14 November 2012

Dear Parents

We are almost at the end of what has been an outstanding first year of our College. The response to our new school has exceeded our expectations to the point where we have filled most classes for next year and there are waiting lists at a number of year levels. The doubling of classes at Prep and Year 5 and the trebling of Year 7 for 2013 are exciting developments which will see us jump from an enrolment of 219 at the commencement of 2012 to approximately 350 students next year. We must, however, avoid the temptation to build more classrooms and take all enrolments as it is clear that this practice, and the associated borrowing which goes with this strategy, brings its own problems as we have seen with several schools in recent times. You can be assured that the College Council is acutely aware of the pitfalls of rapid growth and are taking a ‘controlled growth’ approach.

Our financial management this year has been very prudent and we have managed to work within the budget set last year by the Interim Council. As you are aware, costs in the community continue to rise. Part of the measurement of the CPI is the education sector which measures the increases in pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary education. The costs in the education sector overall have shown an increase of 5.8% in the period September 2011 to September 2012 with costs in the secondary sector rising by 7.7%.

For us to cover our costs and to remain financially viable we need to raise our fees by 4.5% for 2013. At this level we have been able to budget for a 4.0% increase to staff salaries. Given that there was no increase in salaries for staff this year we believe this is a modest increase which hopefully will keep us competitive in terms of attracting and retaining the best staff. Unfortunately the big unknown for next year is what the State Government will finally settle on with the Teachers Union in terms of salary increases for teachers, as this can also affect what independent schools pay their teachers. However, we think it more important to give parents as much notice as possible so you can budget in confidence, rather than waiting for more certainty.

The 4.5% fee increase will add between $380 to $620 per annum depending on the year level of the students. We believe that, in the face of rising costs in the educational sector, this is a modest and financially responsible increase. From what we know of the potential increases of other schools in the independent sector, our position in the market place remains unchanged with Cornish College maintaining our commitment to affordable independent education.

Once again I thank you for your support in what has been an amazing first year – together we have saved and are building an amazing school. I look forward to our end of year celebrations over the coming weeks, and to an even better year in 2013.

Yours sincerely

Rev Dr Robert Johnson
Chair, Cornish College Council