HARMONY DAY

On Wednesday we celebrate Harmony Day as a part of the broader state-wide celebration of Cultural Diversity. The United Nations also celebrates the international day for elimination of racial discrimination on this day. At St Peter’s we have many students from different cultural backgrounds and one of the great things about our school community is the genuine affection and care that our students have for each other. It is a wonderful opportunity for all members of our community to come together to share aspects of their culture, faith and language and celebrate the benefits of multiculturalism brings to this community. This year the theme for harmony Day is "Sport – play, engage and inspire" in recognition of the role sport plays in allowing us to celebrate a sense of belonging, acceptance and an understanding of different cultures. In celebration of this theme I welcome to our school Mr Sean Wroe a Commonwealth Games Gold and Silver Medalist who is aspiring to represent Australia at the London Olympics and will address our students as part of our Harmony Day Celebrations.

COLLEGE BOARD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the annual general meeting of the College Board on the 24th of April the terms of two of our Parent Representatives will expire, Mr Robert Carboon and Mr Stephen Van Der Velden. Mr David Williams has fulfilled a casual vacancy on the board since the last Annual general meeting and this parent representative position will also be up for election.

The three Board Members are fully eligible to re-nominate as a Parent Representative for a further 2 year term. Consistent with the Constitution of the Board, other parents who are members of the Parish Community may also wish to nominate.

In accordance with the constitution current Board Member, Mr Ken Barnes is understood to be entering the second year of his two year term as parent representative.

Nominations for the three vacant Parent Representatives on the College Board will open as of today and close on the 30th of March. Nomination forms are available from the college office and from the St. Agatha’s Parish Office until the closing date. Nominations forms can be submitted to the Parish Office at St Agatha’s, which is open from 8.30 am to 3pm Monday to Friday or to the front office at St Peter’s College – Cranbourne West.

In accordance with the constitution of the College Board, the newly elected parent representative must be a member of St Agatha’s Parish Community and have a son or daughter enrolled at the college.

Polling if necessary will take place at Parish Masses on the weekend of the 1st of April.

BOOK IN A DAY

Congratulations to the students who participated in the Book in Day competition last weekend. Students from St Peter’s and Catholic College Sale worked in teams to complete a novella of 8000-12000 words which will then be judged by year 7 & 8 students throughout the Sale Diocese as they “read it and rate it” to promote reading. Reader appreciation scores will be totalled and a winner announced at the end of Term 3. I thank Ms Lockley for her great work in establishing this program and for the many staff who contributed on the day to make it a success.

PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Parent Teacher Interviews will take place next week and I encourage all parents to book a time with their children’s Subject Teachers and Learning Advisors. With the introduction of the House System this year the learning advisors through their on-going relationship with your children will become an important source of feedback on your child’s academic and pastoral progress. After 9 weeks in term 1 students will already have established attitudes towards and routines for their learning. The interviews, which students should attend, will provide families with the opportunity to discuss with their children what is working well for them and what may require adjusting for term 2 if it is hindering their learning and ultimately stopping them from achieving their full potential.

Parent Teacher Interviews
Thursday 29th March: 4pm – 8.30pm  Friday 30th March: 9am – 1.30am
Interview & Booking Process mailed to all families next week.

Mr. Tim Hogan
PRINCIPAL

Parents & Friends Meeting 27th March: 7.30 PM
Location: Cranbourne East Campus, 55 MacKillop Way
Guest Speaker: Cranbourne East Staff Member – Mrs Jodie Connell
ALL PARENTS ARE WELCOME.
**Cranbourne East News**

**Interim Reports and Parent Teacher Interviews**

Interim Reports will be posted out towards the end of this week; additionally, information will be posted out on how to book Parent/Teacher Interviews which are occurring on the 29th and 30th of March. Interviews for all Cranbourne East Staff will take place at the East Campus upstairs in the Lyons Building (science/technology). Should you require to book an interview with a Cranbourne West staff member, you will need to attend the West Campus for this interview, allowing time to travel between the two campuses. This includes the following teachers:

- Mrs Anderson: Yr 7 Literacy Enhancement
- Ms McMenamin: Yr 7 Japanese
- Ms Kugimiya: Yr 8 Japanese

All interviews with Cranbourne West staff will take place in the Multi-Purpose Hall.

