



Holy Cross College

Office of the Principal

Holy Cross College, founded by the Patrician Brothers, 1891

Monday 23 January 2012

Dear Parents

Welcome to new parents

On behalf of the whole school community, I extend a warm welcome to all families new to the College in 2012. Many firm friendships are established between parents when their sons come to Holy Cross and I hope that this is your experience too. The more you involve yourself in the life of the College, the greater the opportunity there is for this aspect of your son's school life to enrich your own life too. I trust that your association with the College will be positive and blessed.

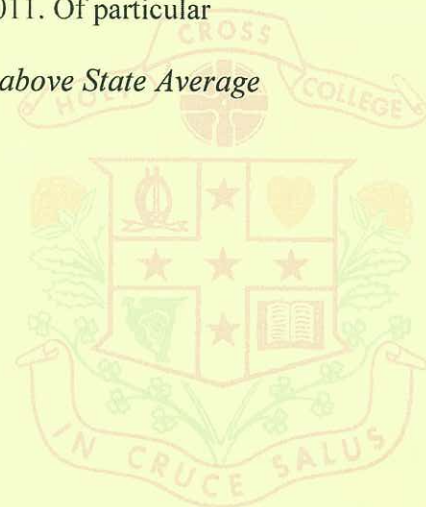
Welcome back also to all families returning for another year of association with Holy Cross College in 2012. In particular, my thoughts are with those parents who will guide their son through Year 12 — it is a journey that Peter Buxton (Assistant Principal) and I will share with you as parents ourselves this year. I have witnessed the enormous joy and pride of Holy Cross parents as they participate in their son's Graduation Day, Graduation Mass and Formal in the years that I have been here and I know that when the tough work of the year is done, you have much to look forward to and be deeply satisfied about.

My purpose in writing this letter is to set out school information that I hope is useful and informative. I ask that you take the time to read it carefully. Your attention to matters that require your consideration will greatly assist in the smooth operation of the College in 2012.

Academic results 2011

Very pleasing progress was made in our academic performance in 2011. Of particular note in the HSC were:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Percentage above State Average</i>
English (Standard)	2.89
English (Advanced)	1.66
English Extension 1	4.41
English Extension 2	10.56
Industrial Technology	6.32
Information Processes & Technology	8.09
General Mathematics	3.02
Mathematics	0.27
PDHPE	1.23



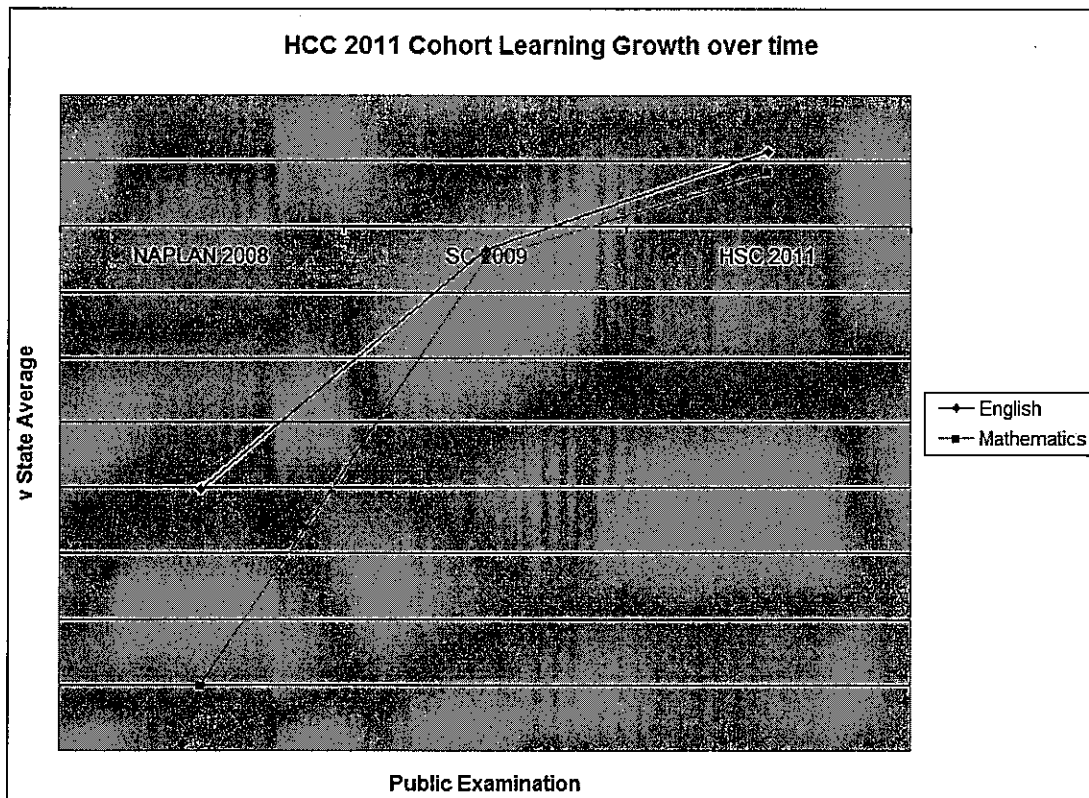
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Visual Arts	0.31
Business Services	3.08
Construction	4.24
Hospitality	2.99

