



Dear Parents and Friends of St Mary MacKillop Primary School,

### PRAYER TO BEGIN A SCHOOL YEAR

*As we begin the 2015 school year I share the following prayer with you:*

*God of wisdom and might, we praise you for the wonder of our being,  
 for mind, body and spirit.*

*Be with our children as they begin a new school year.*

*Bless them and their teachers and staff.*

*Give the strength and grace as their bodies grow;  
 wisdom and knowledge to their minds as they search for understanding;  
 and peace and zeal to their hearts.*

*We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

### HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE A BETTER STUDENT

As we commence a new school year, here are some ways you help your child have a successful school year:

#### 1. Let your child see you making mistakes.

Parents are their child's first teacher and their lifetime teacher. Part of being a teacher is teaching your child how to deal with making mistakes and learning from them. Let them see that you make mistakes, deal with and learn from them as they continue to develop resilience.

#### 2. Use e-mail to keep in touch.

E-mail is a great way to reach your child's teacher without having to play phone tag. If you notice your child is struggling in a particular area of their learning contact your child's teacher to organise a meeting. Communication needn't be limited to when there's a problem. Share success stories through the school email which will be forwarded to your child's teacher.

#### 3. Enjoy Mathematics and the use of numbers.

Maths makes life easier, and mastery can start at home with parents showing their children how they use numbers. One way to make maths more accessible is to relate it to daily activities. Capitalise on examples where maths is useful, especially the kinds of calculations adults do daily like measuring ingredients, managing sums of money and working out distances. This way, children see how what they're learning matters in life.

#### 4. Help your child get organised with a checklist.

Keep a written checklist by their school bags so they can make sure they have packed everything they need.

#### 5. Check their homework, and then have them explain it to you.

This lets you know that the child has completed the task and for the child to actually explain their work helps their learning.

#### 6. Don't compare your child with others.

Don't put pressure on children to be just like others. There's no such thing as the child that's like every other child. We can learn from others and set goals for success, however every child is unique and different.

#### 7. Help your child make connections to literature.

To help your child get the most out of books, focus on problem-solving, social skills and life experience. Take your child to the zoo (life experience). Teach them to ask an adult for help if they lose something (problem-solving) or to hold the door for others (social skills). With skills like these, children will be able to relate their own life experiences to those of book characters, improving their comprehension.

#### 9. Don't do everything for your child.

Sometimes it's faster to do things yourself than wait for your children to complete a task. But having everything done for them means they don't learn to take care of themselves. Empower your children to think for themselves and be more responsible.

#### 10. Ask about your child's day.

Stay involved in your child's education, beyond helping with homework. Asking a child what happened at school enables the children to reflect on their learning. Give them feedback that acknowledges their learning and lets them know you are really hearing them.

Have a great 2015 school year! Enjoy.





## **CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REGISTER CODES COMMENCED 27 JANUARY 2015**

The Minister for Education has approved changes to the use of the Attendance Register codes for 2015. As part of the implementation of the National Standards, **holidays** taken by students outside of school vacation periods will now be included as absences. A Certificate of Exemption can no longer be granted for this purpose. Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. If travel during school term is necessary the following considerations apply:

If the principal accepts the reason for the absence, the absence will be marked as “**L**”. If the principal does not believe the absence is in the student’s best interests and does not accept the reason, the absence is unjustified and will be recorded as “**A**”. The recent changes to the Attendance Register Codes include the redefinition of some codes:

The “**B**” code includes student exchange and allows for some additional flexibility around its use. The “**H**” code is used when a student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to attend an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis. A note addressed to your child’s teacher is required whenever an absence from school occurs. If you have any questions regarding these changes, please contact the school office.

## **CHANGES TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA ENROLMENT POLICY**

In September 2014, a new enrolment policy and procedures were approved for use by Catholic systemic schools in the Diocese of Parramatta. Under the previous enrolment policy, Catholic families were asked to enrol their child/ren in their local parish or ‘feeder’ school. Recognising the changing nature of work and family life, the new policy allows Catholic families greater choice, by removing the concept of ‘feeder’ parishes and schools. Catholic families may now apply for enrolment in a Catholic school anywhere in the Diocese. Where places are limited, priority will be given in order to:

- Catholic children who live in the local parish
- Catholic children from other parishes
- Children of families who actively participate in the life of the school and local parish community (siblings)
- Orthodox children
- Children from other Christian faiths
- Children of non-Christian faiths

