

# ST JOHN'S COLLEGE BULLETIN

## Term One, Issue One, 2025

"There is no better way to teach a child Christianity than to live it truly and from the heart. You cannot teach what you do not live." - Saint Silouan the Athonite

### From the Principal

A very warm welcome to 64 new students and 6 staff (our largest number of new students in some time), together with many returning students and families to St John's College. In addition, on behalf of the College Board and staff, I offer best wishes to those who will undertake VCE subjects this year and also a special 'shout out' to the 34 new Foundation students who went to school for the first time on Tuesday 28th January.

Our start has been largely a very positive one – my special thanks to staff who have worked with great diligence and energy to prepare for the start of another school year – a good number commenced in mid-January, while a week of meetings, student and staff orientations and preparations over the 28-31 January all contributed to the success of the first week.

New initiatives such as the VCE Study Retreat also helped to sharpen our focus for a new year.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora, for leading us in our College Blessing on Thursday 6th February to formally welcome in the new year and to bless our work, activities and efforts for the 2025 school year.

#### Principal's Reflection at the Commencement Assembly

There is much in the world around us that God has created for us to take inspiration from – take Geese.

We see them overhead – But have you ever wondered why they fly in a V like they do? Geese in flight form a V or plump. They fly in formation to conserve energy, communicate and remain together. But why?

#### Energy conservation

To conserve energy on migrations some of which are 4,000kms in length, Geese fly slightly above the bird in front of them which reduces wind resistance – this 'uplift effect' scientists estimate can save around 70% of flight energy expenditure. Faster, quicker, safer, less energy used!

#### Communication and co-ordination

Geese use honking patterns to encourage and co-ordinate their movements – keeping better track of each other, heightening morale and permitting them to 'doze' when flying, allowing them to remain only partially alert at 7000m, or higher if you like than Mt Everest.

#### Visual assurance

The V formation makes it easy for geese to keep track of each other.

The plumb rotates leadership of the V as they tire. This form of shared effort and leadership ensures the load and responsibility is shared especially on long trips by the entire group.

Interestingly, when a goose gets sick or wounded, two other geese drop out of the formation and then follow it down to help and protect it. They remain with the goose for as long as it takes, until it dies or is able to fly again. They then assist with the 'catch up task' in re-joining the plump. Remarkable!

If we have any sense at all, we would do well to emulate them. Our classrooms are more productive, our learning is heightened, teams more successful.

Put simply, by looking out and after each other, we are more likely to get where we need to go and in better shape. A great way to conduct ourselves and our activities in 2025!

Next time you see a flock of birds in formation, I hope you will remember this life lesson they are sharing with us each and every day!

### New Staff

A very warm welcome to the following new staff:

#### Ms Attard - English and Humanities Departments

Ms Attard is an experienced educator who has held numerous leadership roles across multiple independent schools, demonstrating strong management and organisational skills. With a passion for literacy intervention, Ms Attard is eager to enhance student learning outcomes through innovative teaching strategies.

#### Mr Douch - Mathematics Department

After working as a relief teacher across multiple year levels last year at SJC, Mr Douch joins St John's College full-time, having been particularly impressed by the school's supportive and friendly community. As a 2024 graduate of Victoria University, he ranked in the top 15% of his course and brings a strong passion for a broad range of subjects from Science to Theology. Outside of teaching, he is the club secretary for the Victoria University Kendo Club and has competed and placed in the Australian Kendo Championships twice, demonstrating the discipline and passion he hopes to inspire in his students.

#### Ms Fan - Science Department

Since 2017, Ms. Fan has taught Science and Mathematics in Australia and overseas, bringing extensive experience in STEM or STEAM education. She holds a Master of Teaching from the Australian Catholic University and a Master of Food Science from the University of Melbourne, developing strong analytical and research skills.

Passionate about inquiry-based learning and technology integration, she has also pursued further studies in AI and cybersecurity. Committed to fostering curiosity and critical thinking, Ms. Fan aims to inspire students through engaging, real-world learning experiences.



#### Ms Makregiorgos - English and Humanities Departments

Ms Makregiorgos is a passionate educator who graduated from the University of Melbourne and has been teaching for two years. With experience at multiple schools around Melbourne, she brings an understanding of the diversity of learning needs and a dedication to fostering a positive and engaging learning environment.

