

St Bede's Principal's Newsletter 1: 8.2.17

Now in my third week in the role of Foundation Principal at St Bede's Catholic College, I would like to thank all those who have made me feel so welcomed in this wonderful region of New South Wales. St Bede's will open at the start of next year with our first cohort of Year 7 of girls and boys. The College will grow one year group at a time with the first cohort to graduate in 2023 where enrolments are expected to be around 1,100.

In addition to loving my new Principal's role, I am very much enjoying the fresher air, the warm smiles, and sense of community. I am definitely not missing the traffic, tolls and parking meters of Sydney.

The staff at the Maitland Newcastle Catholic Schools Office (MNCSO) have been incredibly helpful and I intend to give my absolute best in leading a school that will live up to their hopes and aspirations. The last secondary school that was built in the Maitland Newcastle Diocese was St Paul's Booragul back in 1984. Their visionary and meticulous planning has provided the platform for St Bede's to become a school that will be at the cutting edge of education. St Bede's will be offering girls and boys a contemporary, exciting and faith filled Catholic education where success will take many different pathways and forms.

With Chisholm and its' surrounding suburbs growing at an unprecedented rate, the demand for Catholic schooling will continue to increase. Catholic schools in this region proudly provide a quality education for students of all backgrounds, interests and abilities. Similarly, St Bede's will be welcoming of all students, irrespective of their abilities and challenges, but a full and enthusiastic involvement in the distinctive Catholic life of the College will be at the core of what we offer. In welcoming students from all Christian denominations and in respecting their richness, it will not be an enrolment pre-requisite to be a Catholic. However, priority will be given to feeder schools and practicing Catholic families. All students at St Bede's will be expected to engage in the religious life of the College that will include religious education classes, classroom prayers, camps/retreats, Masses etc. The clergy, led by Bishop Bill Wright and Parish Priest Father Paul O'Neil, will be partners in developing a school culture centred around Jesus Christ. Having already met with Bishop Bill and Father Paul on a number of occasions, parents considering enrolling their son or daughter at St Bede's would need to be supportive of the religious life of the College which will be based around the Gospel values of love, respect, forgiveness, compassion and service.

The focus in coming weeks will be to develop a Foundation Strategic Plan. This plan will provide the mission and vision of the College and a roadmap for future planning which will be further developed when the College opens next year. Annual Plans will set out a more detailed pathway to successfully implement this Strategic Plan, with surveys and discussion forums providing a basis for review and improvement. Reporting back to the community will occur at various forums and through the Annual Reports. The basis of developing the St Bede's Foundation Strategic Plan will be consultation and an alignment to MNCSO 2017 – 2019 Strategic Plan and the work already completed by a Project Implementation Team. For those parents who would like to join one of the discussion forums being held on Monday 20 – Tuesday 21 February, I invite you to look at the attached flyer and to email me directly at john.murphy@mn.catholic.edu.au. These discussion forums are in no way connected to the enrolment process. A separate Information Evening concerning enrolments is being planned for March and will be conveyed soon.

I look forward to developing close community ties and leading an exciting authentic Catholic secondary school that will offer students multiple pathways to developing their faith and growing as young people who can become positive change agents.



John Murphy
Foundation Principal