The principal of each school has the delegated authority to accept enrolments in consultation with the Parish Priest under the guidelines of the CEDP enrolment policy and process. **Siblings** of children already enrolled in the school are considered by the same criteria above. However, within each of these categories, a sibling of a child already enrolled will have preference over an applicant who does not have a sibling enrolled in the school. A child who has completed primary education in a Catholic Diocesan primary school will usually be offered continuity of enrolment in a Catholic Diocesan secondary school. If no places exist at the school of choice, the Catholic Education’s Director of System Performance will assist the family to enrol in another Catholic secondary school in the Diocese. At St Mary MacKillop we are currently accepting enrolments in Year 5 & 6. Kindergarten 2016 enrolments commence on the 2 March, 2015, with an information evening planned for 7:00pm on Monday 23 March, 2015. Please pass these dates on to your families and friends.

***Thought for the Week***  
*“Look back a little and see what God has done for us”*  
*St Mary MacKillop, 1880.*

Have a Blessed Week

Michael Siciliano  
PRINCIPAL



## Religious Education News

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### **Class Prayer Bags:**

Prayer is an important part of the life of a Catholic school and this year the St Mary MacKillop School community will once again embrace the concept of a class Prayer Bag. This Prayer Bag offers a link between home and school through prayer. We hope that when your child brings home this bag that you will gather together as a family, and use the contents of the prayer bag to pray together. Your child is also invited to write a prayer in the prayer journal. The prayer written by your child will become part of the class prayer on the Friday afternoon.

The Prayer Bag consists of:

- A cloth
- St Mary MacKillop Prayer card
- Prayer book
- Student Prayer Journal
- Prayer card: Our Father and Hail Mary (**Kindergarten only**)
- Prayer card: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and Angel of God (**Years 1-4**)
- Rosary Beads and how to pray the rosary prayer card (**Years 3-6 only**)
- A copy of The Angelus (**Years 3-6 only**)
- God is With Us - A prayer book for Families (**Years 4-6 only**)

The Prayer Bag is a very special and sacred bag. We know that you, with your child will take care of it and see that it is *completely and safely returned to school each Friday* to ensure every child is given the same prayerful opportunity. Thank you for joining with the St Mary MacKillop Community in prayer.

### **Opening School Mass and Year Six Leadership Induction: 9:15am Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February:**

Please join us for our Opening School Mass on Friday 13 February at 9:15am. At our mass we will gather as a school community to pray for God's blessing on the school year and welcome our Kindergarten students, new students across the grades and new teachers to St Mary MacKillop Primary School. We will also induct the Year 6 students into their 2015 leadership roles. We look forward to seeing you there as we celebrate our Catholic Faith together.

### **Reconciliation Parent Meeting:**

The Parish based Sacramental Program will begin this year with the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will commence with a parent only session on Tuesday, 17 February at 7:00pm. If you wish to enrol in this program it is compulsory that at least one parent/carer attend. This meeting will be held in the St Nicholas Church. This program is for all children in Year 3 or above who have been baptised and would like to enrol in our Sacramental Program. All enquires to Anne Tucker (Sacramental Coordinator) at St Nicholas Parish House 4721 2509

### **Ash Wednesday:**

Wednesday 18 February is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. The Season of Lent is the 40 days prior to Easter (Sundays are not included in the count) and is a time of preparation for the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. Ash Wednesday is the day for us to take stock of our spiritual lives and we are encouraged to attend Mass on this day in order to mark the beginning of the Lenten season. As Lent begins, we should set out specific spiritual goals we would like to reach before Easter and decide how we will pursue them—for instance receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

***To celebrate the beginning of Lent all students will attend an Ash Wednesday Mass or Liturgy. K-2 will have a Liturgy at 11:30am in the Multi Purpose Centre and Years 3-6 will attend mass at 9:15am in the Multi Purpose Centre. All parents and family members are warmly invited to attend these special prayer times.***

During the liturgy the ashes, which give Ash Wednesday its name, will be distributed. The ashes are made from the blessed palms used in the Palm Sunday celebration of the previous year. While the ashes symbolise penance and contrition, they are also a reminder that God is gracious and merciful to those who call on Him with repentant hearts. The distribution of ashes, is a tangible reminder of our own need to focus on being better people. Through acts of penance comes a change of heart - a coming back to God. Our personal Lenten journey should be marked with reflection, prayer and penance. Throughout Lent we should strive to model the actions of Christ. As the prophet Joel wrote:

***'Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks –  
come back to me with all your heart.'***

Mrs Gillard  
Religious Education Coordinator



## From the Assistant Principal

### Maths Assessment Interviews:

Thank You to all the parents who have brought their children to the school outside of school hours in order for Maths Assessment Interviews to be conducted. Remaining children will be tested at school by the conclusion of next week. Data gathered from these interviews is used to inform teaching, and is also used by Catholic education Office for system data.