#### Mr Punjwani - Mathematics and Science Departments

Mr Punjwani graduated with a Master of Teaching in Secondary at Monash University. He has a passion for education as demonstrated by his dedication to teaching and learning through his self-employment as a VCE Biology Teacher as well as volunteering his tutoring skills for Monash Virtual Schools. Mr Punjwani's experience in data-driven teaching strategies will benefit our students' academic experience.

#### Mrs Vezos - Primary

Mrs Vezos joins us with over 7 years of experience in the state sector, primarily in junior education. She brings a diverse set of skills and knowledge that will enhance the students' learning experiences. She has a special connection to the school, as her husband is an alumnus, and her mother-in-law was a dedicated junior school teacher for nearly 20 years. Her love for St John's College has only deepened as she now has two children attending the school. She is fluent in Greek and a proud Greek-Australian in our community.



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### Staff Changes

With some staff on Leave, the opportunity permits others to set-up, show their wares, as well as broadening the capacity and capability of our team. In saying this, I am delighted they have done so, and we are already benefitting from their enthusiasm and contributions.

**Ms Pimpini**  
In addition to her Head of Junior School role, Ms Pimpini becomes our Acting Deputy Principal during Mr Sherwood's absence. Romina's impact is already evident.

Ms Sarigianoglou's role, with our Senior School, has been divided into 3 aspects between Mr Hedditch, Ms Costanzo and Mr Raspa as follows.

**Mr Hedditch** assumes responsibility for administrative organisation across Year 7-12 along with Year 7-9 Pastoral Care.

**Mr Raspa** will have in addition to his other duties from 2024, 10-12 Pastoral Care.

**Ms Costanzo** will co-ordinate the VCE Curricular program, which includes Year 10-12.

My best wishes to these 4 staff.



Ms Pimpini      Mr Hedditch      Ms Costanzo      Mr Raspa

### Ms Giannos

I wish to inform you that Ms Giannos will be taking extended leave during Semester One. She wishes to share with you that she is undergoing treatment for cancer. Her Year 12 English and Orthodoxy classes will be covered by Ms Pastorelli and Miss Krikelis. We ask our school community, of which she has been a part of for thirty years, to keep her in our prayers and thoughts. Further, we ask our loving God to give her strength, courage and patience.

### College Chaplain

As announced at the College Blessing and Commencement Assembly, the role of College Chaplain has been expanded. His Grace Bishop Evmenios will return to the role of College Chaplain together with a wider team of Reverend Fathers from the various parishes which will also include Father Leo.

A special congratulations to Fr Leo on making a difference to so many at SJC and being such an inspiration to staff, parents, our families and especially the students of St John's College over the past 14 years of service as our College Chaplain



### College Blessing and Welcome Assembly



On Thursday 6th February, with the love and blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora, together with the clergy of the Diocese of Chora, conducted the College Blessing to mark the beginning of a new academic year at St John's College.

Following the blessing, we had the honour of recognising the exceptional achievements of our students. Two students were acknowledged for their outstanding academic performance, while two others were celebrated for embodying "Philotimo"—a spirit of love and generosity towards their peers. These awards were presented through the generosity of the Benito Family Trust.

A special commendation was given to our 2024 Dux, Pantelis S, who received a commemorative award in recognition of his exceptional academic achievements last year. Additionally, other students from the Class of 2024 were awarded for their outstanding study scores. The ceremony also included the presentation of Year 12 jackets to our Class of 2025. In a moment rich with tradition, our School Captains, Daniel B and Angeliq T, rang the first St John's College school bell—originally used by our Founder—to mark the commencement of their final year. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora, Fr. John Frangos (Chair of the College Board), Fr. Ierothos, Fr. Leo, Fr. Konstantine, Fr. Kyriakos, Fr. Panteleimon, Fr. George, and Fr. Ephraim for their presence and participation in this special service. A special thank you to His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora for his unwavering support, love, and inspiring words to our students and staff.

Following the Assembly, His Grace and Fr John, along with staff had the opportunity to speak with His Grace about what it means to be a leader, and the importance of our Christian Faith/prayer and attending church in our lives. The students felt very honoured to have this special time with His Grace.

May this new academic year be filled with growth, success, and blessings for our entire St John's College community!



