4 March 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

All students from Early Stage 1 (ES1) to Year 6 are being taught how to set goals and to set goals for themselves this year.

Meetings with teachers for students in Years 1 to 6 took place during class time in Weeks 5 and 6 to ensure students had set a reasonable “SMART” goal. ES1 will set goals during their feedback sessions between the teacher and parents on Wednesdays in Weeks 6 and 7 Term 1.

A SMART goal is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time framed. For example: By…(date) I will (what you will do) so that…….(measurable result).

Each student has set a “Learning Goal” and a “Making Jesus Real” (MJR) goal. Students will keep a copy of their goals on their desk as a reminder of what they are working towards. A copy of their goals has been sent home with this letter for your information and so you can discuss your child’s goals and assist them to stay focussed and motivated. An opportunity will take place with parents, students and teachers at the end of the term to discuss progress towards their goals, celebrate successes and to consider their next goals to continue growth.

Ownership
As parents and teachers, we have many goals for our children. However, in order to be successful, the resolution must belong to the child, not the parent or the teacher. A resolution that is generated by the adult and unwanted by the child is not a resolution at all; it is just another teacher or parent command. Suggestions are fine, of course, but there is much more empowerment when the child comes up with the resolution him or herself and when he or she is fully invested in the process and the outcome.

Attainability
Whatever the resolution, unlike my goal to be “perfect”….., it should be attainable! The flip side of attainability is challenge. The goal must not be too easy or there is not much point. Students have been encouraged to try for a goal that is both challenging and attainable.

Be Specific
Another problem with my resolution to be “perfect” is that it is a bit unclear as to exactly what it means to be perfect. The teacher has helped your child to refine his or her resolution into a specific goal.

Here are some examples:

- Instead of: I will be more polite, try I will remember to say “please” and “thank you.”
- Instead of: I will be better at Maths, try I will practise one of my “times tables” for 5 minutes every night.
- Instead of: I will get better at playing the piano, try I will practise piano for one hour each day.
Make a Plan
Brainstorm some ideas for success. For example, if the goal is to practise 3 and 4 multiplication tables for 5 minutes each night, perhaps a “times tables” chart on the bedroom door or fridge will help or a copy of the goal stuck on a noticeboard that everyone can see or someone calling out random tables to assist with remembering them. If the resolution is a big one, you may want to make a list of steps to follow towards achieving the goal.

Celebrate Success
Be sure there are markers for success. Some resolutions are easy to measure. For example, if your daughter has resolved to stop biting her nails, longer, unbitten nails are proof of success. If the goal is more long term or ongoing, such as practising piano, it is likely the hard work will pay off without you doing anything, for example, the piano teacher may comment on improvement or offer a larger part in the recital. Take the chance to celebrate with your child as they achieve towards their goals.

If you have any questions regards the goal setting process or the goals your child has set, please do not hesitate to contact the classroom teacher to discuss.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Janet Cartwright
Principal
janet.cartwright@cg.catholic.edu.au