From the Principal

The Schools Assistance Act 2004 has a variety of implications for all schools. This Act is Australian Government legislation that describes what schools must do to receive Commonwealth funding. Every four years, the Catholic sector in South Australia enters into an agreement with the Australian Government to receive funding for our schools. The agreement struck in recent times provides clear details of a range of accountability and compliance requirements that is conditional if funds are to be received. The specific requirement that is most likely to capture the attention of students, parents and caregivers is in relation to student reports. The following few comments will serve as an introduction to pending changes to student reports and will be followed up with further information in future newsletters.

STUDENT REPORTS- Australian Government Requirements

The Schools Assistance Act requires all schools to provide meaningful information to parents about their child’s progress and achievement. From 2006, schools will be required to provide specific information to parents of students in Yrs 1-10, as well attend to a range of other compliance requirements.

The Act requires that student reports will:

- be provided in writing at least twice a year followed by an opportunity for parents to discuss the report with teachers
- use plain English that is easy for parents to understand
- show relative achievement of students based on 5 levels (A,B,C,D,E) defined against the specific learning standards articulated in the curriculum framework used by the school
- on request by parents, indicate the relative and comparative achievement of the child against the child’s peer group (i.e. the school year level), and include a statement on each report to this effect.

The current Xavier College reporting procedures are consistent with most aspects of these requirements. However, there will be implications in regard to the last two dot points and in future weeks I will elaborate on the specific changes that will occur at Xavier College in order to comply with these requirements.

Mr Lynn Martin,
Principal

National Excellence in Teaching Awards

Honour An Outstanding Teacher or Teaching Team
Call for National Excellence in Teaching Awards Nominations for 2006
Nominations close: 28 July 2006

The NEITA Foundation’s National Excellence in Teaching Awards program is one of those rare opportunities to publicly recognise and encourage your outstanding teachers. It is the only national awards program where school communities – secondary student councils, individual parents, school councils, parent associations and community organizations – can nominate the teachers or teaching teams who contribute excellence. Two awards streams are offered:

- **NEITA Teaching Excellence Awards**
  These NEITA awards and Australian Scholarship Group grants are presented to the teachers whose exemplary classroom skills and dedication have demonstrated innovative approaches to teaching that serve as models for schools.

- **Australian Scholarships Group Community Merit Awards**
  The Australian Scholarships Group Community Merit Awards are made to teachers who have engaged their students in activities that are of service to the community, and/or who have provided the local community with opportunities to support and participate in the work of the school.

To receive your 2006 NEITA Awards nomination information pack:
Phone free call 1800 624 487 Australia wide or Email your school contact name and address to: neita@asg.com.au
Grief and young people

Loss at any stage of life is sad. During adolescence, loss and grief can be especially troubling. At younger ages, children have a limited understanding of death. During the pre-school and early primary school years, they may think it is reversible and assume that if they are good death will not occur. As they age, children gain more understanding.

It is often assumed that teenagers have an adult understanding of death, however this is often not the case. While they understand that people die, they may have a sense that it can’t happen to them and that they are invulnerable regardless of the risks they take. Others may romanticise death and fantasise about being with the dead person as if they could revive the relationship so that it would resemble the time before the loss. The same jumbled thinking is often seen in suicidal adolescents who realise that death is forever but imagine themselves as witnesses at their own funerals.

Some may become depressed and express their sadness through irritability and anger. Others become guilty that they have survived or may develop hypochondriacal concerns, physical complaints, sleeping difficulties, excessive worries about the safety of loved ones, low levels of trust and school refusal.

The experience of loss may itself separate young people from their peers. As one young man told me after the death of his parents, ‘All the kids at school seem so dumb, so stupid. They don't realise that in a moment it could all disappear. I just don't fit in any more’. This sense of separateness from peers may make them more reliant on family. Try to keep family routines as normal as possible.

Some rough guidelines

Involve young people as much as possible in the processes around the death or loss and also the arrangements to observe and mourn the loss.

- People can show signs of grief, sadness and loss for a long time afterwards.
- Young people can be affected by the loss of people they don’t know directly, such as students at their school, rock stars and royalty.
- Chronic illness of siblings can cause grief.

What parents can do

- If you are directly affected by the death yourself, find someone you trust to speak to and for your teenager to speak to. Don’t let them get away with not grieving. If you are grieving yourself, don’t give yourself the sole job of trying to help your teenager. It may be that they won’t share their real feelings with you in order to protect you.
- People can grieve for people who are not dead but are effectively lost to them through disability, stroke, geographical shifts and loss of relationship.
- People often report that what is difficult in the first few weeks or months after a loss is likely to be different from the issues that create difficulty in the next few months. It is often helpful to concentrate on those things just in front of you. This is not a time for making big plans. Don’t expect people to be over it quickly. Young people particularly grieve in bursts. Let them know that people who are grieving are allowed to feel good some of the time too.
- One of the best times to talk to young people about loss is when they are engaged with you in an activity of remembrance about the lost person. Ask them about their best memories, holidays and favourite times.
- If you are grieving yourself, it can be important to share some of your own feelings rather than feeling you have to be the super-coping parent at all times.
GOING WITHOUT TO HELP OTHERS
The World’s Greatest Shave is an annual event where people in the public either shave or colour their hair, raising money for the Leukaemia Foundation to help find a cure for the disease. Several other people at my local church (Gawler Zion Lutheran church) were going to participate, and I wanted to do this because my mum’s cousin has Leukaemia. She needs to have a bone marrow transplant to save her life. When I first asked Mr Martin to give me permission to cut my hair off he said “No”, but after some discussion the school let me do it. So far I have raised $600 dollars with more to come. Thanks to everyone who has supported me.

