome I have received from everyone since I commenced at St Mark's College last Wednesday 25 March! The warmth and acceptance I have experienced from students, staff, parents and the general community has been touching and very humbling indeed.

I thank all for your generosity of spirit and feel blessed that I have been guided towards you and serve you through the Grace of God in any, and every possible way for the benefit of our children.

Over time, I will get to know each of you better and likewise, you will have the opportunity to get to know me. I believe that together we will be able to work towards ensuring that our great College just gets greater with each step that is taken by a unified 'us', working collaboratively and collectively with our combined efforts focussed on achieving our Vision.

In the lead up to the end of this term, may I take this opportunity to wish each of you a blessed and Holy Pascha. Through the darkness, sadness, cruelties and injustices experienced during Passion Week, we then celebrate the greatest Celebration of Our Lord's Resurrection, filling us, our souls and our homes with His Light – guiding us with Hope, Love, Strength and Courage.

أتمنى أن قيامه المسيح و نور القيامه يملأ قلوبنا وبيوتنا بالمحبه والفرح والسلام والامل و الايمان عيد سعيد

May the Resurrection of Christ and His Light fill our hearts and homes with Love, Happiness, Peace, Hope and Faith. Happy Easter!

After some rest and family time for all of us to enjoy, I look forward seeing and welcoming you next term with lessons for K – 12 commencing on Tuesday, 21 April.

Invitation to Meet the Head of College (Acting)

I would like to extend an invitation to all parents of St Mark's College and the wider community the opportunity to attend this Meet & Greet on WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL between 6 – 7 pm to be held in the College Hall.

Please assist by forwarding an RSVP to Mrs Mervat Sidhom by 3 pm Monday, 21 April on 9825 6768. Your RSVP will assist us with the necessary preparations. My wife Anna and I look forward to meeting our community and hope that as many parents as possible are able to attend.

Anthony Tsoutsa

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Newsletters

A Newsletter will normally be distributed each at the commencement of each month (and/or at the commencement of each term). Newsletters will be sent to all families via email and via the Skoolbag app. A small number of Newsletters will be printed and kept at Reception in the Office for anyone to collect who may not have access to email/Skoolbag app.

The next Newsletter will be distributed on Tuesday, 21 April as it will be the first week of term.

SPIRITUAL CORNER

Fr Mark Basily Guides Us: Is it Syami (Fasting)?

During these most holy days of Lent, one of the most common questions asked when deciding what to purchase from the supermarket is: "Is it Syami (is it fasting)"? You quickly turn the item around and start to read the ingredients to ensure that the product does not contain any animal products. Every now and then you get really excited when you discover a product that is enjoyable to eat and still conforms to the requirements of the Coptic Orthodox fast (just like the day when I discovered Oreos were Syami!).

The question: "Is it Syami?" stems from the desire to offer to God an acceptable and honourable fast. As soon as milk solids is read out on the list of ingredients, the item is immediately returned to its rightful place on the shelf. After purchasing all our Syami products, we proceed to the checkout with our conscience at ease that we are fulfilling our desire to offer God an acceptable and honourable fast. But are we really? Is this all that is required? Let us look at the how the Lord explained the acceptable fast to the prophet Isaiah:

"Would you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To lose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter" (Is 58:4-7).

Upon reading the lives of our saintly desert fathers, you will quickly notice two very common trends, they all lived their lives in the quest for spiritual perfection and they practiced extreme forms of physical asceticism. I believe these two simple observations, shed light on the perspective and purpose of fasting. One is the aim, and the other is the means. Although, this may seem to be obvious, we often lose perspective, forgetting the aim (spiritual perfection) while aiming at the means (fasting).

St. John Chrysostom explains it as follows:

"Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works. If you see a poor man, take pity on him. If you see a friend being honoured, do not envy him. Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies.

Let the hands fast, by being free of greed.

Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.

Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful.

Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip.

Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.

For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers"?

So if we would like to offer an acceptable fast to the Lord, let us not only offer the fasting of food, but moreover the fasting of the soul, as John Cassian teaches us saying: "We should not be confident that the outside fasting of food is enough alone for the purity of the heart and body, unless it is accompanied by the fasting of the soul".

