THE WAY

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FROM THE HEAD OF JUNIOR SCHOOL

One of the great privileges of working in a school is being surrounded by words every day. We read them, write them, speak them, listen to them and increasingly post them online. Words shape our thinking, our relationships and our understanding of the world around us.

Recently, I finished reading The Dictionary of Lost Words by Pip Williams. The novel explores the significance of words and how they help us make sense of our experiences. It reminded me that words are far more than letters on a page; they have meaning, power and influence.

Each week in Junior School, I share a "Word of the Week" with students. Over the next two weeks, our focus word will be optimism. Optimism is the ability to look for the good in a situation and to believe that things can improve, even when circumstances are difficult. In child-friendly terms, optimism means having hope and believing that tomorrow can be better than today.

While some people may naturally lean towards being optimistic, optimism is not simply something you are born with. It is a skill that can be learned, practiced and strengthened over a lifetime. Every day we have opportunities to choose how we respond to challenges, disappointments and setbacks.

As a Christian school, we recognise that our ultimate source of hope is found in God. The Bible reminds us that God is faithful and that we can trust Him, even when life is difficult. Christian optimism is not pretending that problems do not exist; rather, it is confidently placing our hope in God's goodness and His promises.

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Words play an important role in developing optimism. The words we speak to ourselves matter. The words we speak to others matter. The words we write, text and post online matter. Encouraging words can build someone up, while careless words can leave lasting hurt.

In Junior School, we want our students to be known for using words that bring kindness, encouragement and hope to those around them. We want them to think carefully before they speak, write or post, asking themselves: Are my words true? Are they kind? Are they helpful?

Reading also matters. Through reading, students encounter new ideas, expand their vocabulary and develop their understanding of the world. Books introduce us to words that help us express our thoughts, feelings and beliefs more clearly. Strong readers become stronger communicators, and strong communicators are better equipped to positively influence others.

Over the coming weeks, I encourage families to talk about optimism at home. Celebrate effort, look for opportunities to be thankful and discuss how words can be used to encourage others. Together, we can help our children develop a hopeful outlook, grounded in faith, kindness and wisdom.

> "*The tongue has the power of life and death.*"
> *Proverbs 18:21*

Mrs Kylie Singles
Head of Junior School

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