



A LETTER TO OUR SCHOOL FAMILIES

Dear Friends

As we consider enrolment for your children, I would like to welcome you into the St Agnes' Parish School Family. Our schools seek to meet the educational needs of the enrolled children and those needs can be many and varied. That is why our Parish School Family has Early Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education and Vocational Education, through which we support you and your child.

We are acutely aware that the children in our schools are not just students. For us, every child is sacred, and they are primarily persons and each is different and unique. The great human challenge is to become the fine person each of us can be, and the years of schooling are crucial for the growth of each person towards that goal.

There is a famous marble statue by Michelangelo of David, the towering warrior king we read about in the Bible. If we had visited his workshop in Florence at the time he produced this work, we would have seen a great big block of marble, no different from any such piece of marble. But Michelangelo saw something else – he saw David in that marble and set to work to bring him out of that raw material. I often think that is a good paradigm for education. From that raw material that is a child, parents and teachers seek to bring out the potential person that each child can be. This requires that the child develops many and varied skills which the schools will seek to provide in order to achieve the child's potential as an adult.

In the end, however, this responsibility of parents and teachers needs a clear vision of what that person should be like. It is not about being something but someone. Our Parish Family Catholic School puts before its students the person of Jesus Christ as a model to aspire to. Surely a reach too far! Not really. That same Jesus provides us with a profile, which in a special way, defines the good human being. We call that profile the Beatitudes, which introduce the fifth chapter of St Matthew's Gospel.

In our schools the children will have standards of conduct put before them and in doing so the school will simply be reinforcing the work of parents. It cannot, however, replace the profound influence of parents on their children.

I trust that this partnership between parents and the school will achieve the result that you sought when you enrolled your children in the schools of St Agnes' Parish.

Yours sincerely

Fr Paul Gooley
Parish Priest