"Is it Syami"? Let us not only ask ourselves this question before deciding what food to purchase, but let us ask this question before we refuse a brother a helping hand, let us ask this question before passing judgment on another, let us ask this question before gazing our eyes on a lustful scene, let us ask this question before losing our temper, let us ask this question before deciding not to pray at night and let us ask this question before every action and reaction we may take.

H.G. Bishop Asheya (Isaiah)

On Monday 16 February, H.G. Bishop Isaiah, Bishop of Tahta and its affiliated regions, blessed our college. His Grace visited all primary classes and gave every child a picture of St Mary. A special assembly for high school students was held. H.G. Bishop Isaiah prayed the thanksgiving prayer and spoke few words of wisdom to the students.



H.G. Bishop Daniel visit



H.G. Bishop Daniel, Bishop of St Shenouda's monastery in Putty NSW, visited the college on Thursday 19 February. His Grace blessed the students and addressed them with a spiritual talk.

H.G. Bishop Daniel is voluntarily holding educational services to the children of neighbours of the Monastery and he has requested to collect any spare textbooks for any subject from Kindergarten to Year 12. Anyone able to donate past text books is able to bring these spare textbook to the office for collection by Friday, 17 April.

From the Deputy Head of College

The following two letters from Mr David have been forwarded to all families and have been included in this Newsletter as a reminder in your preparations prior to the commencement of next Term.

Dear Parents,

1. College Uniform & Expectations

This letter is to inform you and your child of the College's expectations in regards to the College uniform. Over the years, staff, students and parents have worked tirelessly to ensure that our College is widely recognised and accepted as an outstanding Independent College in all regards. To continue this success, we need to uphold our appearance at all times. Outlined below are the expectations regarding school uniform.

*All students **MUST** enter and leave the College dressed in their full College or Sports uniform. This extends to travels on Public Transport to and from the College and includes the College blazer (Years 5 – 12) and college bag. The College jumper is part of the winter uniform and must also be worn under the blazer. Next term, girls must wear the winter uniform and ensure that their dress is below the knee. Boys must wear the correct socks (Long Navy Socks) and the **school approved stockings** for girls must be worn at all times. All male students are expected to wear a tie and must do so with their top shirt button closed. At no stage will students be permitted to undo their top button. Students who do not have a top button on their shirt must either repair their current shirt or purchase a bigger shirt immediately from the College Uniform Shop.*

Students are not permitted to wear visible long sleeved shirts under their school shirt. Students that are cold should wear the school jumper and blazer. Any student seen wearing any garments other than the school approved uniform will be asked to remove it. This includes incorrect scarves and any bennies (bennies are not an approved item). The only scarfs permitted are plain navy or burgundy.

*These expectations also apply on Tuesday (senior) and Wednesday (junior) sport days where students must be dressed in full sports uniform including the College tracksuit. Any student who is unable to wear the full sports uniform must wear the correct full College uniform. Students should wear the correct school shorts only. Regarding proper sports shoes, the College will not accept casual shoes including, Canvas, Vans, Rabens, tigers, converse and the like. Indoor sports shoes and/or shoes with distinct florescent coloured labels/material will not be accepted, **only predominantly white sport shoes**. Conservative but supportive sports shoes will help prevent injuries to students while participating in sporting activities. Students will only be permitted to change into their playing boots at the venue and must change back before returning to the college.*

With the exception of sports days and representative sports, No student is permitted to attend school in sports uniform. *Students that have any PE lessons must come to school in full school uniform and then change into their school sports uniform, not vice versa. Likewise, students who have PE in the afternoon must not leave in sports uniform. Only students that have the correct sports kit will be permitted to participate in the PE lesson and we ask that all students have a few sets of uniform in the case of rain.*

*All senior students **MUST** be clean shaven at all times and girls are not permitted to wear nail polish. As is quoted in the College diary Boys must have acceptable hairstyles; the following are not permitted- undercuts, shaved sides, lines in hair or eyebrows, patterns, steps or designs (including gel), extremely short or long hair. Hair colouring for boys or girls is not allowed. Hair colour must be returned to the student's natural colour before s/he returns to the school. **Any student who returns from the school break with an inappropriate hairstyle will be sent home immediately.***

It is important to note that any student that does not conform to the College expectations will not be permitted to enter the examination room until the issue is rectified. This time lost will not be added onto the set examination time.