**CRANBOURNE EAST ENVIRONMENT CLUB NEWS:**

On Tuesday the 6th of March, Cranbourne East Campus had its Kitchen Garden set up by the members of our Environment Club. I wish to thank Mr Adam Bonnici and Mr John Tofflon for their valuable support to make this project possible by providing us with the plants and tools and also for sharing their expertise with our students. I seize this opportunity to invite the Year 7 students also to bring their contribution and come forward with any suggestions to help build up a sustainable school Environment.

Thank you.

Mr Antoine

**ASSISI House News**

Each Assisi Tutor Group is currently raising funds for the 2012 Project Compassion Fund with all funds raised benefiting Caritas Projects in Timor Leste. Not only are we aiming as a House to raise the most funds within the College, but each of our Tutor Groups are competing against each other to raise the most funds within Assisi House. Please support our aims with any donation you can make, no matter how small.

Roger Hampson,
**ASSISI HOUSE LEADER**

**PASTORAL PERIOD**

Last Thursday marked the first official Pastoral Period of the vertical House System. These sessions enabled students to strengthen their relationships with members of their Tutor Group and Learning Advisor. The activities the student took part in also promoted positive thinking towards the school and life in general. One of the most prominent activities involved discerning the feelings of an animated boy and the reasons for those feelings. We look forward to the next session in the hope that it will help student’s further develop a connection and sense of identity towards their house.

Curtis Moses
**KOLBE HOUSE CAPTAIN**

**What Happened?**

This is my very first pastoral event that I have taken place in, we were with our tutor group when Mr. Nelson put on this video on how to love yourself and how to approach different situations. After watching a few comic strips and videos we got in groups and acted out different event, where there was a disaster and two teams had to evaluate the positive thoughts and the negative thoughts, each with different conclusions. It was quite funny and a lot of fun.

**What was the focus?**

The focus was to love yourself and how to think about each situation, not in the negative way but in the positive way as well. We discussed as groups on how we thought about the event, but most of us had the same idea.

**What did you learn?**

A learnt the loving yourself is great and if you do life will be much happier. You should love the way you look, the way you approach things and the way you turn things positive. Your life will be much happier if you can love yourself.

By Alexander Iswahyudi Mackillop B
STUDENT WELFARE

Every year, the College focuses on the serious issue of BULLYING AND HARASSMENT.

In the final week of this term, we will acquaint students with our Bullying Policy and Procedures. The House System has been introduced to strengthen student/student and student/staff relationships and to build very child’s sense of connectedness and belonging to our community. In House Assemblies this week, students will be looking in particular, how cyber technology can be inappropriately and even dangerously used. Students will also look at health and legal issues which may emerge from use, misuse or abuse of this technology. Your sons and daughters will be involved in year level age – appropriate sessions and student leaders will also be involved, as positive role models for younger students! another aspect of our efforts to build positive relationships, security and positive role modelling in the College. As part of our home – school partnership, we encourage you to

- Discuss with your child, what activities they have been involved in regarding anti-bullying.
- Read the 2 attachments and go through the key points with your child – it may save them from very serious consequences.

Anita Carter
WELFARE CO-ORDINATOR

SPORT NEWS

BOYS EUROPEAN HANDBALL
SAINT PETERS V PADUA MORNINGTON

Saint Peters defeated Padua 12 to 6 in a very even game until Darryl Faamasuli let loose in the third quarter scoring four Captain’s Goals. In this game we tried 13 players which meant that we rotated players throughout the game giving everyone an opportunity to learn the game. Our defence was solid throughout the game and we frustrated the opposition by blocking many shots and rebounding quickly. Corey Machaya, Ryan Pola and Andrew Schwieger were solid in defence all game.