There are thirteen subjects above State average, compared to the eight subjects above State average that I reported on at this time last year.

It should be remembered that Holy Cross is a fully comprehensive school. It is a key part of our Patrician ethos to accept students of all ability levels from the best of the best (academically speaking), to students who struggle with academics and need our special support. In this context, one could only expect student results overall to be ‘average’ — yet our results are vastly better than this. Our repeated and increasing number of HSC subjects above State average is a reflection of the strong academic climate of the College, the effort of the Year 12 cohort and the commitment of our teaching staff.

Of greatest importance, though, as I continue to write, is the *Learning Gain* of students. What do we do with what we are given? We now have public testing data, in the English and Mathematics domains at least, that gives some indication of the Learning Gain from our students’ baseline 2008 NAPLAN results, through their 2009 School Certificate results and finishing with their HSC results.



The upward trend that you see in the graph above is what we were able to achieve with the 2011 HSC students. This is the “value-adding” that an education at Holy Cross provides.

Our 2011 School Certificate results were excellent once again, with English, Mathematics, Science, History and Computing above State average. In NAPLAN results, our Year 9 students achieved spectacular Learning Gain of between 12%, and 27% growth above State average growth in aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. This represents Learning Gain among the highest in any NSW school in 2011.

Fees

While Holy Cross provides modern facilities, vast grounds and a quality education for your son, it continues to maintain a modest fee structure to ensure that a quality Catholic boy's education remains affordable for families, in accordance with the mission of the Patrician Brothers.

There is ample evidence in the building projects of recent years that strong capital investment has been made in maintaining and improving the quality of the physical resources at the College. In 2012, plans will proceed for the construction of new state-of-the-art Science facilities in 2013.

Every effort is made in the annual structuring of fees to achieve a balance between the huge demands of providing the financial base to ensure the ongoing growth of the College and keeping costs to parents within acceptable limits. The average increase in fees is 6.4%. This is slightly above the most recent Educational CPI of 5.8% and less than the 2011 increase of 7.0% in the AGSRC (Australian Government School Recurrent Costs) index used to calculate the Federal government payments for children in non-government schools. It is in this context and in consideration of the needs of the College that the Finance Committee has made that the judgement of the fee increase for 2012 is a responsible one which is affordable for our community.

At its Term 2 meeting of 2011, the P&F Executive approved an increase of the P&F Levy to \$300 for 2012. While this is a considerable increase, it was strongly felt that the increased revenues are required to continue to drive the capital improvements program that has been so much a feature of Holy Cross's development over the last four years.

Considerable thought and planning has gone into the restructuring of school fees for 2012 and beyond. The intention has been to create a single set of flat-rate, up-front compulsory payments for parents, with no hidden extras or add-ons such as camps or excursion monies in the course of the year. This is designed to assist families with their financial planning. The exceptions to this are non-compulsory school activities such as Duke of Edinburgh, the Annual College Snow Trip and the optional TEC program for Years 8-12, (the latter will be billed separately in Term 2).

In order to assist in the payment of fees, the College encourages parents to take up the new payment options for 2012 and beyond, which will allow parents to make 40 weekly payments from February to November, reducing the lump sum burden that is so often encountered by families with school fees. The option will remain for parents to pay fees termly over Terms 1-3. The fee schedule is set out in a separate attachment to this letter.

