The survey found some alarming trends in smartphone ownership and usage. Children, in general, are spending more time on their smartphones and tablets with children, on average, from 3 to 17 years spending 21.8 hours on their mobile phone each week. Considering children are in school for 25 hours per week, the mobile phone has a significant influence. 54 percent of these children also own a tablet and spend up to 3 hours per day on their tablets as well. This equates to 5.9 hours per day on these devices. Of course screen time increases as children get older—from 14.7 hours each week at 10 years of age to 26.3 hrs at 17.

Kids also use their devices at night with 68% of 10-17 year olds using them between 9 pm and midnight. This trend also increases as children get older. Parents in the survey felt that smartphones were distracting and that their children use them during homework. Parents ranked Facebook as the most distracting social media platform followed by Instant Messenger and then Snapchat.

65% of parents cited 'peace of mind as the reason for buying their children a smartphone, while 38% thought independence was more important. 29% bought one so their children could contact their friends more easily. Unsolicited contact from strangers was the biggest parental concern (79%) while 66% were concerned about sexting.

The Daily Mail Australia reported on March 16 that Sydney-based family researcher Justin Coulson advises parents that the best rules were those created with the child's input. "There's no point writing out the terms of a contract if the kids have no say in it," said the father of six.

Dr Coulson also recommends a minimum age of 12 or 13 for children to be given a phone. "And then make it a dumb one. Smart parents give their kids dumb phones," he said, advising that phones with only text and call capabilities were better options than smartphones. "You don't give them too much too soon ... kids don't need smartphones."
We are pleased to announce that the next stage of building works at GLC has gone out for tender to a select number of building contractors. Tenders have now been received by the builders and the quotes are currently being reviewed. Once this process concludes, a preferred contractor will be allocated and a commencement date will be announced. We expect this construction to be approximately 90 days once the contractor is on site.

In the future when the College reaches capacity, these classrooms will be renovated to complete the current Library/Resource centre. For the foreseeable future though, the Senior School will be housed in these classrooms.

The Council has begun to discuss and plan the next step for the College. We are currently reviewing enrolment predictions and classroom requirements to determine priorities for the next building project to be undertaken in 2017.

The formal Opening of Stages 5 B and C mentioned in my last newsletter is scheduled to be held at the College on May 5th. Sarah Henderson MP will be at the College to complete the formalities.

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**Pako Festa 2015**

It was such a treat to see almost 80 students and staff from St John’s in the Geelong West Pako Festa parade on Saturday 28th February. The students looked resplendent in their new uniforms and served our School as excellent ambassadors. Congratulations to Mrs Lytzki for organising this year’s march and many thanks to the staff, parents and students for making the effort to take part and support our School.
Despite the fact that we had a very small cohort of students completing Year 12 at GLC, our VCE Results were most encouraging. Of course, it needs to be noted here that in such a small cohort of students in 2014 and again in 2015, these results may vary enormously from year to year. Our College Dux for 2014 is Chantelle Langdon and our VCAL High Achiever is Ethan Gibson. We are very pleased with the results from these students. The average study score for our VCE students was 31 with three scores above 40 (Josh Duncan – Software Development (48), Pierre Vaillant – Software Development (42), Chantelle Langdon – Drama (43)). All of our students received first round offers from universities with only one student not receiving their first choice. Well done to our students, and in particular thank you to Mrs Tattersall and our teaching staff.

I was exceptionally proud to stand with these students at their graduation and to also have the privilege of addressing them at the ceremony which was held at the Sands in Torquay. It was just so gratifying to see these students reach this significant stage in the educational journey, but also sad to see them leave our College.

We are proud of each one of them and we are also thankful to them for continuing their schooling through to Year 12 at GLC, and for being such a positive role model to the other students in the College.

One of the practical ‘facts of life’ in a school is that as soon as one year finishes, everyone immediately begins to project into the next! While the echoes of ‘good-bye’ are still being heard, choruses of ‘welcome’ to the new Year 12s are loud and clear. It is important to note that although we are delighted with these VCE results, we are equally proud of all of our Year 12 students who have done their best to achieve the results that they did. The College encourages all of its students to complete Year 12, regardless of academic ability.