Roger Hampson
COACH

SENIOR CRICKET

St.Peter’s remain undefeated after winning all games this season. SPC Vs SFX at the Skydome SPC 5 for 117 Z.Davis 47, K.Henderson 27, SFX all out 59 J.Frawley 2 for 7, N.Worsteling 3 for 8

SPC Vs Padua at Mornington Padua 8 for 102 N.Worsteling 3 for 27, D.Constable 2 for 13 SPC 8 for 109 Z.Davis 33, K.Henderson 23, P.Beckham 19

SPC now in the Semi-Finals vs St John’s N.Worsteling left arm bowling at the stumps, Z.Davis superb batting under pressure and outstanding wicketkeeping, K.Henderson power batting, the “beast” and S.Frawley leadership and solid batting and bowling, Well Done Guys.

Patrick Grant and Paul Gyulavary
SENIOR COACH AND ASSISTANT

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

The Production auditions took place last week and some amazing talent was uncovered. The cast list will be published later this week. The first meeting of the cast will be Tuesday March 27th from 3.30 – 4.30 in the Hall.

Mr. Carter, Ms. Goss

CAREERS INFORMATION

Get Real Experience – Holiday Programs

RMIT University offers a number of free events designed to encourage students in years 10, 11 and 12 to engage in hands on workshops over the school holidays. All days will have four interactive sessions and two seminars and provide students with lunch and an on campus experience. As these sessions are limited in numbers, we ask you to encourage students to sign up if they are genuinely interested (as we have said no to students in the past, and then had significant numbers of students not turn up on the day).

Students can register their interest, to be alerted when workshop registrations open, here: http://www.rmit.edu.au/experiencedays

AT MONASH SEMINAR SERIES

The At Monash Seminars provide an opportunity for students, parents and secondary school teachers to gain an insight into courses and careers in a broad range of fields across the faculties and campuses of Monash University.

Tuesday 20th March – Information Technology – Caulfield Campus
Monday 26th March – Health Science and Social Work – Caulfield Campus
Tuesday 27th March – Teaching, Sport and Outdoor Recreation – Peninsula Campus
Wednesday 28th March – Medicine, Biomedical Science, Radiography & Nutrition and Dietetics – Clayton Campus
Thursday 29th March – Arts (Social Sciences and Humanities) – Caulfield Campus

Wednesday 18th April – Design and Fine Art – Caulfield Campus
Thursday 19th April – Psychology – Clayton Campus
Tuesday 8th May – Science – Clayton Campus
Tuesday 15th May – Performing Arts – Clayton Campus
Wednesday 23rd May – Berwick Campus Showcase – Berwick Campus
Wednesday 30th May – Gippsland Campus Showcase – Gippsland Campus
Thursday 17th May – Law – Clayton Campus

Thursday 28th June – Engineering – Clayton Campus

For further information and to register your interest please visit the website http://www.monash.edu/study/options/schools/at-monash.html

Email: Onshore@monash.edu or call 03 9903 4810.

- Melbourne Uni Veterinary Science and Hospital Open Day. Attend lectures, pet demonstrations, tours and get course advice; 10am-3pm, Sun 25 March, 250 Princes Hwy, Werribee: www.vet.unimelb.edu.au

- Access All Areas 2012* may suit you. This is a series of events especially designed for Year 10-12 students and their families, offering a personalised insight into the University. Find out about undergraduate degrees and graduate pathways, opportunities to enrich your degree (eg concurrent diplomas, exchange and study abroad), admission and entry requirements, Access Melbourne and scholarships, accommodation and transition programs. When: 9am-3pm, Fri 13 April, 13 July and 27 Sept;Where: Parkville campus; Cost: Free, but limited places; Register: www.futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/accessallareas.

- ZOO KEEPER FOR A DAY – This is a hands-on school holiday program for students interested in a career working with animals. Help out the animal keepers and learn about a most rewarding job. Speak with animal keepers about their jobs and experience. When/where: 9.30am-4pm, 3rd, 10th and 12th April at Werribee Open Range Zoo, K Road, Werribee; 9.30am-3.30pm, 5th, 5th and 10th April (Year 7/8), 4th and 11th April (Years 9/10), Healesville Sanctuary, Badger Creek Rd, Healesville; Cost: $102 (incl morning tea); Bookings: ph 9285 9406 (pay when booking); Details of holiday programs: www.zoo.org.au/Learning/Camps-Holidays.

