Dear Parents, Carers, Staff, Students, Parishioners and Friends of St Finbarr’s,

So we come to the end of the 2013 school year; a year of many wonderful experiences, achievements and tremendous growth in the learning and personal character of our children. Thank you so much for your willingness to work as partners and to contribute your own talents and energy to life’s most rewarding endeavour, the education of our children. While watching the Echo’s Christmas Fair video I was reminded of the catchphrase we often use, that “it takes the village to raise the child”. Thank you for being such willing and such talented villagers this year!

This period of Advent has had a very real dimension to it for all of us at St Finbarr’s as we watch our friends and colleagues Titian (in the coming weeks) and Carolyn (early in 2014) prepare for the birth of their babies. I see in both of them the endless patience, preparation and willing energy required during the long wait mixed with the love, joy and hope invested in these emerging new lives. Neither may be aware of this but they have provided us with a rare and exciting window into this most precious of life’s moments and a beautiful tangible symbol of this time of waiting for the birth of Jesus.

I’m just praying that our nativity scene on Friday doesn’t become too real!

Both Carolyn and Tish will be on leave during 2014 and we look forward to their return in 2015. Tish has been a wonderful teacher of our Kinders and has contributed her many talents throughout the school, not least of which is her beautiful singing. Carolyn (Straddie) is a very talented teacher and leader and has played a key role at St Finbarr’s and I for one will be at a loss without her amazing organisational skills, friendship and laughter on the team next year (watch out for some aimless wandering on my part). Straddie has been instrumental in the development of our professional learning teams this year and has often been the glue that holds ‘it’ all together.

Celia Coleman and Helen Hunter have been wonderful additions to our staff in 2013. Their 12 month contracts have come to an end and sadly we say farewell on Friday. Celia has brought many new insights to our staff and has made significant contributions to the Stage 3 Team. She has a wonderful sense of humour and love of learning. Helen is a very warm and caring person who has contributed to a culture of connectedness in her classroom and across the school. She has also provided very practical and prayerful support to our staff as a leader of Religious Education.

I offer my congratulations to Mrs Rachel Kearey (mother of James and Oliver) who will take on the part-time role of Communications Secretary in 2014. I’m sure you will help Rachel to feel at home on the other side of the counter! Jenny Packham is reducing her hours for the 2014 school year and focusing specifically on the finance secretary role. Jen has been an amazing, consistent and warm presence in our office for over 20 years; her knowledge of our community, her welcome to new families and her thorough organisational skills have had a significant impact on St Finbarr’s. I sincerely thank you Jen for all you do and have achieved. Thank you also to Perry Bartholomew who has worked as a Teacher Aide for the past two years. Perry has played a very important role mentoring our boys, tutoring in Quicksmart and leading the charge on our outdoor adventures! Mrs Maria Melville has worked here this semester as a teacher aide and in the front office and she has been a very caring and thoughtful member of our team. While not working here next year Maria joins us as a parent.

I have received a number of nominations for the role of Chair of the Parish School Forum in the last two weeks and am delighted to announce that Mr Peter Parker (father of Oscar and Finnley) will take on the role for 2014. Peter operates his own environmental planning business and has a wealth of experience working in and with community organisations. Welcome aboard Peter. Marion McKillop has done a terrific job as our Forum secretary over the last two years (often stepping in as Chair) and I thank her for her diligence and great sense of humour. This is Marion’s final year as a St Finbarr’s parent.

Mr Michael Mullaly has been the Education Consultant for St Finbarr’s this year and a very great supporter of our school. Sadly, Michael is moving to the Port Macquarie area in 2014 to take on the consultant role with the Hastings Region of Catholic Schools. I thank Michael for his excellent support and friendship this year and I wish he and Robyn every blessing.

Tomorrow your child will bring home a copy of his or her class list for 2014. My sincere thanks to our teachers for the very many hours of time that have gone into their development. Please remember that there is no perfect arrangement nor is there a perfect teacher. We have done our best to provide a good balance, to share the love and to provide for quality learning for all students. Ultimately, the way the class dynamics unfold next year are part of the rich tapestry of life! I ask that you are positive with your child and show them the importance of a commitment to and faith in the individual talents and wisdom of our teachers – you would be hard-pressed to find better!

