Dear Parents,

Just a big reminder to everyone that:

**this Thursday and Friday (25th & 26th February) are our school closure days.**

These days are to enable all staff members to participate in the review process about our achievements and challenges over the last four years since our last School Improvement Plan was implemented and how we can do things even better for the benefit of our children and community. From this review, a new School Improvement Plan will be developed to describe our goals, intended outcomes and identified targets for the next four years.

Today, we are featuring photos of Year 5/6S doing *Me Moves* which is just one of the meditation activities that we do a couple of times a week. The movements are designed to activate and support a calm and attentive state. Other types of meditation that may be done in the classrooms include Christian meditation, guided meditation, body scan meditation, and labyrinth tracing meditation. As we discussed at the Information Evening, meditation is one of the ways in which we are attending to the wellbeing of our children here at St Mary’s. Why not ask your child to teach you a meditation? It is another great way to learn together.

**Congratulations to our Students of the Week:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Student Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2P</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mikayla B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2H</td>
<td></td>
<td>Holly O’T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oliver M</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/4N</td>
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<td>Maddy S</td>
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<td>5/6B</td>
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<td>Brodie McC</td>
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<td>5/6S</td>
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<td>Caleb H N</td>
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<td>3/4R</td>
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<td>Jarawun L</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/4F</td>
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<td>PJ D</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/6L</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blake W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brookly P/Tianna T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With my prayers and best wishes for the coming week,

Mrs Lynne O’Meara  **Principal**

Don’t Forget!  School Closure Days – 25th and 26th February

What a beeautiful job you’ve done. Congratulations!
Lord Jesus, we have long seen you as offering the great example of how life should be lived. Help us to be models for our children. Especially through this period of Lent, may they see us as people who are loving and forgiving, peaceful and just, compassionate and generous, prayerful, full of love and hope.

What's Coming Up?

| Week Five | Monday, 22nd February       | 8.45am  | School Assembly |
|          | Wed, 25th February          | 3.30pm  | Staff Meeting   |
|          | Thursday, 25th February     |         | District Swimming |
|          | Friday, 26th February       |         | Prep Rest Day   |
|          |                               |         | SCHOOL CLOSURE-Review |
|          |                               |         | SCHOOL CLOSURE-Review |

| Week Six  | Monday, 29th February       | 8.45am  | School Assembly |
|          | Tuesday 1st March           | 8.45-10.45 | Working Bee    |
|          | Wednesday, 2nd March        | 3.30pm  | Staff Meeting  |
|          | Thursday 3rd March          | 2.30pm  | Icy Pole Day   |
|          | Friday 4th March            |         | Prep Rest Day  |
|          |                               |         | Grade 6 School Camp |
|          |                               |         | School Assembly |
|          |                               |         | Bike Ed – Grade 5 |
|          |                               |         | Grade 6 School Camp |
|          |                               |         | Bike Ed - Grade 5 |
|          |                               |         | Grade 6 School Camp |
|          |                               |         | Bike Ed – Grade 5 |

What’s Coming Up?

Thursday 25th and Friday 26th February – School Closure Day
2nd – 4th March – Year 6 Camp & Year 5 Bike Ed
8th March – School Photos
16th March – First Reconciliation
22nd March – House Sports Day
23rd March – Parent Teacher Interviews
Thursday, 24th March 2.30pm – End Term 1

School Closure Days for 2016
Thursday 25th and Friday 26th February
Monday 14th March – Labour Day
Thursday 5th & Friday 6th May – Staff Professional Development
Monday, 13th June – Queen’s Birthday
Monday, 30th October (Day before Cup Day) – Reporting
Do you find that your child is having emotional or behavioral issues or is overly anxious?

OnPsych are a team of fully qualified and registered psychologists who specialise in child and adolescent services working in primary and secondary schools in both individual and group settings.

Services are performed on site at school, at NO COST to the school, student or parent, through Medicare bulk billing.

