From the Principal

It is with great sadness that I inform you that Mrs Evelyn Hazzard, our Deputy Principal Curriculum passed away as a result of advanced breast cancer on 16 January. Mrs Hazzard was an outstanding leader, educator and colleague and we will miss her friendship and professional input terribly.

Mrs Evelyn Hazzard worked very closely with our students, particularly our seniors and also many of the students studying in the Home Economics area. Her guidance and support for both and students will be sorely missed.

As a school community, we are still coming to terms with her death. To support the students, a special announcement was made at our first assembly for the year. I spoke of Mrs Hazzard’s commitment to excellence and her absolute passion for ensuring that all students reached their potential. Our counsellors, Mrs Franke and Mrs Asfoura were available to speak to any students who might feel upset or uncomfortable on hearing such sad news and they also prepared a leaflet which outlined some ways in which students can access support for either themselves or a friend.

At times in our lives, we can and will have lots of different types of grief and loss through death, illness, separation and change. This is a common and normal part of life for all people.

As everyone is different, there is no right or wrong way to respond but I have listed some normal reactions to grief to assist parents in supporting their child should it be necessary.

Some normal responses to grief include:

Shock, disbelief, sadness, guilt, trouble sleeping, crying, anxiety, fear, loneliness, anger, lack of appetite, forgetfulness, not knowing what to feel or how to react, a sense of feeling numb.

What can parents do to help their child deal with grief and/or loss?

Encourage your child to share their feelings and reassure them that it is all right to talk about the person who has died; encourage them to come to school to see their friends and reduce any feelings of loneliness; have them keep to their regular routines as much as possible; let the school know, through their Year Adviser or the Head Teacher, Welfare Mrs Judge, if you suspect your child is not coping and encourage them to help their friends and seek trusted advice from staff at school.

Sometimes, the death of one person can bring up uncomfortable feelings about the loss of another person, especially in children and young people.

I would encourage parents to monitor their child over the next few days and weeks and contact our counsellors or the HT Welfare if there are any concerns.

I will be speaking with the school staff and our student leaders regarding the most appropriate way in which to remember Mrs Hazzard and our contribution to her school. Certainly, any donations to breast cancer research would be a most suitable response.

The next newsletter will contain information about the HSC results and details of new staff. You should receive that newsletter during next week.

Mrs J Dolstra
Principal