MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

Newsletter.

Volume Three

20 March 2026

MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

We're enrolling now for 2027!

Visit our website to enrol or to register for our upcoming enrolment events: www.mackillop.act.edu.au

Year 7 2027 Open Night

Monday 11 May
Padua Campus

Book a session:
www.mackillop.act.edu.au

Try MacKillop Day

Friday 15 May
Padua Campus

For Year 6. Register at:
www.mackillop.act.edu.au

Year 11 2027 Open Night

Wednesday 20 May
St Peter's Campus

Save the date - more information coming soon!

Applications for Year 7 2027 close Friday 29 May
Enrolment enquiries: enrolments@mackillop.act.edu.au

A Catholic school for all.

Principal's Letter.

Principal's Prayer

Dear St Joseph, humble and faithful guardian of Mary and Jesus, you obeyed God's will with courage and trust. Guide us with your loving care, protect our families, and strengthen us in faith. May we, like you, serve God with a humble heart and follow His will in all things. Amen.

Dear families and friends,

The Season of Lent

As we journey through the fourth week of Lent, and approach "Laetare Sunday", we are reminded to rejoice amidst our Lenten reflections. The word "Laetare" means "Rejoice" in Latin, reflecting the Church's invitation to celebrate the hope and joy of Christ's resurrection, which draws near. This week, let us pause and reflect on the ways we can bring light to others through acts of kindness, prayer, and service. As we continue to prepare our hearts for Easter, may we be inspired by the love of Christ to renew our faith and share His love with those around us.

Celebrating 'being' MacKillop

At this week's Staff Meeting, I had the privilege of sharing my initial reflections with the team, based on my experiences as the new principal at MacKillop. From the moment I stepped into MacKillop College, I was warmly welcomed with the mantra, "This is the way we do things at MacKillop!" - a testament to the vibrant and unique culture that defines this community. The staff's pride in being part of MacKillop is evident and inspiring, as is the collective work ethic that permeates every corner of the College. Leadership density stands out as a key strength, with a clear focus on succession planning and investing in people. By fostering leadership opportunities within a safe and supportive environment, we prioritise developing our colleagues and promoting from within.

Everywhere I look, I see happy and engaged students, thriving under the College's high expectations, which are consistently and positively communicated through newsletters, staff briefings, assemblies, and PC classes. This shared language ensures that expectations and behavioural norms are not only understood but embraced. The relationships here are marked by a profound sense of respect and collegiality, creating a palpable feeling of togetherness. The sense of community at MacKillop College is truly second to none, strengthened by the incredible events that bring us together. Whether it's the Opening Mass, Parent Information Evenings, the Swimming Carnival, or initiatives like the Year 11 Gift of Life Walk, these moments reflect the heart of our College and the commitment to excellence that we share as a community. It is easy to see why St Mary MacKillop College is the college of choice!

Community Days

It is an expectation that students attend all Community Days. These are compulsory school days like all other term days. Next Tuesday is our annual Athletics Carnival and I ask all families to ensure their child/ren are in attendance. We can certainly improve on the attendance statistics from our Swimming Carnival.

Our 2026 Swimming Carnival attendance was:

- **Year 7:** 91%
- **Year 8:** 78%
- **Year 9:** 68%
- **Year 10:** 66%
- **Year 11:** 76%
- **Year 12:** 87%

Let's work together to have every year level 90%+ attendance at next week's carnival. Go Year 7! You're setting the gold standard at present.

Congratulations to Year 11 students who participated in the **Gift of Life Walk** after school last Friday afternoon. The event raises awareness for organ and tissue donation and was attended by 182 Year 11 students – an incredible achievement! The 2025 College Captain, Phoebe Vassallo, spoke with the students about the cause, sharing the story of her father who benefitted from organ donation. Thank you to the staff who offered their support by attending the walk on Friday. The MacKillop spirit is alive and well, inspiring us to live with kindness, courage, and faith, and to help those in need, just as St Mary MacKillop did.