Becky Couzner

I was always getting payed out for my large hair. Friends from school gave donations, and my Aunty took a tin to her work and collected $150. I had my haircut last Saturday at the Gawler South Football clubrooms after our football game. All of my family came, as well as my team mates to watch while my local hairdresser Nicole gave me a number 2. I raised $190 that night at the South Gawler clubrooms. In total I have made over $700.

Daniel Costa

Approximately 2,370 Australians are diagnosed with Leukaemia every year. This is the equivalent of almost 6 people every day, and is the most common form of cancer that affects children. Their combined donations total more than $1300 dollars which is a real achievement to them both.

Deb Wyatt

** Students must seek approval from the Principal for any exemptions to the College Uniform Policy. As a general rule approval will not be given for students to be involved in public awareness campaigns that involve them being unable to comply with the College Uniform Policy. The school curriculum provides a wide range of alternative opportunities for students to become actively involved in community service initiatives without the need to go outside of school policy. It is only in cases where a student has a significant commitment to the personal well being of a close family member that an exemption is likely to be granted.

YAC Youth Forum
The City of Salisbury Youth Advisory Council is hosting a Youth Forum so young people aged 12-25 can have a say in the City of Salisbury Youth Strategy.

** Wednesday 17th May**
9.30am till 2.30pm
1st Salisbury Scout Hall, Memorial Drive,
Salisbury

The day will include guest speakers, food, and other fun activities. The forum will involve discussion around education, training, employment, recreation and health. There will also be time to raise and discuss any other issues and ideas.

For further information or to register contact Kelly Fowler Youth Development Officer 8406 8251 or kfowler@salisbury.sa.gov.au by Friday 12th May 2006.

R.I.P.
Please pray for the eternal repose and happiness of Steven Kent, husband of Tanya and father of Cassie, Year 8. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family.

SACE Semester 1 Examinations
Term 2, Week 8
Year 11 Students : 19 - 23/6/2006
Year 12 Students : 19 and 20/6/2006
(Mathematical Applications and Business Studies ONLY)

Rebecca Donnon,
SACE Coordinator

Weekly Celebration of the Eucharist
Every Tuesday morning at 8.10am Fr. Germano Baiguini will say a morning Mass in the Xavier Chapel.

Students and staff are invited to join the thousands of Catholics around the world who begin their day by spending some time in prayer and celebrating the Eucharist together before they go off to school, work.... etc.
PARENTING WORKSHOPS
GAWLER COMMUNITY HOUSE
2 SCHEIBENER TCE, GAWLER

A program of 4 workshops over 2 weeks

PARENTING AND COMMUNICATION - 25 May, 12:30pm
- How to talk so kids listen and listen so kids talk
- Assertive communication and active listening
- Personal boundaries and self-respect
- How to say no and mean it

PARENTING AND SELF-ESTEEM - Fri, 26 May, 12:30pm
- What is self-esteem and what affects it
- Parenting styles and their impact
- What children need at different ages
- Agreements we can make for a happier life

PARENTING AND SOCIAL ISSUES - Thu, 1 June, 7:30pm
- Looking at addiction, family breakdown, poor pressure, youth culture, global change
- Rites of passage and maturity
- Negotiation and problem solving

PARENTING AND BULLYING - Fri, 2 June, 12:30pm
- What is it and what causes it
- Power, powerlessness and authority
- Respect, self-assertion and boundaries
- Discipline - what is it?

FOR ENQUIRIES AND BOOKINGS
PLEASE PHONE 8522 4601

National History Challenge

The National History Challenge is a research-based competition for students. It gives students a chance to be an historian, investigating their community and exploring their own past. It emphasises and rewards quality research, the use of community resources and effective presentation.

Students are able to present their work in a variety of forms including the following forms:

- Individual Research Essay
- Performance
- Three-Dimensional Museum Display
- Multimedia - Audio/Video
- Multimedia - Website.

Students from Years 5 to 12, 19 years of age or younger, in Australian schools submit their research and can progress from School to Regional to State / Territory and National finals. They will all have an unforgettable learning experience through involvement in the Challenge.

Last year Xavier student Naomi Tucker was a National winner in this competition and won a trip to Canberra to receive her award from Minister Nelson.

Mrs. Martin has volunteered to support interested students to develop their entries by working with them during lunch time on Fridays.

National Safe Schools Week

Bullying, harassment, violence, child abuse and neglect are issues of great concern to school communities across the country. Next Week (May 15-19) is National Safe Schools Week and will provide an opportunity to focus on developing safe school environments following the implementation of the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF). Next week, 4 of our Year 8 students - James Cobbledick, Jack Mercer, Melissa Botchen and Lucy Harnett, will attend the Northern Region Student Roundtable at Trinity College to identify issues and solutions around safer schools.