### Mathletics:

Children in Years 3-6 would have already received their log in details for Mathletics. The Mathletics website is an engaging numeracy site which allows for the children to drill and practice recall of facts. Please see your child's teacher if you need further information on how best to use Mathletics.

### Assembly Information:

The parents who were at our assembly last Friday were informed of a new starting time and structure to our whole school assemblies starting from this week (Week 2). Assemblies will now commence at 2:20pm on a Friday afternoon. Ten minutes earlier than previously. Included in these assemblies, each class will take turns throughout the year to present a brief assembly item showcasing work that the children have been doing in class. Classes have been rostered on throughout the year, and your child's teacher will inform you in the weeks leading up to the assembly that their turn is approaching. This information will also be included in our newsletter on the back page under 'calendar'. This has replaced the 'Class Assemblies' which have taken place in the past. This enables the children to present their work to a wider audience, ie. Whole school rather than just their own Stage. The first of these class items will be 4BL during the assembly in Week 3 on February 13<sup>th</sup>.

### Meet The Teacher Years 1-6:

Parents will have the opportunity to meet your child's teacher on Monday afternoon 9 February. Teachers will be available in classes between 3:30-5:30pm where an information hand out will be available for you to take home. This is a good opportunity if you have not already done so to personally meet your child's teacher. Please note, however, that this is not a formal presentation or interview, but an opportunity for your child to show you their 2015 learning environment and become a familiar face to the teacher.

### Kindergarten Information Afternoon:

Kindergarten parents are invited to the Kindergarten rooms next Monday afternoon 9 February from 3:30-4:30pm where the teachers will provide you with important information for the 2015 school year. At the conclusion of the presentation, the Years 1-6 classrooms will remain open if you would like to see teachers from other grades.

*Mr Steve Cauchi*

Assistant Principal

### Subscribe to the Online Newsletter:

A reminder to all parents that we will no longer be printing a paper copy of the newsletter.

Parents need to subscribe to receiving the newsletter online via the website.

You will need to go to [www.mackillopenrith.catholic.edu.au](http://www.mackillopenrith.catholic.edu.au) select News & Events>Newsletter and click on Subscribe to our online newsletter, complete the form, you will then receive the newsletter each fortnight via email.

You can also view the newsletter on the website under current issue.

The screenshot displays the Mackillopenrith Catholic School website. On the left is a navigation menu with links: SCHOOL, PARENTS, LEARNING & TEACHING, NEWS & EVENTS, and CONTACT US. The main content area is titled 'Newsletters' and features a description of the school newsletter, 'KIT (Keeping in Touch)', which is sent fortnightly. It includes a 'Subscribe to our online newsletter' button and a section for the 'Current Issue' (Term 3 Week 8, 4 September 2014). Below this is an 'Archive' section listing years from 2011 to 2014. On the right side, there are sections for 'Related Links' (Latest News, Upcoming Events, Newsletters, Galleries, Notes from School), 'E-News Subscription' (Subscribe to our online newsletter (E-News)), and 'RSS Plugin' (Receive Our Feeds).



**Welcome and CONGRATULATIONS** to all our new families commencing their journey at St Mary MacKillop Primary School. We were so happy to see such beautiful angels start their first day at school and without a hitch. Thank you to all the teachers, leaders and Year 6 buddies that make the transition so easy for new families. A very big thank you also to our amazing parent volunteers that helped out serving refreshments to all the new parents.

**Welcome BBQ 'ALL WELCOME'- Thursday, 5 February from 5:30 - 7:30 pm.**

SMMPS WELCOME BBQ will be taking place from 5:30 - 7:30pm. All are welcome because we would love to see you there. A very big thank you to the Hicks Family from **OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE - PENRITH** for their support in making this BBQ possible and delectable. Please join us with your families and mingle with current and new families of our school, as well as the teachers. Enter the raffle to win some great prizes on the night. But above all enjoy each others company and spark up friendships that could last for many years to come. Hope to see you there.

