Summary of Letter

• St Monica’s wants our students to have access to quality ICT’s that enhances learning and is supported by effective infrastructure providing instant access, extensive storage.
• Financial considerations mean that the school can’t offer each child a school owned device
• Most of our families have access to tablets, in particular Ipads
• School undertaking a major upgrade of cabling, wireless and switches (at $22,000) over 2014 holidays
• From Term 2, 2015, Year 3-5 children are invited to bring to school an Ipad family owned device. Those unable to do so will have access to school technology.
• Year 6,7 children have option of which device to bring as many commenced doing so in 2014. This opportunity respects those families who will need to buy a device for Secondary/ College. Most of these students have indicated that they have either Macbook or Ipad and a few have Window based laptops.
• Our aim is that all children Year 3-6 will have Family owned Ipads by 2016.
• An information evening will be held later in Term 1 2015 where families (wishing to take term 2 IPAD option) will read, understand and sign an ‘Acceptable Use Agreement’, learn about safety, care for Ipads, privacy settings, family itunes accounts for Ipads and log into our network.
• Parents are advised strongly to update their home insurance to cover mobile devices. (approx. $20.00 p.a) to cover breakage and theft of devices. Any family with a mobile phone should have this insurance.
• The school will explore best pricing including lease options for our families.
Dear Parents,

Thank you for your feedback, suggestions and recommendations in respect to our community consultation on the provision of ICT’s into the future at St. Monica’s. As stated in the letter, costs for provision of the infrastructure, licensing, security, WAN (wide area network), IT support, maintenance and current leasing of the few devices that we are leasing consumes all of the IT levy that our parents pay. See a breakdown of finances below.

Thus, unless the IT levy was increased significantly, we are not in a position to purchase or lease more replacement devices to provide to the students. We, like many other schools and colleges see the way forward is to, over a period of time move towards either BYOD (Bring your own device) or BYOT. (bring your own technology). That is, students will bring to school a specified device (BYOD) or a form of technology (BYOT) that meets school minimum requirements. This is sometimes referred to as a ‘Parent Own Device Program.’

Our survey of families show that the majority (70%) support BYOD whilst 16% want BYOT. 14% of our families were either unsure or did not want to supply device.

Almost 50% of families who responded have access to an Ipad at home which would be available to bring to school. Only 5% named a laptop that is available or parents willing for this to be brought. Likewise, 10% Macbook and 5% other tablets are available.

In our homes, our parents have a mixture of devices. 66% have Ipads and the breakdown of PC’s and Macbook/imacs is around 66% to 33%. Most parents were unsure of High School platforms with 5 parents stating PC’s, and 3 Macs/ ipads.

From the comments that were made, clearly insurance, damage and cyber safety are key issues in our community. There were many positive comments about moving forward, with a number of parents wanting to know ‘soon as possible’ so that plans can be made in respect of birthday/ Christmas considerations.

From the surveys and the many conversations that we have had, we would like to stage the implementation of a BYOD (which was the most supported and has clear advantages to our teachers, IT support). We had thought of introducing this to Year 2, but from your comments we discerned that you felt it was too young to be responsible for BYOD at this stage.)

Thus we are recommending that

- From Term 2 2015, children Year 3-5 will be invited to BYOD. This will commence a phase in the aim that all Year 3-6’s will have a BYOD by the commencement of 2016.
• That prior to term 2, all families will be invited to information sessions in which they will read and sign our ‘Safe IT Practices’ policy, be informed of security protocols and good habits when the device is at home including automatic timed ‘turn off/ on’ functions. (eg device not able to be used between 8:00pm and 8:00am). Students will be given access to our WIFI at this at this meeting.

• For those families opting for a later start (eg 2016), they will be offered these sessions prior to commencing the program.

• Children in Year R-1 will have exclusive use of our 26 IPads that we are currently leasing.

• Children in Year 2, Year 6-7 will access our existing Macs and Macbook Pros at a ratio of 1:2.