These services are also available to parents.

We now have an OnPsych psychologist, Arabella Mayne, working here at our school. The approaches that Arabella use include:

- CBT (cognitive behaviour therapy)
- Client centred and solution focussed therapy.
- Employs a collaborative approach.

Issues covered by a mental health plan include: Anxiety, Attention deficit, Alcohol/drug abuse, Adjustment disorders, Bereavement, Conduct disorder, Depression, Eating disorders, Enuresis (non organic), Neurasthenia, Obsessive compulsive disorder, Panic, Phobia, Psychosis, Post-traumatic, Stress, Sleep disorders, Mood disorders, Spectrum disorders, Interpersonal, learning or behavioural disorders, exam stress, harming and adjustment difficulties (social and situational)

If you believe that this service may benefit your child or yourselves, please contact Lynne O’Meara or Angela Glennie on 9736 2219 for further information on how to access Arabella’s services.

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**SCHOOL TERM DATES 2016**

**Term 1**

- **Preps Only**
  - Friday, 29th January – Thursday, 24th March

**Term 2**

- **All other Students**
  - Thursday, 28th January – Thursday, 24th March
  - *Easter 25th – 28th March*

**Term 3**

- Monday, 11th April – Friday, 24th June

**Term 4**

- Monday, 11th July – Friday, 16th September

- Monday, 3rd October – Friday, 16th December

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**2016 FEES HAVE SENT HOME**

Please contact the office if you did not get your fee statement for 2016.

School fees include course and subject levies, and the costs of all curriculum excursions and activities. School Fee Statements will be issued at the commencement of the school year on 3rd February 2016 with payment schedules and forms for direct debits. Reminder Statements will be issued at the beginning of each term for your information.

Fee agreements and payment plans have been sent home and are due back immediately!

**St Mary’s BSB/ACCOUNT Details**

- St Marys Primary School
- BSB 083-347
- Account Number 676054930

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**CSEF CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)**

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS WITH A HEALTHCARE CARD**

Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund helps ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government’s commitment to breaking the link between a student’s background and their outcomes.

**IF YOU HAVE A CURRENT HEALTHCARE CARD**

Contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from www.education.vic.gov.au/csef
Sunday, 21 Feb 2016: Second Sunday of Lent - Year C

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

As Jesus prayed, the aspect of his face was changed, and his clothing became brilliant as lightning.

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning.

Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ – He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. And a voice came from the cloud saying, ‘This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.’ And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.

The Gospel of the Lord

The apostles' experience on the mountain was a time when they finally understood about Jesus. It was an extraordinary experience, but at the end of it, God spoke to them from a cloud and told them that Jesus is God's beloved Son, and that they should listen to him. How do we listen to Jesus today? How can we listen to and follow Jesus this week? What is Jesus is calling you to do this week?

Other news in Religious Education:

- **Commitment Masses for Sacraments** – thank you to the children who attended a commitment Mass on the weekend and signed the book. All staff, students and families will keep you in our prayers as you prepare for these important Sacraments. First Reconciliation is coming up very soon, Wednesday 16th March at 6.00pm.

- **Lent** - God doesn't give up on us, even when we disobey him. Instead, God helps us as we work on changing our actions to become more like the loving person that he wants us to be. The Season of Lent reminds us just how much God loves us.
CALLING ALL GARDEN LOVERS!

As you may know, we have a thriving art and craft club (the Community Craft Club) that is run by a group of parent volunteers, and we were wondering if you would help us start a Creative Gardening Club? This could include doing activities such as growing plants in decorated pots, looking after our school veggie patch, helping kids learn to grow and care for plants and many other things. We are seeking interest from Mums, Dads, Grandparents, Aunties, Uncles anybody to come and help us with this.

If you have any ideas or are interested please contact Mrs Glennie, via the school office or email aglennie@smmountevelyn.catholic.edu.au

Thanks from the SAT team (Student Action Team)
Would you like to assist in the classroom? Would you like to share in an educational journey?