Finally, whilst the College supports and encourages students to wear a crucifix it does not allow them to be worn as fashion items and asks that all students keep them tucked under their shirts, not visible for all to see.

2. Mobile Phones

It is clearly stated in the Student Diary that students are not permitted to have mobile phones in their possession during school hours of 8:25am – 3:10pm. Rather, students have been advised to place their phone in the Office each morning and pick them up at the end of the day. If an issue were to arise throughout the day parents will be contacted via the College Office and the same channel of communication can be used if parents wish to inform their child of any urgent issues.

Students are strictly not permitted to contact their parents through the use of a mobile during school hours. **Students found to be contacting anybody during school hours will have their mobile phone confiscated immediately** and returned to them at a later time. This includes phone calls, SMS's, Facebook etc.

Any student that does not hand in their mobile phone to the office, but is seen in possession of a mobile phone directly after school may also be punished for their actions.

As a course of action, students who do not comply with any of the College expectations will be issued with an afternoon detention, which will take place on Friday afternoons from 3:15pm – 4:15pm and students who continue to break the rule may have their phones confiscated until their parents arrange a time to pick it up.

3. Wattle Grove Shopping Centre

It is important for students and parents to understand that demographics surrounding the College has changed over the years and as such be aware of the effects these changes could have on our students. Recently, the local shops adjacent to the College has acquired a new bottle shop as well as a large outdoor beer garden which overlooks Australis ave. The introduction of these shops has attracted more people, mainly males, to the area at earlier times of the day.

It is therefore for the safety of a students that we do not permit them to attend the shops in school uniform, before, during or after school.

We also ask that if parents insist on parking at the shops that they walk their children to and from the front gates each day.

We ask for your support on this issue as to ensure that your child respects their College and develops a sense of pride that will flourish throughout their school and home life.

We pray that you have a blessed Easter and relaxing holiday.

Kind regards,
Mr David
Deputy Head of College
31 March, 2015

Traffic Concerns

Dear Parent or Guardians,

A number of serious issues surrounding the dropping off and picking up of students from the College have come to my urgent attention and need to be clarified and amended immediately.

Each morning and afternoon is an extremely busy time for all schools with the movements of cars, buses, parents, teachers and students as well as the local community. It is therefore essential that we all work together to ensure that our students are safe at all times. Please keep in mind the following points;

- **Children are small and hard to see**
Children can have a short attention span, poor peripheral vision and are easily distracted.
- **Always drive at 40km/hr during school zone times**
Driving at a lower speed means you have more time to react to a child's actions and may therefore reduce the severity of an injury if a collision were to occur.

- **Obey parking signs such as 'No Stopping' and 'No Parking'**
You must not stop at all on a section of road that is marked 'No Stopping'. In a 'No Parking' area you can pick up and drop off as long as you stay no longer than 2 minutes and the driver of the vehicle does not move more than 3 metres from the vehicle.
- **Always set a good example when crossing the road**
Children under the age of 10 should always hold the hand of an adult when crossing the road. Always cross the road at the marked crossings or designated safe place to cross. Never call your child across the road.

The main safety concerns at schools always involve conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. You should be aware that Council now has the ability to enforce parking restrictions and illegal road user behaviour around schools.

Parents are urged to drop off and pick up their children in an orderly manner. For this to work effectively parents must drop their children off on the school side of Australis Avenue. At no stage should parents double park or drop their children off at or on a roundabout. We will continue to work with Liverpool council to implement a drop off zone, but until we gain approval it is very important that we abide by the current signage.