VCE CHEMISTRY AND BIOLOGY REVISION LECTURES AT MONASH – These monthly revision lectures will help prepare you for your exams. The seminars are designed to encourage revision throughout the year, clarifying and consolidating concepts as they are introduced in the classroom. When: Biology 4-5pm, Chemistry 5.30-6.30pm, 21 Mar, 18 April, 23 May, 6 June, 18 July, 22 Aug and 19 Sept; Where: Monash Parkville campus, 381 Royal Parade; Register: (free), but registration essential: www.pharm.monash.edu/events or call 9903 9504. You can attend both Biology and Chemistry if you wish, with afternoon tea provided.
Two of RMIT’s recent graduates will present the different fields of engineering that are offered at RMIT whilst emphasising their chosen fields of Aerospace and Environmental Engineering.

**What benefits will your student receive from attending?**

- Descriptions of the types of engineering offered at RMIT, and their real-world applications
- Opportunities for students and graduates within chosen streams of engineering
- Study experience and skills they have learnt from studying engineering at RMIT
- Importance of women in engineering
- Opportunities to work and learn overseas

**MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR STUDENTS ALONG TO THE ANNUAL ENGINEERING CAREERS EXPO TO SEE RMIT’S ‘ENGINEERING THE FUTURE’ PRESENTATION!**

**TIME: Thursday 29th March from 2:30PM - 3:15PM AND 4:30PM - 5:15PM**

**VENUE: ETIHAD - THE CREST LOUNGE (STAFF WILL DIRECT STUDENTS TO THE PRESENTATION ROOM)**

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**2012 Launch of St Peter’s College AFL Victoria Umpiring Academy**

Late last year AFL Victoria Umpiring Development Manager, Neville Nash and South East Juniors General Manager, Shaun Connell met to discuss how to recruit more umpires into a fast growing junior competition and the outcome was to approach St. Peter’s College in Cranbourne about establishing a School Based Umpiring Academy at the College. The College embraced, lead by the college Sports Manager Justin De Goldi, the concept and 14 students are now enrolled in the Academy.

“AFL Victoria is delighted that St. Peter’s College took up the opportunity to establish an academy”, says Neville Nash, AFL Victoria Umpiring Development Manager.

The goals of the academy are consistent with most schools key objectives, learning and development in a safe, fun and supported environment.

The concept of a School Based Umpiring Academy at St. Peter’s College in Cranbourne is to provide the opportunity for students to learn a new skill, keep fit and get paid by umpiring in South East Juniors on weekends. Students also learn important life skills such as:

- Decision making
- Leadership
- Effective Communication
- People management
- Conflict resolution

The academy is conducted any term Wednesday straight after school.

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**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS**

Last week some of our Yr 11 students, the CSYMA class spent a couple of days with students from the other Secondary Colleges in the diocese. It was a time of prayer, reflection and action. The students shared their stories in small groups and spoke about how parts of the Gospels had an impact on their lives. The two days came to a close with a celebration of the Sacrament of reconciliation, and it was a great and uplifting occasion.

Myself, Ms Karen McMenamin and Mr David Fini had the pleasure of being with the group up at Neerim East and seeing them in action. It is good to see how open the students are to the whole area of Youth Ministry and reflecting on the place of God in their lives.

The season of Lent is approaching its’ culmination with the Easter Ceremonies on the horizon. Whether we give anything up for Lent or not is one thing, but if we don’t use these weeks to spend a little time in reflection we are the losers. What we call our faith journey is really our lives and we need to stop from time to time and honestly look and question how we are journeying. It is so easy to sail through the year and never stop to look at how we are living our faith, how we are responding to the call to be God’s hands and feet on earth.

We are preparing to celebrate the Stations of the Cross here at school before the students finish. We are also preparing to celebrate harmony day. A strange mix ?

No, not at all. If we believe as our faith tells us, that Jesus died for all and rose again that all may have life, then we have a bond with all people and can say that all are equal before God. Whenever people are mistreated, persecuted or abused we see an example of how life is when the value and human dignity of each person is denied. The issue of Social Justice at St Peter’s is so important because it helps our students grow in understanding of the human dignity of all and to develop a critical eye for injustice in society.