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### VCE Retreat

VCE Retreat at Camp Sunnystones, Merrimu, Victoria.  
From February 3rd to 4th, a group of Year 11 and 12 students from St. John's College attended a wonderful Retreat at Camp Sunnystones in Bacchus Marsh. This program was designed to motivate and prepare students for a successful VCE journey, with a particular focus on our Year 12 class of 2025!

The retreat featured a series of meaningful workshops, including sessions on goal setting, study motivation, achieving VCE success, time management, and creating a study schedule. These sessions aimed to equip students with essential skills for the challenges ahead. In addition to the academic focus, students participated in exciting team-building activities, such as raft building, canoeing, archery, geocaching, and the much-loved night walk. These activities fostered camaraderie and strengthened their bonds as a cohort.

The natural surroundings added to the experience, with students spotting many native birds, including tawny frogmouth owls and wedge-tailed eagles, on their walks. Not to mention the thrill of encountering tens, or even hundreds, of Australian kangaroos in their natural habitat.

We were truly blessed to be joined by His Grace, Bishop Evmenios and Father John Frangos who both added a profound spiritual element to the retreat. Their insightful presence, supportive message and commitment to our community, especially given the hot weather, were greatly appreciated by both staff and students alike.

A special thank you to our staff: VCE and Pastoral Care leaders, Ms Chiara Costanzo and Mr Kristian Raspa, Camp Coordinator Mr Stefanos Chrisoulis and Ms Natanya Thrift, for their incredible efforts in organising and facilitating this VCE Retreat program. Their dedication to delivering meaningful sessions ensured the overall success and enabled our students were able to get the most out of this time away.

We look forward to returning to Camp Sunnystones next year for another enriching experience with our VCE students of St John's College.



### PA Meetings and Events 2025

#### EVENTS:

##### TERM 1

Welcome picnic - 14th Feb  
Lambathes Stall - March 17th – 2nd April

##### TERM 2

Mother's Day Stall - 9th May  
PA Annual Dinner Dance - 14th June

##### TERM 3

Disco Bingo/ Parents & Friends Night - 23rd Aug  
Father's Day Stall - 29th Aug

##### TERM 4

Spring Fete - Nov TBC  
Christmas Dinner Catch Up - Nov TBC

#### MEETINGS:

##### TERM 1

18th of Feb  
25th of March

##### TERM 2

6th of May  
10th of June

##### TERM 3

5th of August  
9th of September

##### TERM 4

21st of October  
18th or 25th of November TBC



PRESENTING THE...  
**ST JOHN'S COLLEGE PARENTS ASSOCIATION WELCOME PICNIC**  
PREP - YEAR 12 PARENTS & STAFF  
COME ALONG FOR LOTS OF FUN,  
AND MEET OUR WONDERFUL SCHOOL COMMUNITY  
FEBRUARY 14 | 4:00PM - 7:30PM  
FOOD & DRINK AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE  
\*GET BRAC, VEGGIES AND DON'T FORGET YOUR PICNIC BAG!  
**TERM 1 TENNIS**  
ST JOHN'S COLLEGE PRESTON  
**FREE TRIAL FOR ALL NEW PLAYERS**  
JUNIOR SCHOOL: 315-400 TUE  
MIDDLE SCHOOL: 315-400 WED  
PRIVATES & PAIRS DURING & AFTER SCHOOL BY APPOINTMENT  
SIBLING, PA & STAFF DISCOUNTS  
**TERM 1 SPOTS LIMITED**  
BOOK YOUR FREE TRIAL & LEARN MORE  
WWW.TENNISTITANS.COM.AU



**ST JOHN'S COLLEGE OPEN MORNING**  
Tuesday 01.04.25  
REGISTRATION IS ESSENTIAL  
FOREVER EXCELLING . FOREVER INSPIRING . FOREVER NURTURING

### Key Commencement Events and Dates

- 14th Feb 2025 - Year 5/6 Interschool Sports Tennis/Cricket
- 14th Feb 2025 - PA Family Welcome Picnic
- 17th Feb 2025 - Year 11/12 Tennis and Volleyball
- 19th Feb 2025 - No School for Foundation Students
- 22nd-23rd Feb 2025 - Antipodes Festival
- 26th Feb 2025 - No School for Foundation Students
- 26th Feb 2025 - Year 9/10 Volleyball
- 27th Feb 2025 - Whole School Divine Liturgy Service