In the case that there is no room to drop off a child in front of the large gate; parents must then drive along Australis Avenue until they find an appropriate place to stop and then drop off their children in a safe manner. Children should disembark from the car from the left hand side doors ONLY, away from the street and potential traffic. The same applies for picking up your child. Parents are not permitted to use any of the public bus stops to drop off or pick up their children. **Stopping on or near the roundabout outside the school office is strictly prohibited and is very dangerous for all parties.**

In the case that you do park on the other side of Australis Avenue, your child is only permitted to cross the road by using the pedestrian crossing provided. Again I ask that parents do not signal, wave, whistle or beep their horns to encourage their child to walk directly across Australis Avenue or the roundabout, but rather park on the school side or get out of the car and pick up their children from the front gates.

Parking in the side streets surrounding the College is not encouraged and both council and police presence will be increasing. Please do not impede the resident driveways, refrain from parking on their lawns and at no time should a car park or stop on a corner.

Finally, I would like to remind all parents and students that we are a strong Christian College in the Coptic Orthodox faith, which teaches us many virtues, the greatest of them being Love and Respect. It is our duty and obligation to demonstrate this behaviour both inside and outside the College grounds, especially to our neighbours who have been very patient and supportive of the College as she continues to grow and develop. Many of these concerns have been raised by loving neighbours or passes by who are genuinely concerned about the safety and welfare of our students and for this we are sincerely grateful for.

For a full list of all new penalties and offences, please visit www.rta.nsw.gov.au or call 13 22 13

Yours sincerely,

Mr. David

Deputy Head of College

P & F Updates

Our last event held on 12 February 2015 for the P & F was a Sausage Sizzle where we were able to raise \$975. Our sincere thanks to all of you that assisted and supported this fund raising event, with a special thank you to everyone that donated. We hope everyone enjoyed the day and look forward to offering more activities following Easter in Term 2. Our takings at this event were very similar to that from the same event in 2014. In addition it is worthwhile mentioning that a total of \$498.50 was raised at last year's Fathers' Day Stall.

God bless you always and we are looking forward to everyone's continued support throughout the year. Wishing everyone a Blessed Easter!

HICES Debating Competition

HICES has begun for the year and has already seen our students engage in some intense intellectual debates.

On 26 February, Round 1 of the HICES Debating Competition was held at Thomas Hassall Anglican College where our students proved to be difficult to beat, despite some of them debating for the first time. The Junior Team (Years 5/6) was exposed to the somewhat confronting world of debating and our Middle Team (Years 7/8) had a very close but unsuccessful round. Although our

Senior Team and Opens Teams posed well-founded impromptu debates they unfortunately lost, however, the experience was a steep learning curve that seemed to inspire them for their rescheduled Round 2 debates.

Our Opens B Team versed Thomas Hassall for their Round 2 debate, with a particularly good performance by George Hanna (11) who has developed some fierce rebuttal skills in what is his second year as a HICES Debater. Perhaps the most outstanding performance for the first two rounds of the competition though is the Opens A Team, who convincingly debated their way to a win against George's River Grammar. A special mention goes to Natasha Milosevic (11) who has proven to be a formidable third speaker, so much so that she exceeded her time limit, yet the adjudicators did not mind as her argument was so convincing and effective.

All of the HICES debaters should be commended for their efforts and we ask the entire community of St Mark's to keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we continue in the competition.

HICES Debating Teams

SMC OPENS A	SMC OPENS B	SENIOR: (9 and 10)	MIDDLE: (7 and 8)	JUNIOR: (5 and 6)
Angelique Assad	Joy Tanius	Anthony Iskander	Arnav Jawale	
Natasha Milosevic	Daniel Mehareb	Vishal Vankatesh	Celine Toutounji	Monique Gawargy
Verona Samaan	Jessica Habib	Ravina Mane	Theodora Ramzy	Natasha Edwards
Steven Sutiono	George Hanna		Alexandra Assad	Mercoria Fahoud
Karen Azzi (TK)	Mark Ibrahim (TK)		Marina Mikhail Danielle Safi	Luke Ramzy

Year 8 Geography

Year 8 Geography are currently studying Global Geographical Issues and the Role of the Citizen. Students have been challenged to question real issues that exist in their society. Human rights abuses are at the centre of the topic including child marriage and child soldiers.

Students have actively partaken in a United Nations campaign called #ChildrenNotSoldiers which has been established to galvanise support to end child labour by 2016. Students are compelled to empathise and consider that children like them are being exploited and confronted with the brutalities of war. Students have come to acknowledge that human rights abuses occur and that they can take an active role in becoming educated and in turn become educators amongst their friends and families.