So during what remains of Lent let us pray for an openness to giving some time in reflection on our own journey through life with God. May we celebrate with the worldwide Church the wonderful events of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

**Lenten Prayer:**

God our Father, you sent your Son into the world to fulfil your plan of salvation.

Strengthen us in faith as you send us to participate in the work of your son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Deacon Tony Aspinall

**ST. AGATHA’S NEWS**

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS** will take place every Friday during Lent at 7.30pm in the Church.

**40 DAYS FOR LIFE:** We are into day 19 of Lenten prayer and fasting for all involved with abortions. We need individuals and families to fill time slots to pray outside the abortion clinic at East Melbourne on Saturdays and Sundays from 2.30pm till 7.30pm. Can you help out for one hour? For enquiries contact Helen O’Loghlen on 0437 198 863.

**TEACHING DAY WITH BISHOP PROWSE:** Saturday 31st March 2012, 9.30-4.00pm at Marist Sion College, 165 Burke St, Warragul. Concluding with Mass at 2.30pm in St.Joseph’s Church. Bishop Prowse will use ‘Year of Grace & Year of Faith’ as the theme, leading to “Opening the doors to Christ”. See notice board for detailed program. Sponsored by Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Sale Diocese. Contact: Michael Power, Coordinator CCR Sale Diocese. Ph. 5678 2271 for Mary Sayers Ph.5629 5339

**INVIGORATE YOUTH GROUP (YR 7-12):** The next meeting will be held on the 23rd of March. It will be an exciting one, we have the NET (National Evangelisation Team) team visiting us. All are welcome, come with a friend. Enquires contact Chrissanne 0411 164 250.

**TWILIGHT CARNIVAL:** The Combined School’s Carnival will be held on Friday 23rd March from 4pm – 9pm at St.Theresa’s School, 131 Endeavour Drive Cranbourne North. Fire Works Display – will go off with a BIG BANG at 8.45pm. All Welcome!

**HELPERS NEEDED** anytime from 4pm – 9pm, for as little as half an hour or until the end. Please contact Lindy 0400 907 694.

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Mr. Greg Nelson

St Agatha’s Parish Representative
INTRODUCTION

Since the middle of last year, a small committee of staff members at St. Peter's has been developing a bullying policy to assist students, colleagues and other members of our community counter the actions of bullies. Unfortunately, from time to time, bullying has and will take place within the St. Peter's Community, and, as all members of the community have the right to feel safe and to be treated with respect, we felt it was necessary to indicate what we view as bullying actions and how the community will deal with bullies, once their actions have been identified. This leaflet will explain the St. Peter's College Bullying Policy - a similar leaflet has been given to your children - and includes the following elements:

- who is affected by this policy;
- what actions can be described as bullying;
- what to do if you are bullied or you see someone being bullied;
- what will happen when you report a bullying incident;
- what consequences bullies can expect.

DEFINITIONS

It is important that everyone understands what we mean when we use words such as bullying. The College policy has adopted the community standard definitions of bullying as they are expressed in the writing on bullying and in the various pieces of harassment and discrimination legislation which apply to Victoria and Australia. The definitions which appear on the next page are the ones which have been included in the Student Leaflet:-
Bullying can take many forms. It's not just a big kid threatening a little kid.

- **It can be physical**, where fighting, pushing and shoving happens.
- **It can be verbal**, with someone being called names, being put down, talked about behind their back, or being picked on because of the way they look, or the things they do, or are good at.
- **It can be visual**, where offensive notes are passed around about someone, or where damage is done to someone's books, bag, artwork, locker etc.
- **It can be victimisation**, where threats to "get" someone are made, or where someone is picked on.
- **It can be sexual**, where someone is touched in a way that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable, or when rude names, or jokes or comments are made about the way a person looks or lives their life.
- **It can be through body language** where others turn their backs on someone, or use inappropriate gestures to someone.
- **It can be through rumours**, where untrue stories are made up and told to others about someone, or when stories are exaggerated about someone and spread around to others.
- **It can be through cyber technology** - via telephone calls, e-mail, websites, social networking sites and where verbal or written messages are sent which are insulting, untrue, intimidating or frightening. This can even include sending or creating images of members of the St. Peter's Community without their permission.