The College relies on the contributions of parents to support the College. There is an expectation that fees are paid promptly and in full; having said that, no child will be excluded from Holy Cross due to a family's personal financial situation. If there are circumstances that make fee payment difficult, please make contact with the Business Manager at the earliest point opportunity so that special arrangements can be made.

New members of staff, 2012

I received news in recent days that Mr Frank Samyia (Mathematics) has resigned from Holy Cross, completing a nine year appointment at the College. We are currently recruiting for this position.

New members of staff for 2012 are as follows:

- Mr George Morad has been appointed to the position of English Coordinator. Mr Morad comes to us from Marist College, Dundas, where he held the position of Year 12 Coordinator. Mr Morad is familiar with the Patrician ethos, having previously taught at Delany College, Granville.
- Mr Thomas Gardiner joins us taking up the position of Teacher of Science. A recent Science graduate of the University of Sydney, he completed his first professional year at St Joseph's Catholic College, East Gosford in 2011.
- Mr Rowell Morales will also join the Holy Cross Science staff. Mr Morales is a recent graduate of University of Technology Sydney, where he completed separate degrees in Biotechnology and Teaching. He has spent the last 18 months in a full-time temporary position at Marist College Eastwood where he was highly regarded.

I also wish to mention the appointment of Mr Michael Krawec as Regional Director, Inner West Catholic Education Office. In this role, Mr Krawec has a real and present influence on the life of Holy Cross. As the former principal at two Patrician Schools, Chair of the Delany Foundation, and the first ever lay participant in the Patrician Brothers International Chapter Meeting in 2011, Mr Krawec joins the Inner West network of Catholic Schools as a man very familiar with the Patrician ethos and a great friend to the Brothers in general and Holy Cross in particular. We wish him well in his new appointment.

Student Diaries

Every student is issued with a College Diary. It is expected that it be used to record homework and assessments, as well as a means of ready communication between home and school. I would ask parents to view it regularly and *sign it weekly*. Compelling research indicates that perhaps the greatest *variant* determiner of success at school is the involvement of parents in the education of their child. This is a simple way for you to be involved — to start the conversation with your son about his progress. Your son may not be proactive in getting the Diary out for you to look over regularly. Some gentle parental cajoling could be in order here.

Student Attendance

A key barometer of a successful school is a high rate of attendance. Each time a student is not in class or in attendance at key celebrations of school life, like Opening School Mass and Sports Carnivals, it eats away at the confidence of the whole. Students are expected to be in attendance every day. There are no optional school days. We have had considerable success in recent years in achieving high rates of attendance at these days and particularly on the last days of each term. Please, do not make arrangements for family holidays that cut into the last days of term time — it *will* impact on others. Holiday periods are generous and well publicised. In the occasional extraordinary circumstances that do require leave during term time, I would ask that parents write a courtesy letter to me making that request. Should your child be sick from school on any day, a phone call to the College on that morning before 9.00am (with a follow-up letter on the next day of student attendance) is the protocol. I ask that parents adhere closely to these courtesies.

Home - School Communication Protocol

It will greatly aid the effective flow of communication between home and school if enquiries are directed to appropriate members of staff in the first instance. At any time, you will find an up-to-date list of staff and their special responsibilities on the College website, <http://holycrosscollege.org> under the menu item *About the College | Positions of Responsibility*.

The following list will help to guide you regarding your enquiries:

- **Curriculum issues:** Initially, look to discuss aspects of your son's progress with the Subject Teacher. Thereafter, any issues can be raised with the Studies Coordinator. The Curriculum Coordinator can assist on such matters as formation of classes, overall curriculum patterns for students and College assessment policy.
- **Pastoral Care:** Initially, the Homeroom or Classroom Teacher should be contacted regarding your son's overall academic, physical, social-emotional or spiritual development. The Year Coordinator thereafter might be involved in discussions regarding ongoing matters. The Assistant Principal oversees the Pastoral Care within the school and will be involved in the most serious or concerning matters.
- **Sport:** The team coach can assist with matters such as training, selection and venues. The Sports Coordinator can assist on matters relating to College policy on co-curricular expectations, sports played and team selection. Concerns regarding sport beyond this should be directed to the Assistant Principal.
- **Fees, Finance:** The Fees Secretary can assist on particular enquiries relating to fee accounts. The Business Manager can address questions regarding general financial policy and all other matters relating to fee accounts.
- **Public Transport:** The College Receptionist can assist with applications for or replacements of bus and train passes. Issues regarding problems encountered on public transport should be directed to the Assistant Principal.

