

The School Chaplains in the Spotlight

St George's College is fortunate to have three chaplains appointed to the School. Faith Wheat and Fr Martin Ashcroft, a Josephite priest, are the College chaplains and Emma Buckley is chaplain for the Junior School. Chaplains are available for everyone connected with the Georgian family – staff, students, parents and former pupils. They can offer support in a variety of ways including –

Pastoral Support someone to listen in confidence, to offer support through a time of difficulty, sickness, crisis or death.

Offer Information about voluntary work, local churches, about faith including Lourdes, SVP and Kennedy Club.

Offer skills, experience and knowledge to help raise spiritual dimension within the School through retreats and discussion groups.

Provide time for worship, prayer and reflection through School masses, assemblies and other activities.

The three chaplains at St George's have very different backgrounds, but interestingly share the same outlook on many things, revealed by their responses in individual interviews. When asked to sum up the role of chaplaincy, each of them stressed the importance of having time for people. When asked about the most challenging aspect of the role, they all spoke of dealing with bereavement. When asked what they found most rewarding about being a chaplain, the answer was unanimous: getting to know so many people and accompanying them on their spiritual journey. The School chaplains are available to help support everyone throughout their time at St George's. Let's meet the team.



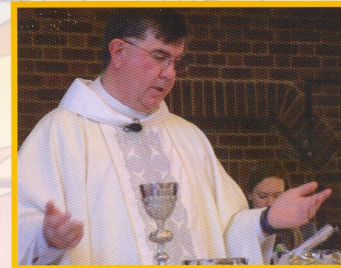
Faith Wheat College Chaplain

Faith Wheat started at the College at the beginning of Christmas term 2007, taking over from Sister Kitty. Faith acknowledges that not every school is in a position to afford such a comprehensive chaplaincy, but feels strongly that the ability to offer this level of support is of great benefit to the whole School community. Faith's vision

for chaplaincy at the School is 'to always do that little bit more. I would like to add more retreats for parents, possibly some evenings to ensure that there is a regular opportunity to reflect on key issues, such as what it means to be a parent. Staff must be supported too: one idea is to hold residential retreats to ensure that they are given the opportunity to reflect on their roles in school life. The key to it all is ensuring that everyone is truly involved.'

Fr Martin, Josephite and College Chaplain

Fr Martin, himself an Old Georgian, feels 'as well as being responsible for developing the prayer life of the School community, the sacramental life, celebrating liturgies and work in the retreat programme, we must ensure the underpinning Catholic Christian Josephite ethos is alive and flourishing in the two Schools'.



Emma Buckley Junior School Chaplain

Emma Buckley is the full-time Junior School chaplain and has been at the School for two years. Emma explains some of the activities at the Junior School. 'There is always something going on that the chaplains are involved in, whether helping to organise assemblies, run retreats or co-ordinating fundraising activities. In the Junior School, I run a chaplaincy club where we try a variety of activities, from singing

and dance to craft work and most recently, meditation. Even at a young age, the pupils really value having someone to chat to and provide guidance. This is really when we are laying the foundations for their spiritual development'.

All of St George's school chaplains feel that chaplaincy is the responsibility of the whole school community, in the Josephite 'family' tradition. They support, motivate and stimulate all those in their care to reflect on life and uphold their values at every opportunity. At a time in our society when people seek support in many guises, from therapists to life coaches, the chaplains are doing their utmost to guide those in their care on their spiritual journey.