With respect and encouragement to you,

Jacqueline Heffernan • Principal

"Gratitude and attitude are not challenges; they are choices."
- Robert Braathe

What's Been Happening

Year 12 Relay for Life

Relay for Life fundraising is underway with Year 12 set to complete their relay on Saturday 28 March. The cohort has managed to raise $47,000 of their $80,000 target.

If you would like to help them reach their goal visit their **Relay for Life page.**

NAPLAN

Congratulations to our Year 7 and 9 students for completing NAPLAN, which took place over the past two weeks.

Harmony Day

On Tuesday 17 March, students were able to wear an orange accessory to show their support for Harmony Week.

What's Been Happening

Year 11 Retreat

On Thursday 19 to Friday 20 March, Year 11 embarked on retreat. Retreat began with Mass, which prepared us for the day ahead, and helped us to feel connected with our cohort. We took part in many adrenaline fuelling activities such as archery tag, frisbee dodgeball, mountain biking and survival skills. The maze, puzzle rooms, and a challenge called Initiatives, all involved team building and listening skills to complete the activity.

On Thursday evening, Mrs Heffernan gave an inspiring talk to our year group. We wrapped up the day with a memorable Trivia Night full of energy and enthusiastic singing.

All in all, Year 11 Retreat was a fun time where we got to know our peers better and learn new skills!

Josh Prstec, Lucy Johns, Karen O'Connor, Rio Redoy & Ielyn Shaji • Year 11

What's Been Happening

Gift of Life Walk 2026

Promoting organ and tissue donation

MacKillop's Year 11 students participated in the Gift of Life Walk on Friday 13 March to highlight the importance of organ and tissue donation. Well over half of the students from the Year 11 cohort stayed back after school to complete an hour-long walk and to promote DonateLife's call for people to register as organ donors. There were good vibes with music, soft drinks, photobooths, and a range of props for photos as the students completed laps of the oval.

The students were able to promote organ donation by sharing content on their social media accounts and by having conversations with families and friends about registering as donors through www.donatelife.gov.au. Congratulations to the students of Year 11 for participating in the walk and for helping to spread the message!

What's Been Happening

Year 7 Community Day

On Wednesday 4 March, Year 7 students participated in a successful Community Day designed to build connections, teamwork, and confidence as they transitioned into secondary school.

One highlight was MacKillop's Next Top Model, where students worked collaboratively to design outfits using newspaper. As Jack shared, *"MacKillop's Next Top Model was my favourite Year 7 Community Day activity. It was really fun because we got to dress up our friends using newspaper and tape. I wrote the story for our group, and I enjoyed being creative and making up a story about our dress design."*

Students also took part in activities such as the Outreach Program, Brain Busters, and physical challenges, which focused on teamwork, communication, problem solving, and perseverance. Reflecting on the cup stacking challenge, Nichelle said, *"Although the activity seemed simple, it required strong communication, leadership, and perseverance to succeed. By working together, we showed that teamwork helps build understanding, inclusion, and lasting friendships."* The day provided valuable opportunities for students to develop important social and personal skills, and we were proud of the enthusiasm shown by the Year 7 cohort.

Anna Vandenbroucke & Henry Mahony • Year 7 Coordinators

Bollywood Dance Incursion

On Tuesday 17 March, Year 9 Dance engaged in a Bollywood class, presented by Sonia Raveena, as part of their dance technique unit which explores developing proficiency in various genres.

What's Been Happening

Birrigai Outdoor School

Defence Students

On Tuesday 10 March, 17 Year 7 Defence Students attended the Birrigai Outdoor School. We were joined by students from St Clare's College and participated in a vertical playpen, giant ladder and crate climb. These activities are designed for students to work together so they could climb as high as they felt comfortable with. The crate climb was the more popular activity with students working together to form a tower of milk crates and climb as high as possible. 13 crates was the record of the day.

This opportunity for Defence students was a great way to form new friendships and enjoy a day filled with activities!