### What happens when a bullying incident is reported?

As parents, it can be heart-breaking to discover that your child is upset because they are being bullied in any one or more of the ways described above. It can be even harder to bear if your child begs you not to contact school on the basis that "it will only make it worse". It is very important to resist this plea - the truth is bullying will continue if the person being bullied remains silent and takes no appropriate action to stop the bullying actions. If your child is being bullied, please contact one of the following people to report the incident:-

- Your child's Learning Advisor
- Your child's Head of House
- The Student Welfare Co-ordinator (Mrs Carter) or the School Counselor (Ms Picinalli) or the Chaplain (Deacon Tony)
- One of the Deputy Principals – Mr Banks or Mrs Hanney
- The Principal – Mr Hogan
When you contact one of these people, please have the following details ready to give them:

- what happened;
- when it happened;
- who was involved and
- who saw the incident.

The incident will then be investigated by the Learning Advisor, the Head of House and depending on the circumstances, one of the Deputy Principals, so that we can understand the full picture of what happened, and more importantly, why it happened. This will include:

- an interview with your child;
- an interview with the bully;
- interviews with any witnesses.

This will all be done as quickly as possible, usually within 48 hours of your initial contact with the College.

Once all the information has been gathered together, a decision will be made about the next step to be taken. You and your child will be kept up to date with everything that is happening.

**Consequences**

When it becomes clear that a person has bullied another member of the St. Peter's Community, there will be consequences for their actions. Each incident will be treated individually, and confidentially to the parties concerned. The consequences may vary from case to case, depending on the circumstances surrounding each individual incident of bullying. Some of the possible consequences for those who bully others are listed below:

- interview with senior members of staff and parents of the person who did the bullying;
- a Bullying Incident Report naming the person who did the bullying is placed on the College Bullying Incident File;
- the person who bullied signs an agreement that s/he will not bully anyone, in any way, again;
- repairing or replacing damaged property;
- withdrawing access to certain privileges/resources at school for a certain period of time;
- suspension.
Repeat bullying will be treated as a very serious offence and the consequences will be more severe. Depending on the situation, repeat bullying may include withdrawing a student from certain subjects or negotiating a student's transfer to another College.

Appeals
If you or your child is unhappy with the way the incident was handled by the staff investigating the incident, you are entitled to contact the Principal to discuss your concerns and seek a resolution to the issues you may have.

Monitoring the Outcome

Once the incident has been resolved, the Head of House and the Student Welfare Services Co-ordinator will monitor the situation to ensure that any assistance recommendations and/or consequences are implemented for both the student who was bullied and the offending student.

Conclusion

Simply because a policy exists on paper does not mean that bullying will suddenly cease to exist. It will only disappear from our community if we are all vigilant in ensuring that the people who bully others learn and understand that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Therefore, it is important to report any incidents of bullying to those people identified in this leaflet, if your child feels unable to do so themselves. *Please do not allow your child to persuade you that the bullying will only get worse if you report the incident to an adult at the College.* Bullying will only get worse if the bully thinks that he or she can get away with it - the longer their actions go unchecked, the “safer” from detection the bully will feel and the more they are going to bully your child. Not only does your child need to feel safe and respected, but the bully needs to be educated to the appropriate ways of living and working with others. Don’t allow bullying to continue.
Cyber Safety Tips:

- PC’s and other internet enabled devices (Ipod, Iphones, Xbox) SHOULD be in a common area of the house - NOT IN THE BEDROOM!

- Monitor your children - see what your child is doing, who they are talking to and what sites they are on...be aware if their mood changes.

- Make sure there is no response to rude or harassing emails. (Keep a record in case of further investigation)
  - If harassment continues...delete the current email account and start a new one. The new email address should only be given to a selected few.
  - If receiving harassing messages on MSN / Facebook etc - have the sender blocked.

- Advise your child to immediately exit any site that makes them feel uncomfortable or worried.

- If you have found inappropriate content about your child on a website - contact the Administrator and or Police

- Have a family internet contract and set house rules;
  - What information your child can put onto websites or share with others
  - Where they go online and what they do.

- Be aware the majority of children WILL NOT tell a parent/teacher if bullied or harassed online for fear that they will loose internet access!! NEVER threaten total disconnection!
  - Make sure that your children understand that they will not get in trouble if they tell you about a problem.

