

School Principal Report for the 2020 Annual Community Meeting
1 December 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers

Thank you for being with us during what has been a most unprecedented time at St Jude's Catholic School this year!

Our year started out like most others, and we were excited to welcome many new families to our community. Very early on, we began to hear about the COVID-19 virus as it began to spread rapidly around the world. This caused us to have to adjust the way that we were able to engage with our families and we were required to cancel some of our very special events throughout the year.

Our families were given the option to keep students at home as the uncertainty of the spread of this virus took hold in Western Australia. During the last week of Term One, all children were asked to stay at home unless their parents were essential workers and our teachers began providing work to the children remotely. A great learning shift occurred at this time and parents worked closely with us to support their children with their studies at home through the provision of work packs and online learning activities presented through SeeSaw and/or Teams.

At the beginning of Term Two, parents once again had the option of keeping children home or sending them to school. No matter which option was chosen, our staff worked tirelessly to ensure that all Learning Areas were taught and that these were provided to every child in the same manner. This was a challenge for our staff, and I was very impressed with the variety of ways that they created learning opportunities for students, some of whom were at school and others were working from home during this time. I thank all staff for their dedication and commitment to operating our school, teaching and learning at all times, and especially during this very unusual year.

We were so glad once all of the children returned to the physical school site. There was a sense of disconnectedness that, despite all of the online collaboration, was only really able to be set aside once the children were back in the classrooms. Unfortunately, we had some restrictions set by the Premier of Western Australia, and this meant that we were unable to have some of our yearly gatherings with families and friends, such as our Harmony Day, shared lunches and even assemblies.

Technology came to our rescue, however, and we orchestrated a way to showcase our Edudance Concert to all of our parents, caregivers and extended families. We were able to bring back assemblies and invite parents to class liturgies – and we appreciated your willingness to adhere to all of the social distancing requirements that were set in place along the way.

The students were able to attend excursions and incursions again as the year progressed. We took part in our annual swimming lessons, and the weather certainly warmed up for us just in time for those two weeks. Our athletics carnival was a fantastic day, and one of the first events where our extended community could come along and enjoy together.

This year we celebrated our feast day over several days. Our celebrations began with a beautiful Mass, and continued with mission markets, bouncy castles, and St Jude's Got Talent.

We also took the opportunity to have our very first Colour Run™ at the school. A very creative team of volunteers came along and, with the help of Gosnells volunteer fire brigade and a foam machine, made the afternoon super fun and exciting.

Father Terry has continued to guide us along on our faith journey this year. Although the Mass was suspended at one time, he continued to be a positive presence in our school, constantly checking on the welfare of our staff, students and families. Once restrictions eased, we were able to work closely with Father Terry and the parish catechists to prepare children for receiving the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Thank you for being a wonderful role model and friend to our school, Father Terry!

Our School Board has continued to work closely with me to ensure that we provide the very best opportunities for your children. I wish to thank them for their enthusiasm and support over the past twelve months. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity I have had in working with each of them and wish to acknowledge Mrs Sam Moonemale and Mrs Rupri Kaur Sidhu as they finish their time on the School Board. I wish their families well as their children leave us and head to high school.

As part of my third year at St Jude's School, I was involved in a Principal Review process. I wish to thank all of the staff, students and parents who were a part of this process and made it such a positive experience for me. I am very privileged to be able to lead this vibrant school community and was humbled by your acknowledgement of my journey in the school as part of this process.

Members of the Friends of St Jude's (FOSJ) team have continued to support the school in building community and in raising funds to assist us in purchasing new resources across all classrooms. It has been an absolute pleasure working with the Executive, and I am so thankful for all of the parents, carers and extended family members who have joined with them and who have given so generously of their time to help us at many special events this year, including our Mothers and Fathers' Day stalls, our long awaited school disco, our athletics carnival, and our Colour Run™.

I would like to wish our graduating students all the very best for next year, as well as offering our prayers and best wishes to those families who leave us after their time at the school. We will miss you all and I hope that, whether your time at the school was long or short, we will hold a special place in your memories.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and special holiday. I look forward to discovering what the new year holds for us all once we are together again in 2021. Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Mrs Jonnda Simpson
Principal