House Points

ST ANTHONY	ST DEMIANA	ST GEORGE	ST MARINA
1645	1610	1571	1546

Junior School
Junior School
News



Parent Information Evening

Parent Information Evenings are held at the beginning of every academic year at the College to give parents and guardians the opportunity to meet their children's teachers.

It is also an opportunity to ask questions about the students' learning experiences. At the beginning of each term the teachers put together an information letter to the parents that outlines the topics taught. The partnership developed between the home and school is invaluable to the education of our students. The staff is looking forward to working with the parents throughout the year, so the students grow and develop their skills, knowledge and talents.

Progress Report

A progress report will be mailed out to each student in week 10. The progress report prepared by your teachers will indicate if your child is working at, below or above the expected level based on assessments, class activities and teachers' observations as outlined by the requirements identified in the Board of Studies (BOSTES) syllabuses within these six key learning areas of:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) (incorporating History K-6 from 2015)
- Creative Arts
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE).

College Assemblies

Assembly for the Junior School is held every morning. During these assemblies the students pray together and listen to important announcements. Year group assemblies are held fortnightly to award students in recognition of their achievements and efforts.

Friday Activities

Every Friday during the last hour of the day, the Junior School operate a **Reading Buddies** program. Every student from Kindergarten to Year 2 is paired up with a suitable student from Years 3 to 6 for reading. A Reading Buddies program helps model good reading. As with any skill, reading needs to be practiced on a regular basis, and with this practice students can improve their own skills.

A reading buddies program allows older students the opportunity to develop fluency as well as a sense of pride in their accomplishments. In addition, they often come to see the value of reading. Students can not only promote good practices but gain self-esteem.

Reading to younger students can help them develop a love of reading and a greater motivation to read. Younger students also read to their older buddies each week, as this allows younger readers to feel a sense of accomplishment while they build fluency. The program provides success in literacy, and with this students often become more positive about their own ability to read and may also improve their reading skills. Buddy visits will be ongoing, and older and younger students will become familiar with one another and nurture a mutual interest in reading.



Diaries

Each child is provided with a school diary. This is an effective means of communicating with your child's teacher. The staff at St Mark's view school diaries as an extremely valuable and useful tool for parents, teachers and students. The diary is a way of keeping regular communication open between parents and class teachers. It is the responsibility of parents to read and sign the diary every night. It is your child's responsibility to record homework details and school events of importance. It is the teacher's responsibility to read the diaries every day and communicate important class and school information to you. Diaries will also be used to convey personal information on your child's progress throughout the year.

Please ensure that you sign the appropriate pages in your child's diary to ensure they can participate fully in school activities.



Liverpool city council
creating our future together

School Zone Penalties Effective 1 July 2014

* The values are doubled during designated holiday/long weekend periods.

Offence	Minimum Fine	Minimum Loss of Demerit Points
Stop on or near: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pedestrian crossing • A children's crossing • Any marked foot crossing 	\$415 \$415 \$415	2 2 2
Double park	\$311	2
Park on a footpath or stop across a driveway	\$173	2
Make an illegal U-turn	\$311	3
Exceed 40km/h in a school zone in a light vehicle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 km/h and under • Over 10 km/h • Over 20 km/h • Over 30 km/h • Over 45 km/hr 	\$182 \$327 \$545 \$1,053 \$2,400	2* 4* 5* 6* 7*
Use a mobile phone while driving	\$415	4
Fail to give way to a pedestrian	\$519	4
Reverse unsafely	\$242	3
Park within 3 metres of double barrier lines	\$242	0



The minimum penalty for disobeying 'No Parking' is **\$173** and **2 demerit points**. You may only stop here for **2 minutes** and stay within **3 metres** of your vehicle.



The minimum penalty for parking in a 'Bus Zone' is **\$311** and **2 demerit points**. You can not stop here at all.



The minimum penalty for disobeying 'No Stopping' is **\$311** and **2 demerit points**. You can not stop here at all. Parking on nature strips is also illegal.