- Parents must learn about the internet with their child – get students to share their knowledge of the internet with their parents in a fun environment
  - Spend time online with children, just as you would with many other activities such as sport, board games and walking the dog - learn and explore together

- Install filters and other monitoring/blocking software to minimise dangers. This is already done in schools but homes should have up to date filtering software installed at home.
  - Know the sites they are accessing to ensure suitability. Filters CAN sometimes fail to protect and can be bypassed by a 'tech savvy' child.
  - Learn the lingo so that you can decipher some of the content if required. Advise parents to do the same.

**DO NOT EXCHANGE PERSONAL INFORMATION!**

- Children Under 14 ARE NOT ALLOWED on FACEBOOK. Don’t support your child to break the rules.
  - Social Networking Profiles such as Facebook MUST BE SET TO PRIVATE.

- MSN contacts and social networking site friends should be people that your child knows in real life. This is one way to reduce possible risks. Anyone can be anyone online.
  - Teach children that information on the internet is not always reliable.

- Set up an MSN, Facebook, MySpace account...whatever your children use and engage with them online. This also allows you to know how these applications work.

- If your child is playing online games it is YOUR responsibility to make sure that YOU know how to play the game too in case of problems. Play online games together.

- Do not let young children 'google' aimlessly with no supervision. Children need to be taught about search engines and how they work.

*The internet and the various applications are a lot of fun and a wonderful tool......
Maximize the benefits and surf safely together!*
MEGAN, a teenage schoolgirl, takes a revealing photo of herself in the school toilets and sends it to a male friend on her mobile phone. She then looks on helplessly as the photo is texted to her classmates. The brief account of her humiliation can be seen on YouTube. It was made by ThinkUKnow, an internet safety campaign developed by the Australian Federal Police and Microsoft Australia. The idea is to educate teenagers about how little control they have over images posted on the internet.

Child education expert and former police officer Susan McLean says she has not visited an Australian secondary school that has not had an issue with sexting. She has said: "When I started working in this area, the only time there were pictures out there of young people in cyberspace that were naked or sexually explicit were as a result of coercion ... so a girl being tricked into sending a picture. But what we're seeing now of course is young girls taking these photos of themselves, of themselves and their boyfriends and sending them off into cyberspace."

Educators and the law are struggling to keep pace with the phenomenon. Smartphones, which allow the instant taking and sending of images via text or email, have allowed teenagers, particularly young girls, to emulate the behaviour of celebrities, whose naked pictures are in circulation on the internet. Some girls have absorbed the idea that taking and sending a suggestive photo is normal behaviour. There is often little understanding that once their photos are on the internet or a social media network, it might be difficult to retrieve them; or that their images might travel beyond the safety of a friendship group. Yet this breakdown of privacy, which can be just one unintended effect of sexting, can be particularly damaging for teenagers. One moment's folly can lead to years of embarrassment, anxiety and regret. It is important for parents and schools to educate young people about the dangers of this behaviour.

Legally too, sexting can also have a disastrous impact on the young people who receive these images. A study of US teens in 2008 showed that about 39 per cent had received texts or emails with sexually suggestive content that were initially intended to be sent to someone else. Ignorance of the law is no defence. Under child pornography laws in Victoria it is a crime for anyone to transmit or possess naked pictures of a person aged under 18.

As today's Sunday Age report shows, possessing sexually suggestive images of teenagers can lead to placement on a sex offender register. Those on the register are monitored by police and are ineligible for jobs that involve working with children, say, or volunteering at sports clubs. This can be devastating for those who are on the register because their ex-girlfriend sent them a naked photo, and can be onerous for the police. Some young men who have been found with sexual images of teenagers on their computer have gone before the courts on child pornography offences. The chairman of the criminal bar association, Greg Lyon, says the law was written before sexting became common among adolescents.

The law needs to find a way of responding more sensitively to sexting. An urgent review is called for. In the words of law lecturer Bruce Arnold from the University of Canberra: "A punitive approach may traumatisc both offenders and victims ... we need to differentiate between the foolish 10-year-old, the wild 16-year-old and the vicious 50-year-old."