I wish you and your family a Christmas filled with love, lots of laughter and much relaxing! It has been an absolute pleasure to share this year’s educational and community endeavours with you! Take care and cherish those beautiful children. JW.
THANK YOU AND FAREWELL!

As I write this last newsletter piece for 2013, I am amazed at how quickly the last three years have gone by. Recently a few teachers and I were reflecting on the time I have had at St Finbarr’s and I wanted to share a few of these reflections with you… For those that know me quite well, know that I spend a lot of time on social media – so I have hashtagged each reflection for you (and I will no doubt have to explain what this means to most of the staff) and I had a bit of a giggle doing so.

- I left my family and friends in Brisbane to move here 3 years ago and Adam and I committed to travelling to/from Brisbane and Byron on weekends in order to still see each other. This just about killed the both of us and stopped us from really immersing ourselves into the Finnie’s community. #neitherherenorthere
- Before I even arrived here, Mr Wilson had nicknamed me “Stradlie” and it took me about 6 months to work out how and why he came up with such a name…. I won’t spoil it for you, but in typical “Dad joke” form – I bet a few father’s out there will work it out. #mortonisland
- During my first 12 months here, my Byron Mums (Mrs Bracken, Mrs Packham and Mrs Wilcosz) took me under their wing and tried to help me develop a work life balance. No such luck (but thank you lovely ladies for trying!) #weeklycoffeedates
- After my first term here at St Finbarr’s Mr Wilson thanked me for everything I had done and then reversed straight into my car in the staff car park. #wastooexhaustedtocry
- I organised the first Canberra trip that Finnie’s had done in many years… and vowed to never do it again after a gastro bug wiped out a few kids and teacher (guess which one?) in the first few days. I lost 8kgs… and looked fantastic when I arrived back home! #freedetox
- I had 4 very long weeks as “Acting Principal” in 2012 and realised how much I admire Mr Wilson for the enormity of his role and responsibility at our school. #overworkedandunderpaid
- I loved working as part of a “stage” in 2012 (with Donna and Brianna) and realised how powerful student learning can be when teachers are collaborating. #sharetheload
- I began my role as Leader of Pedagogy this year and my favourite part of this role has been assisting Maths learning with kids in Stage 1 and 2. It has allowed me to get to know the kids across all stages. #mathscanbefun
- Although my first degree was in “Creative Arts” this year was the first time I have ever organised a whole school showcase – and LOVED it! #mrghadnothingonme
- I got engaged, married and pregnant. #inthatorder
- I am incredibly nervous about taking next year off work and you may find me doing some relief work in Term 4 next year. #iwontknowwhatitme

In my new role this year I have been able to observe the teachers (somewhat) and I am in awe at how they persevere at this busy time of year in amidst reporting, end of year school events, and so much more! I would like to thank them for the support they have shown me in the last 3 years, both in my professional and personal life. A HUGE thank you to the staff who I have worked very closely with – Mr Wilson and Mrs Clark, both of whom I admire greatly and have learnt so much from.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to students and parents for your support and friendship over the last three years. Many have asked what my plans are for the future – and all I have been able to say is that I will continue living at Suffolk Park and will see me back working at Finnie’s in 2015. Finally, may I wish each and everyone a happy and safe Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Carolyn Wade
Assistant Principal
Leader of Pedagogy

NEW FRENCH CLASSES IN 2014

Research shows that learning languages is best begun at a young age; and that learning a foreign language can improve cognitive function, promoting intellectual and mental development in children.

French classes for pupils at St Finbarr’s will begin again in Term 1 2014 in the library for pupils wishing to continue - or to begin - learning French.