If so, please come and join me at our “Parent Classroom Helpers” workshop. This workshop will help you to understand what is involved in helping out in the classroom. You will be given some hints and tips for working with children and some curriculum background. It is school policy that parents attend a workshop before assisting in the classroom. The workshop will run for approximately 90 minutes.

There are two workshop times available. (you only have to attend one)

Wednesday 31st February at 9.30a.m. in the school library

OR

Thursday 1st March at 6.30 pm in the school meeting room (near office)

Please fill out the attendance slip below and return it to 1/2F or the office, if you are interested in attending one of the workshops

Thank-you,

Veronica Fraraccio

I would like to attend the Parent Classroom Helpers workshop

My name ________________________________

My child’s name __________________________ class ____________

Workshop I wish to attend (please circle)  Wednesday 2nd March at 9.30a.m  Thursday 3rd March at 6.30 pm
Children are expected to have a school bag with the St Mary’s School logo. Please ensure that your children bring their correct school bag.

Girls’ Summer Uniform
- St Mary’s uniform school dress
- Length of dresses and tunics should not be above the knee
- St Mary’s windcheater
- Navy socks
- Black polished shoes
- (no sneakers/runners)
- School hat

Boys’ Summer Uniform
- Navy Shorts
- (no jeans, jean style or cargo pants)
- St Mary’s polo shirt
- St Mary’s windcheater
- Navy socks
- Black polished shoes
- (no sneakers/runners)
- School hat

Girls’ Summer Sports Uniform
- Navy track suit pants
- St Mary’s windcheater
- Navy unisex sports shorts or navy skirt
- St Mary’s polo shirt
- White St. Mary’s sports socks or plain white socks and runners
- School hat

Boys’ Summer Sports Uniform
- Navy track suit pants
- St Mary’s windcheater
- Navy unisex sports shorts
- St Mary’s polo shirt
- White St. Mary’s sports socks or plain white socks and runners
- School hat

St Mary’s School logo school bag
- No jewellery – plain studs, sleepers, watches excepted.
- No make-up
- No extremes of hairstyles
- Long hair to be tied back at all times with navy ties and ribbons
- No nail polish

An important note on Uniforms. Whilst it is not compulsory to purchase uniform items only from our uniform shop, we trust that parents will only purchase items that are of the same as sold in the shop. We would ask that you continue to support us as we strive to ensure a disciplined atmosphere in our school, by ensuring that your children do wear the standardised uniform.

Your children may, at times, tell you that it is okay because, “others do it” or “have it”, but this is a good signal that it is NOT okay!

A note about hair. As we are a primary school, we feel that any change of colour is inappropriate for children. In the spirit of our practice at St Mary’s, to keep children as children, we ask that you cooperate with this and leave the hair colouring as something that they can look forward to in their older age. We also differentiate between “weekend hair” and “school hair”. The use of hair gel, etc., and styling, is considered to be a “weekend hair” practice. There is also the problem of styling hair so that it will fall over the child’s eyes or face when they lean forward, e.g., long fringes or strands being left out of ties. This then becomes a distraction when they are writing or reading. If we can all work together on this then not only does it assist in their learning and give a more disciplined and uniformed approach, but it will also save you time and money!
ST MARY’S NEWS

(CSEF) CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS WITH A HEALTHCARE CARD

Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund helps ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government’s commitment to breaking the link between a student’s background and their outcomes.

Contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from www.education.vic.gov.au/csef
School Procedures for the Bushfire Season

Fire danger ratings and warnings are used in Victoria to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life.

Schools and children’s services listed on the DET Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) will be closed when a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined in their Bureau of Meteorology district. Our school has been identified as being one of those at high bushfire risk and is listed on the BARR.

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to four days notice of a potential Code Red day closure by letter and SMS message. A Code Red day will be determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner no later than 1.00 pm the day before the potential closure. Once we are advised of the confirmation of the Code Red day we will provide you with advice before the end of the school day.

Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and help your family plan alternative care arrangements for your child. It is also important to note that:

- No staff will be on site on days where the school is closed due to a forecast Code Red day.
- School camps will be cancelled if a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined for the Bureau of Meteorology district in which the camp is located.
- All bus routes will be cancelled.

On these Code Red days families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan – on such days children should never be left at home or in the care of older children.

For those of us living in a bushfire prone area, the CFA advise that when Code Red days are forecast, the safest option is to leave the night before or early on the morning of the Code Red day.

As part of preparing our school for potential hazards such as fire, we have updated and completed our Emergency Management Plan.

What can parents do?

- Make sure your family’s bushfire survival plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements in the event that our school is closed.
- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers. Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters and checking our website.
- Most importantly at this time of year, if you’re planning a holiday or short stay in the bush or in a coastal area, you should check warnings in advance of travel and remain vigilant during your stay.
- If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family’s bushfire survival plan.

For up-to-date information on this year’s fire season, visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or call the 24-hour Victorian Bushfires Information Line on 1800 240 667.

Mt.Evelyn Primary School OSHC – SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

On behalf of Mt.Evelyn Primary School OSHC we would like to invite you to our Vacation Care Program. You can receive your Booking Form for Easter School Holidays from your school office. You may also email, phone or pop in and see Melissa at Mt.Evelyn Primary School. Mt.Evelyn Primary School OSHC is an accredited child care. Families can apply for CCB and CCR rebates. Monday – Friday 6.00am – 2.00pm 9736 2233 osh@mitevelynps.vic.edu.au

28th Mon March Closed Easter Monday
29th Tues March - “Mini Golf” Excursion “Easter Activity Day”
30th Wed March - “Tennis” Incursion
31st Thurs March - “Drawing with different mediums”
1st Fri April - “Ace Space” Excursion “Messy Day” (2nd Program if Excursion is at capacity)
4th Mon April - “Healesville Sanctuary” Excursion “Use your senses” (2nd Program if Excursion is at capacity)
5th Tues April - “Letter “ C” Day”
6th Wed April - “Wheels Day”
7th Thurs April - “Reading Cinemas” Excursion “Cupcake Day” (2nd Program if Excursion is at capacity)
8th Fri April - “Multi Media Day” Vacation Care Daily

It is a great opportunity for our local school community to support a wonderful program. Kind regards, Melissa Mc Donald
WORKING BEES 2016

We believe that having a safe and pleasant school environment is important. Thank you to all families who have helped with school maintenance during last year.

To assist planning for this year we are asking each family to attend ONE Working Bee and to indicate which session,(listed below) suits best.

In an effort to cater for everyone, we will hold Working Bees across a range of days and times.

The alternative to attending a Working Bee is to complete the payment details below which are for a $60.00 contribution toward hiring maintenance help as required.

Please complete and return the form below as soon as possible (families who have not replied by Feb 26th will be contacted).

Yours faithfully,

THE MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE.

EDUCATION BOARD.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO SCHOOL BEFORE MONDAY FEBRUARY 26TH 2016

NAME: ________________________ ELDEST CHILD’S GRADE: ____________.

Monday Feb 29th (8:45-10:45am) ☐ Saturday March 19th (9:00-11:30 am) ☐
Saturday April 30th (9:00-11:30 am) ☐ Wednesday June 8th (1:10-3:15pm) ☐
Monday July 25th (8:45-10:45 am) ☐ Saturday August 20 (Production set up) (9:00-11:30am) ☐
Wednesday Oct 12th (Twilight 3.30pm-6.00pm) ☐ Monday Nov 28th (8:45-10:45am) ☐

Please debit my credit card for $60.00:

Name on the card ____________________________________________
(Please circle) Visa / Mastercard
Credit Card Number: [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ]
Expiry Date: [   ] [   ] [   ] [   ]
Sunday, 7 Feb 2016: Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

**Gospel**  
*Lk 5:1-11*

An abundance of fish are caught by Simon. Jesus was standing one day by the lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats – it was Simon’s – and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, ‘Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.’ ‘Master,’ Simon replied ‘we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.’ And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point.