• Year 6 and 7 of course are free to BYOD as they already are. We are reluctant to insist on a BYOD for our 6/7’s due to requirements of College in Year 8. A class set of Macbooks is available to our Year 5/6 and 6/7 classrooms.

• We invite any Year 3-5’s with access to a BYOD from term 2, 2015 to do so. We will have other devices here through 2015 for any students who are unable to BYOD.

In terms of the device for Year 3-5, it is clear that Ipads have a distinct advantage. Our surveys show that these devices are used in over 66% of our homes. They offer a secure operating system and apps can only be purchased through Apple store and thus avoiding viruses etc. Over 90% of our staff use an Ipad and a large majority of our families have these devices at home. With Office 365, Ipad now offer a ‘Windows’ environment that meets the needs of our PC users. It also provides excellent creative suite software such as Moviemaker, Garageband, Keynote and Lphoto that all link, connect and integrate. We are now able to print to our photocopier from our Ipad, eliminating this shortfall. Whilst Ipad are at first glance more expensive, when other devices are brought up to reasonable specification and software, the difference in cost is not so great. We can bulk purchase apps at about 50% of single user cost. ‘Apple Family Sharing’ is a new innovation that provides all users with an Apple ID and email address and any time an app is attempted to be purchased/ downloaded, parents are sent a notification seeking permission. We see no problem with children having an Ipad or Ipadmini. Any Ipad from Ipad 2 on is sufficient and would need to be loaded with the latest Operating system. All these instructions will be forwarded later.

Approx Costs.

Device: Ipad mini wifi 16 GB: $299 (smaller screen 7.9 inch, very light, efficient.)

Ipad Air: wifi 16 GB: $589. (larger screen, 9.7 inch, light, durable)

Over the next 2 months I will be exploring lease options as an alternate arrangement for families who don’t have an Ipad available to BYOD. Having done this in 2013 at Marymount College for 105 Year 7 families, I became aware that the best option is to do this through a company such as Harvey Norman. I was able to negotiate a lease of the latest Ipad for $6.50 per week over 2 years. Many families took the option to arrange their own finance or purchase a device elsewhere at a cheaper rate.
In 2013 I also looked at Insurance of BYOD’s. Again the most economical and practical option was for families to extend their contents insurance to cover all mobile devices which covered theft, loss and damage. This amounted to an extra $20 per year on top of home insurance. Families should have this insurance for their mobile phones in any case.

In Term 1, week 2, Holden Hill Police are presenting a Cybersafety workshop to all our students. We will continue to work with our children and give them all the tools to keep safe. We will work with you too, in ensuring that you have the information required to support your child in using technology wisely, responsibly and respectfully. We continue to address such things as ‘how much IT time is appropriate, how do these tools best support learning, what skills do we need to continue to build?’ (eg handwriting, spelling, grammar, number facts, the arts, physical fitness..).

This note is to give you advanced notice if you were considering purchasing/leasing a device for your child. We hope that the slow lead into this program will give our families the time to plan and prepare for this.

As with all our initiatives and programs, if this causes too much financial stress, we will work with you to ensure that your child /ren is/ are not disadvantaged in any way. To provide complete transparency to this decision, below is a breakdown of how the IT parent levy is spent and the difficulties we face in continuing to fund the purchase of devices.

Faithfully

Greg Parker
Principal

St. Monica’s Financial Summary

Income from IT levy ($354) $81,774

Projected costs (2015)

Lease of current Macbooks and Ipads $17,000

Capital Infrastructure upgrade (wireless points, moving data cabinet, cabling, new switches) $22,000

IT support salary: $30,000

CEO Support $5,000
Wide area Network/ broadband access  $16,800

Ischolaris (learning achievement software)  $4,700

Office 365  $4,700

Total IT expenditure for 2015 :  $100,200

(Note the upgrade is a ‘one off’ and I will try to spread these costs over the next 3 years, but even so, our outlays continue to be greater than income from IT levy.)