For more details, see the message board in the front office for your enrolment form. And please direct any queries to your French teacher, Patsy Bennett, on 0448808333. Merci!
## Important Dates

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<th>December</th>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advent Liturgy in hall</td>
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<td>10:45am</td>
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<td>Kinder excursion to Earth’n’Sea Pizza</td>
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<td>2:45pm</td>
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<td>Altar servers end of year party</td>
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<td>6:00pm</td>
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<td>Graduation Supper and Ceremony</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Stage 1 – fun ‘wet’ afternoon at school</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30am</td>
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<td>Final Liturgy and Ringing of the Bell</td>
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<td>Last day of school year</td>
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<th>January</th>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Admin Day</td>
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<td>Uniform Shop Open 9:00am-1:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 1 begins Years 1 to 6</td>
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<td>Best Start Interviews Kinder over the three days, 29—31 January</td>
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<td>Kindergarten First Day</td>
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### CANTEEN NEWS

The school canteen will be closed this Friday to enable Cyra to do the annual overhaul, a huge job as you can imagine. Thank you so much to Cyra for all her beautiful food, hard work, dedication and commitment to our school community.

### MEDICATION

All medication needs to be collected by Friday. If you would like your child to take their medication home we will require a permission note.

### Altar Server Roster

**Saturday 21 December**

**Group A**

Caelan Maladay, Ben Callahan, Julia Brophy and Sam Callahan

Please be at the church at 5:40pm.

### **URGENT**

The fair is over so please return any unsold raffle books to the office as soon as possible.
School Banking
School Banking is every Wednesday.
Could each student who has a banking wallet please hand it to their teacher.

Keep us up-to-date
Don’t forget if you change any of your contact details i.e. address, work/home/mobile phone numbers, emergency contact details, email addresses you need to let the school office know immediately.

General News - On Display - Parent Notice Board (Outside Library)

The Ballina-Byron Family Centre
6686 4109
See notice board for all services and programs.

After School Yoga Club @ St Finbarr’s with Karen
For 5-8yrs
Starts Mon 3 Feb 3.15 - 4.15pm
$91 for 7 week block
Booking essential contact Karen to register 0420 239 791

Tweedies After School Yoga Club @ St Finbarrs with Karen
For - 9 yrs up
Starts - Tuesday 4 Feb 3.15 - 4.15pm
Cost - $91 - 7 week block
Book with Karen - 0420239791

Fit Fins Run Squad 2013
Running Club from Kinder to Year 6
Training sessions Mondays and Fridays from 8am to 8.30am
$50 per term
Contact Caroline Bailey on 0409 804 131 or carolinejbailey@rocketmail.com

STS Student Exchange – Contact us today to start your adventure 1900283964 or 0401741754 email: stsf@people.net.au

Babysitters Needed!
Byron Bay Runners members need reliable, experienced babysitters around the Byron area Tues 5-7pm and Thurs 6-8pm $5 negotiable.
Email “byronrunner@gmail.com” with your contact details, for more info

Toastmasters - meeting every 1st & 3rd Mon of the month in the music room at St Finbarr’s

Austswim Swimming Lessons call Sally Preston for bookings and info 0423222918

Basketball Camp 1 - 12-18yrs - Mon & Tues 20 & 21 Jan. 2014, 9-3pm
Cost $70 1 day/$120 2 days
CAMP 2 - Under 12yrs - Fri 24 Jan. 2014, 9-3pm Cost $60 for the day
Lunch provided and fun guaranteed.
All info and Registration Forms on www.byronbasketball.com or ph; 66872246 a/h, HURRY, REGISTER NOW, NUMBERS ARE LIMITED!!

Sistagurl EP launch - 20 Dec 6-11pm Tickets $10 or $15 with CD
Where: Kulchajam, 1 Acacia St, Byron Bay Arts & Industry Estate
Contact: Nadine Smith nadinetahia@gmail.com 0421 731 642

Women’s Boxing at St Finbarr’s
Tues 6pm, Wed 6pm and Fri 6am. Call Kendall for enquiries on 0432795933

16TH-17TH AUGUST 2014
Past students, teachers & friends of the school are invited to join us for a weekend of celebrations that include an Open Day, Dinner & Mass.
For more information email cinnamonclark@gmail.com