Dear Parents and Members of St Patrick’s School Community,

4th SUNDAY OF LENT—The Parable of the Prodigal Son—Many of you will know the story of the Prodigal Son; the young man who asked his father for his share of the family fortune and then spent it on a life of excess in other lands. When he’d spent his fortune and fell upon hard times he found himself feed pigs and wishing that he could share their food. He decided to return to his father’s home and beg his forgiveness. He was even willing to be a servant in his father’s house. The father was overjoyed to see his son again and greeted him with open arms. He killed the fatten calf and threw a huge party to welcome him home. The father’s love for his son was overwhelming and his forgiveness total. Why? Because what had been lost has now been found. God constantly invites us to his party and it is up to us to accept his invitation to share in his hospitality.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY—Tuesday 8th March was International Women’s Day. It is a great opportunity to acknowledge all the strong women in our lives and also those who have helped make Australia and the global community what it is today. Each family can take this opportunity to thank their mothers and grandmothers for their strength in keeping their families going. This quote from Angela Merkel, Germany’s chancellor spoke volumes to me about how we need to treat others. Such a powerful statement from a strong woman.

ABOVE and BEYOND—Two students have been identified as Above and Beyond winners this week. ACHIEVING ACADEMIC GROWTH was the focus this week. This involved students—

- Trying to improve, especially in areas that are difficult
- Asking questions to improve understanding
- Persistence, especially when things are hard
- Being organised
- Avoiding distractions
- Staying positive
- Staying on task

We had a number of students nominated this week which was very pleasing. The eventual winners are two students who have shown huge growth in their persistence and their positive attitude to their learning. Congratulations to Cooper Dickinson and Maddison Panter. Congratulations to all students who have been working positively this year. We are very pleased with your progress.

Next week the Above and Beyond focus will be EMBODYING SAINT MARY MACKILLOP. The Sisters of St. Joseph, founded by Mary MacKillop, established St Patrick’s School in 1949. Mary MacKillop was known for her compassion, her care for the needy and under privileged, her courageous and her faithfulness to God. We will be encouraging the students to show care and kindness to others, courage when things are difficult, as well as respect for everyone. We are sure they are up for the challenge.

Full colour version of newsletter is on our website spnhill.catholic.edu.au/newsletters-2016.html and tiqbiz
JUNIOR CLASS NEWS from Miss Farquharson

This week has been a busy one as we have finished our focus on tattling and have moved on to learning about Harmony. In preparation for Harmony Day on Monday 21 March, we have looked at the diversity of people in our school. The students have used our Vocabulary Chart to find the definition for harmony as well as many synonyms and antonyms. They have decided that harmony means getting along with others which can look like sharing, being happy, playing nicely and having fun. Our reading focus this week has been on full stops and commas. We have discussed that full stops mean we take a big breath at the end of a sentence while a comma means we take a short breath in the middle of a long sentence. The students have practised reading aloud to make sure that they have been reading with full stops and commas while still using their strategies for decoding new words.

SENIOR CLASS NEWS from Miss Anson

This week in Literacy, the seniors have started learning about ‘explanations’ as their text type in writing. We have been exploring the parts to an explanation text and the purpose of writing an explanation text. Our vocabulary words for this week are ‘satisfy’, ‘sought’ and ‘endured’. In Numeracy, the seniors have been continuing with their unit on common fractions. We have been comparing fractions and some of the more senior students have been looking at fractions as decimals. The Year 3’s have been practising their 2 times tables and the Year 4’s and 5’s have been working on their speed and accuracy with their 4 times tables. In Inquiry, we have been completing an action and reaction board which is helping us to identify appropriate reactions to certain situations. We have also been role playing and practising a ‘Harmony Day’ play which relates to our this week’s focus on Harmony. We have been diving a bit deeper into the word resilience and coping strategies directly related to resilience.

ST PATRICK’S DAY CELEBRATIONS—Students are invited to dress in green next Thursday (17 March) to celebrate the feast day of our patron saint. We will have a number of activities during the day, and some green food at lunchtime. Father Neville will celebrate mass with the school community at 2pm in the church. Please feel free to join us for mass.

ST PATRICK’S QUIZ NIGHT—Don’t forget to see Helen Cannell or Lisa Braybrook to book a table for the St Patrick’s Quiz Night on Friday 18 March. This is a PAC fundraising event and your support will help our school but more importantly it will be a great night of fun.

WINNERS ARE GRINNERS – CONGRATULATIONS CHARLOTTE / JAYDA / NESSA—Last Friday afternoon the junior basketball held their grand final. Jayda, Nessa and Charlotte were involved in the girls final. Charlotte’s team were the eventual winners. Jayda was presented with the ‘Most Improved’ player for the season. Congratulations to our students and all others who were involved in the competition. Also well done to the parents and community members who organised the competition. On a side note Alister Dickinson (Year 6 in 2015) was part of the boy’s winning team. Alister, like Jayda, also received the ‘Most Improved’ player for the boys competition. Well done Alister.

COOPER’S PUPPY VISITS—On Monday students were delighted when Cooper’s birthday present ‘Rubble’ visited the school. Rubble is a 7 week old Jack Russell puppy who melted the hearts of students and staff alike. These photos show a very happy Cooper, Zara and Jobe.

SCHOOL FOR FOUNDATION STUDENTS—
From next Wednesday, March 16th, Foundation students are to attend school every day of the week.

END OF TERM 1 / START OF TERM 2—Term 1 has flown by and we only have 9 school days left. Term 1 finishes at 2:15pm on Thursday 24 March. Please note the earlier release time. Term 2 starts at 8:55am on Tuesday 12 April. Staff have Professional Development on Monday 11 April and the school will be closed on that day.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE FUNDING—A reminder that the Victorian Government’s Drought Assistance package is available to all families experiencing hardship because of the drought. This is NOT means tested and is separate to the CSEF support. If you have any questions please contact the office. The money provided by this funding is just for this year and will be put towards camps/extended excursions. In some cases there may be money available to reduce school fees. Karen will update invoices once the funding is provided and camps are organised and costed.

FOOTY TIPPING—A reminder to get your footy tipping sheets in before the end of Term 1 (the first game of round 1 is on Thursday 24 March).

REMINDER—We are still waiting on some Medical Verification Forms to be returned. It is a legal requirement that we have this updated information in order for students to participate in events such as excursions. Please return the signed form, even if the information is correct.

As always, please contact the school if you have any questions about what is happening at St Patrick’s School.
Kathryn Bendall, Principal.