When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, ‘Leave me Lord; I am a sinful man.’ For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon’s partners. But Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch.’ Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him. The Gospel of the Lord

What sort of messages or errands have you been sent on?  
When you are a messenger, what do you have to do? (e.g listen to instructions, make sure you know where to go, pass on the message clearly, etc.)

Jesus asks the fishermen in the Gospel to be messengers. What do you think he means when he tells them they will bring in people rather than fish?  
Jesus calls us to be his messengers. How can we be good messengers?

Use the words in the fish to complete the sentence below....

_____ be _______! From ___ on you will _____ in _______ instead of _____.

Other news in Religious Education:

- Don’t forget to return enrolment forms for the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion or Confirmation. These need to be returned to school by **Thursday February 18th**.

- This Wednesday 10th February at 9.15am we will celebrate a whole school Mass in the church for **Ash Wednesday**, the beginning of the Lenten season.

- **Commitment Masses for children enrolled in a sacrament**  
  On the weekend of the 20th and 21st February, all children enrolled in a sacrament need to attend one of the parish Masses. Times are 5.00pm Saturday, 10.30 am Sunday and 5.00pm Sunday.
Help Urgently Required

We need to roster 6 people per week to run the St Mary’s tuckshop. We have not received enough volunteers to be able to effectively do this, this year.
If you have not put your form in, please do so ASAP.
If we do not receive more responses, we will not be able to run tuckshop in term 2. If we don’t get the volunteers required we will be unable to offer tuckshop in the future. Please commit by filling out the below form.

PLEASE COMPLETE 2016 TUCKSHOP ROSTER

The St Mary’s Primary School Canteen operates every Friday between 9.00am – 1.00pm. Volunteers are needed to help run the canteen. If you are able to help, please fill out the attached form and return to school office ASAP.

NAME __________________________________________ PHONE __________________________ EMAIL ___________________________

ELDEST CHILD AND GRADE ________________________________________________________________

Availability (please tick)

☐ WEEKLY ☐ FORTNIGHTLY ☐ MONTHLY

☐ EMERGENCY ☐ CO-ORDINATOR ☐ OTHER ___________________________

Thankyou Parents & Friends Committee

CRAFT CLUB VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

We have loads of activities planned for this term, but for us to be able to run these sessions properly we are desperate for some volunteers.

If you can help on any Tuesday days please fill out the form below and return to the office.

Craft Club is run every Tuesday during first recess. Volunteers are required from 10.00am until 12.00pm (2 hours duration approximately)....

We are still taking donations of any craft type items......Drop them off at the office if you have anything we can use.

Name ___________________________ Contact Phone Number __________________________

I am available on the following Tuesday/s ____________________________ from 10.00am – 12.00pm
Any child interested in playing After School Basketball in Season 1 (commences early February 2016) will need to fill out the following form and return it to the school office by ASAP.

**CURRENT PLAYERS**: If you are currently playing After School Basketball in Season 2 2016, you will still need to fill out the following form so I can format the new teams. Games start at 4pm and finish at 7pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday afternoons at Kilsyth or Lilydale Basketball Stadiums.

- **Monday**: Grade 4 - Grade 6 Boys
- **Tuesday**: Grade 3 Boys
- **Thursday**: Grade 3 - Grade 6 Girls
- **Friday**: Grade 2 Boys & Girls

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**2016 BASKETBALL CO-ORDINATOR REQUIRED**

**FOR ALL QUERIES PLEASE CALL LIZ RHODES**

ON 0414 761 088

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**St Mary's Basketball Singlet Tops**

Children playing in the after school basketball competition are to wear navy blue shorts (the shorts you wear for PE at school are perfect), runners and the St Mary's Basketball Singlet Top. Tops are $25.00 to hire, however, once your child returns the top back to school they will receive a $20.00 refund. Payment can be made by cash or cheque. Cheques need to be made out to "St Mary's Parents and Friends Committee"

Could all payments for the singlet tops and this form please be given to the office ASAP, in an envelope, clearly marked "Basketball Singlet Top Money". If you still have your top from last season, you **DO NOT** need to pay any more money, just hang onto the one you have and use that again.