Crossroads

The College regularly communicates to parents through the *Crossroads* newsletter, which is published fortnightly during term time. This should come home to you as a hard copy via your son. You are also able to optionally email-subscribe to the *Crossroads*. Go the College website, <http://holycrosscollege.org>. On the home page, you will see a link in the bottom right hand corner, *Subscribe to our Newsletter*. I encourage all parents to subscribe to *Crossroads*. A useful feature of *Crossroads* for parents is the *Letterbox*. This small section of *Crossroads* outlines every letter that has been sent home to parents in the previous fortnight. Checking the *Letterbox* in *Crossroads* will ensure that you do not ever miss the letters home that are intended for you. If you have not received a letter that you should have, you can retrieve an electronic copy from the College website under the menu item *News & Events | Letterbox*.

Other Important Information on the College Website <http://holycrosscollege.org>

It is College policy that teachers publish unit assessments/projects for students at the start of each new unit of work. Assessment tasks are also required to adhere to a standard format and to be published on the College website. This is a public site and you are able to view these assessment tasks yourself. You will find them under the menu item *Current Students | Assessments*. You will also see Assessment Manuals and Book Lists are published there. Assistance that you can give your son in accessing these materials will make a difference to his level of organisation and thus ultimately to him reaching his academic potential. The College Calendar is available on the College website under the menu item *News & Events | Calendar* and can be viewed in Month, Week or Agenda

formats. The calendar is regularly updated and can be relied upon as an accurate diary of College events.

Textbooks

It is my expectation that every boy has his textbooks for Day One, when class work commences. You son will find it very difficult if he does not have his textbooks with him. Particularly in the younger years, parents' assistance in ensuring that boys are appropriately organised with the right books for the next day's classes as they pack their bag the night before will generate good habits that promote and support the best opportunity for learning at school.

Student uniform and grooming

I take this opportunity to share with parents what is regularly shared with students. Boys are expected to wear their uniform with pride. When they are tardy with their uniform, it betokens a lack of respect for self and the College they represent. Simple things like shirt tucked in, tie fastened with top button done up (for the seniors Terms 1 & 4 and all students Terms 2 & 3) send a very clear message to the community about the pride we have in our history, our traditions and our values. I believe that Holy Cross boys have been excellent in the way they have worn the uniform in recent years. They want to be the *best of the best* and they have lived up to the expectation. I call on the support of parents to ensure that this continues. In addition, all boys are expected to be clean shaven each day. Hair must be off the ears and collar and should not be so long in the fringe that it can be pulled over the eyebrows. Once again, boys have been excellent with this standard. When a boy is asked to get a haircut, it should be attended to promptly.

Every student must have a House T-shirt. These can be purchased from the College Uniform Shop. Students are expected to wear the College polo shirt to school on a Thursday and to bring their House T-shirt with them in their bag. Year 7-10 students are also expected to have their House T-shirt with them for PDHPE practical classes. Lastly on uniform and grooming, I wish to reiterate with parents the expectation that students have *black leather* shoes. Extremes of style or other materials are not acceptable.

Parents in Touch



Parents in Touch was successfully launched as an initiative of the P&F in 2011. Parents in Touch is a once-a-term series of seminars/workshops designed to assist parents in guiding their son's education. As I have already noted above, parent involvement is the secret ingredient to achieving full student potential. **I make a special request that at least one parent from each family attend the Parent in Touch sessions.** This is where you can make a difference to our school community. Please keep a lookout for the Parents in Touch flyers advertising upcoming Parents in Touch seminars/workshops.

**Opening School Mass Wednesday 15 Feb 10.00am & Parent Wine and Cheese Night
Friday 17 Feb, 6.30pm**

You will soon receive a separate invitation to join us at the College Opening School Mass. I most warmly welcome your attendance if your work schedule allows it. The first evening opportunity for us to gather as a parent community is at the P&F Wine and Cheese Night on Friday 17 February. This is a relaxing, informal evening for parents of students from *all* year groups. I do hope you can join us in the recently redeveloped Delany Paddock, as it is now named, immediately behind the historic Br Fintan O'Neill Building to welcome in the new academic year.

I look forward to another successful year working with you and your sons.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Taylor', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Adam Taylor
Principal