Many of you will be aware that our school participates in the Insight SRC Organisational Health and Satisfaction surveys every second year. These surveys give us excellent feedback about our schools. Insight SRC are an internationally recognised company with an excellent reputation for their work and research into organisational health. Their findings point strongly to the fact that the better the morale is for individuals in an organisation, the more able they are to deal with the daily stress of their work. This has the positive spin-off of less sick leave, less absenteeism, better engagement with colleagues and an improvement in work output. What is not generally known though, is that when the morale improves, the quality of the output at the end also improves. For us in schools this means that the happier the staff are, the better they feel about their work, the more positive they are about what they do, the better the students will learn and they will achieve higher results. Being positive builds morale and the children reap the rewards!

Mr Graeme Huf (LEVNT) addresses the graduands.

Q: Does feeling positive about schooling improve learning performance? A: All of us experience less stress and become more effective when we feel positive.

Our inaugural VCE student group is to be congratulated on their VCE achievements in 2014. We look forward to 2015 and beyond where Geelong Lutheran College will see some exciting results in the future.
Brené Brown is a qualitative researcher from the United States who studies human connection. She has journeyed from being a person who valued total control and predictability in her life to someone who finally understands that life also requires us to be vulnerable.

For Ms Brown, and through the research that she had undertaken, she discovered that vulnerability was the core of shame and fear and of the struggle in our lives for worthiness. What she discovered on her journey though, is that vulnerability is also the birthplace of joy, of creativity, of belonging and of love.

Ms Brown began her project with the study of connection, but she discovered that her interviewees were more likely to tell her about disconnection—when asked about belonging, people opened up about being left out; when asked about love they told stories of heartbreak; and when asked about connection, they spoke of being disconnected. She soon discovered that shame was the basis of the fear of disconnection. Shame leads us to cover up who we really are because the fear is that if people knew what we were really like, then we can’t be worthy of connection with others. The thing that underpins these feelings of I’m not good enough—not rich enough, not thin enough, not beautiful enough, not smart enough—is vulnerability! In order to connect fully with others, we need to allow ourselves to be really seen as we really are.

The only thing that separated the people who always felt ‘not good enough’ and the people with a strong sense of worthiness, that is, a strong sense of love and belonging—was that the latter group believed they were worthy of being loved and belonging, whereas the ‘not good enough’ group continued to struggle for it.

Ms Brown decided then to focus on the ‘connected’ group and to distil what it was that made them like that. What she discovered was, that in all of these connected people, the common denominator was a sense of courage. They were able to tell their story; to connect with people with their whole heart. These people all had the compassion to be kind to themselves and this enabled them to be kind and compassionate with others.

To do this effectively, this group fully embraced vulnerability. They had a firm belief that their vulnerability was what made them beautiful. It was a necessary part of them and a necessary element of being connected genuinely to others.

The world we live in is full of situations where we are under attack constantly, and one of the ways we deal with this is to numb our vulnerability. This can become a dangerous cycle and manifests itself in a number of ways. Firstly, our vulnerability can be covered with addictions so that every time we feel vulnerable we cover it over with more food or more drugs. The side affect of this is that we end up numbing all of our emotions—the good and the bad. Secondly, we can also numb our emotions by making the uncertain certain—this has affected the way we see religion and the way we do politics. The more fear there is, the more vulnerable we are and the more fear there is! Politics defaults to blame instead of healthy debate; religion moves from belief and faith to certainty and proof.

The biggest danger is the one that affects our children as we try and perfect them. Children are hardwired for struggle and Ms Brown says, “Our task is not to say, “Look, my child is perfect. My job is to keep her perfect.”…. Our job is to look at our children and say, “You know what? You’re imperfect, and you’re wired for struggle, but you are worthy of love and belonging.” That’s our job”*

Ms Brown concludes her talk encouraging us to allow ourselves to be vulnerable; to love with our whole hearts and to be able to say, “I’m so grateful, because to feel this vulnerable means I am alive.”* Her last thought to the audience, is to believe we are enough. That is because when we work from a place that says, “I’m enough,” then we stop screaming an start listening—we’re kinder and gentler with the people around us, and we’re kinder and gentler to ourselves.


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**Further thoughts...**

Being Vulnerable

A couple of weeks ago I attended a professional development session in Melbourne with other Principals from our region of Lutheran schools. The presenter spoke about those challenging conversations that we need to have from time to time and directed us to a ‘TED’ talk by Brené Brown on vulnerability which I found quite fascinating. I’ve attempted to summarise it for you.