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**St Mary's Basketball Singlet Tops**

Players name: ____________________________ Year Level: ____________________________

Class: ____________________________

Mum's name: ____________________________ Dad's name: ____________________________

Mum's mobile: ____________________________ Dad's mobile: ____________________________

Amount enclosed: ____________________________

*If you already have a basketball top, please fill out below.*

Number: ____________________________ Size: ____________________________

Office use:

Top number given: ____________________________ Amount enclosed: ____________________________

Cash Yes/No  Cheque details: ____________________________

Date top given: ____________________________ Date top returned: ____________________________

Date refund of $20.00 returned: ____________________________

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TO ALL TEAM MEMBERS

NO FORM NO PLAY

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When speaking with parents when I present at schools, or engaging with them via our social media, bullying is always a hot topic. A recent Facebook post had one of our biggest engagement rates ever. It begged the question- "What is bullying? Do we mix it up with teasing and other forms of mean behaviour?"

It’s an important topic that needs clarification.

Bullying is a term that’s wrapped in emotion. For many people it’s associated with bad childhood memories. It’s been estimated that around 40 per cent of people have experienced bullying in the past. It’s something that we don’t want to happen to our kids.

But I fear it’s being overused at the moment and confused with teasing and rudeness.

Rudeness refers to thoughtless behaviours and thoughtless words. Kids often do rude things to each other without thinking their actions through. Examples include breaking wind in a child’s direction; joking about the colour of a child’s hair in front of others; failing to share possessions and neglecting to acknowledge someone. Rudeness is usually about selfishness and thoughtlessness. Taken on their own many rude behaviours can be seen as an element of bullying but when looked at in context they are more about thoughtlessness, lack of consideration and poor manners rather than a deliberate attempt to hurt someone.

Teasing refers to annoying, hurtful behaviour that is used to get a reaction from someone else. Teasing can be persistent in nature, but not always. It’s generally an attempt to get under a person’s skin. It can involve name-calling; it can be personal and hurtful in nature. It can also infringe on another person’s rights. But generally teasing doesn’t have the key ingredients that make up bullying.

Bullying is the selective, uninvited, repetitive oppression of one person or group by another. It involves three elements – intent to hurt or harm; power imbalance; and repetition over time. It takes many forms and guises including physical aggression; verbal abuse; emotional aggression (or blackmail); intimidation; harassment and exclusion.

The new cyber-dimension to bullying has moved the goalpost for many kids. In the past children and young people could escape bullying behaviours by being at home. Cyber-bullying means that children can’t escape bullies like they once could.

Why the distinction? I hear the term bullying misused a great deal in the media and when talking with parents. We run the risk of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" Syndrome where we become so desensitised to the term that we (or teachers) ignore it when children really are the victims of bullying. We also run the risk of failing to skill our kids up to manage rudeness and teasing if we categorise every awful behaviour that kids experience as bullying.

Our ability to discern about bullying is as important as the action we take when we are sure that our child is on the receiving end of bullying behaviour. These actions include: dealing with feelings; providing emotional coping skills; getting others involved; building up a child’s support networks; and building self-confidence that can take a battering.

Bullying needs to be taken seriously. But we also need to be discerning about bullying behaviours.

Michael Grose

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Want more ideas to help you raise confident kids and resilient young people? Subscribe to Happy Kids newsletter, my FREE weekly email parenting guide at parentingideas.com.au. You’ll be so glad you did.