**Annual General Meeting (AGM) - Tuesday, 3 March 2015 @ 7:30pm**

ALL WELCOME. Pencil this into your diaries. Please come and join us for the 2015 AGM. Reports are provided by the President, Treasurer, Fundraising team, Parents Representative Council (PRC), Class Parent Representatives and the school Principal. ***All positions of the P & F Association are declared open and new nominations will take place at this meeting.*** Please do come along to the meeting and get to know the current and new Parents and Friends Committee members. It takes a good team to encourage positive results for our school.

**Class Parent Representatives - 2015:**

This week forms have been distributed to your children asking for nominations as class parent representatives for 2015. Class representatives become the central person for parents who may have questions or want to know the channels to follow regarding a query. Please do fill out the form and return it to the front office by Friday, 13 February, 2015. Communication will be sent out announcing the representatives before the AGM. Thank you for your contribution in making our school a friendly community.

**Zooper Dooper volunteers needed:**

Zooper Doopers sales will commence on Friday, 6 February 2015 during the recess break at 1:30pm. Volunteer forms, were distributed early this week, please return to the office by Friday, 6 February. A roster will be provided ASAP. Prices for Zooper Doopers are 60c for a full /30c for a half.

**PRC - Seminar about CYBER SAFETY with Leonie Smith**

All parents of students in our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Parramatta are invited to attend the PRC Term 1 Meeting on 16 Feb at 7:00pm with special guest presenter 'The Cyber Safety Lady', Leonie Smith. Venue: Diocesan Assembly Centre, Cnr Flushcombe Road & Marion Street, Blacktown. For more information, contact the Parent Representative Council on (02) 9840 5600.

**A GRACIOUS THANK YOU to past P & F members:**

I wish to extend a very gracious thank you to all parents and friends who have dedicated their precious time, their efforts, their creative flair and their selfless contribution towards making our school community such a well respected one indeed. Each and every one of you is a valuable and memorable ambassador to our school community due to your commitment and the positive changes that you have made to our school. Please remember you are appreciated for all you have contributed towards the P & F Association and for this we are forever grateful.

Thank you and God Bless.

Liz Whalen

President

on behalf of the P & F Executive Team



## Dates for Your Diary Term 1 - 2015

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT
Thursday	5 February	5:30pm	P&F Welcome BBQ-All Welcome
Friday	6 February	2:20pm	Whole School Assembly
Monday	9 February	3:30-4:30pm 3:30-5:30pm	Kindergarten Meet the Teacher Year 1-6 Meet the Teacher
Friday	13 February	9:15am 2:20pm	Opening School Mass Whole School Assembly & 4BL Assembly Item
Tuesday	17 February	7:00pm	Shrove Tuesday Reconciliation Parent Meeting
Wednesday	18 February		Ash Wednesday
Friday	20 February	9:15am 2:20pm	Parent Literacy Workshop Whole School Assembly & 3M Assembly Item
Sunday	22 February		Reconciliation Enrolment Masses
Monday	23 February		Year 4 PCC Incursion
Tuesday	24 February		Nepean Zone Swimming Carnival @ Glenbrook
Friday	27 February	2:20pm	Diocesan Swimming Carnival @ Blacktown Whole School Assembly & 1R Assembly Item
Monday	2 March		2016 Kindergarten Enrolments Open
Friday	6 March	9:15am 2:20pm	Year 1 Grade Liturgy Whole School Assembly & 2M Assembly Item
Tuesday	10 March	2:00pm & 7:00pm	Numeracy Parent Workshop
Friday	13 March	2:20pm 3:45pm	School Cross Country Whole School Assembly & 3W Assembly Item Reconciliation Practice @ St Nicholas
Tuesday	17 March	7:00pm	First Reconciliation @ St Nicholas
Friday	20 March	9:15am 2:20pm	Year 2 Grade Liturgy NSWCPS Swimming Trials @ Homebush Whole School Assembly & 6PM Assembly Item
Monday	23 March	7:00pm	Year 6 Young Leaders Day 2016 Kindergarten Parent Information Evening
Friday	27 March	9:15 2:20pm	Year 3 Grade Liturgy Whole School Assembly & 5M Item
Monday	30 March	TBA	Easter Celebration: Stations of the Cross
Thursday	2 April		<b>Staff Development Day—Pupil Free Day</b> Holy Thursday - End of Term 1
Friday	3 April		Good Friday

## Dates for Your Diary Term 2 - 2015

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT
Monday	20 April	8:45am	Term 2 Commences Kindergarten-Year 6