Primrose Minion & Mr Justin Kain
Year 7 Student & Defence Student Mentor

Geography Excursions

Over the past few weeks, Year 11 and 12 Geography students have taken part in fieldwork excursions to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands in Canberra, and to Bulli and Sandon Point beaches in Wollongong. These excursions gave students valuable opportunities to examine how land cover is changing as a result of both natural processes and human activity, and to investigate the strategies being used to manage and protect these environments.

As part of their fieldwork, students carried out a variety of geographical activities, including environmental observations, measurements of abiotic factors and macroinvertebrate testing. The knowledge and data gathered during these excursions have provided important support for their most recent assessment task.

Trent Wilson • Geography Teacher

Student Achievement

Alana Fraser (Year 12) played for the GWS Giants Academy in the AFL NSW/ACT U22s Summer Series in Sydney.

Cooper Richardson (Year 8) competed in the U14 National Softball Championships in March.

Information & Notices

Year 10 Urban Challenge

Parent Information Session

The Year 10 Urban Challenge will take place in the urban landscape of Sydney and its surrounds during the last week of Semester 1. Students will operate in small teams of approximately 16 students, with each student taking on the responsibility of a specific role within the team. Teams are required to complete a series of challenges and activities, embarking on an unfolding adventure that takes them all over Sydney. Students are given the freedom to make their own decisions. This includes being responsible for navigating their way around, buying food, solving clues and managing a team budget.

In preparation for the experience, staff from the Urban Challenge will attend the College to provide information to parents and students. The details of the parent information session are:

Date: Tuesday 31 March
Time: 6.00pm
Venue: Theatre, Sr Noelene Quinane Building, St Peter's Campus

Bronze Status Awards

Congratulations to the following students who received Bronze Status at the last Padua Assembly:

Teresa Markham (9W3) and Myisha Thakur (8F2)

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

ThinkUKnow *AFP Presentation*

On Wednesday 11 March, we had ThinkUKnow come to MacKillop to talk about online safety. They explained how public TikTok and social media accounts can put our information at risk, and that anything we post online can stay on a server even if we delete it.

They also spoke about situations where someone might pressure or threaten you online, and how important it is to recognise when something doesn't feel right. We learnt what to do if we ever feel uncomfortable or unsure and why reaching out for help straight away matters.

The AFP reminded us that there are many places we can go for support. We can always talk to trusted adults like parents, carers, and teachers, or reach out to the AFP if something serious happens. They also shared online support services such as the eSafety Commissioner, Headspace, and Kids Helpline, which can help if we're feeling worried or need advice.

Nikita Chapman & Matilda Franklin • Year 8

THINKUKNOW RESOURCES

Throughout the year, each cohort on the Padua Campus will have the opportunity to participate in this valuable presentation.

Further parent resources can be found here.

Information & Notices

Responding to Peer Pressure

SchoolTV

As children grow, friendships and the desire to fit in become increasingly important and with this comes the influence of peer pressure. Sometimes this influence can motivate young people in positive ways, but at other times it may lead them to take risks or act against their values.

In today's online world, peer pressure is no longer limited to the schoolyard; social media and digital trends add new layers of comparison and expectation.

To support families in navigating these challenges, this edition of SchoolTV explores the different types of peer pressure: spoken, unspoken, direct and indirect and offers practical advice to help young people build confidence, make healthy choices and stay true to themselves. We encourage all parents and carers to access this valuable resource to better understand how to guide and support your child through these influential moments.

VIEW THIS WEEK'S FEATURE

Driver safety when collecting students

When dropping off or picking up students, please utilise the basketball courts on both campuses as the primary pickup point. We understand that congestion may occur at times, so we kindly ask for your patience. Avoid stopping on the main road near entry and exit points to the College, as this can be dangerous and obstruct drivers' vision. It's crucial to pick up students at the designated location to ensure safety.

Furthermore, students have been reminded to prioritise their safety as pedestrians, whether in the carpark, on the basketball courts, surrounding streets, at crossings, or at bus stops. Drivers, please adhere to speed limits, yield at crossings, and assist in maintaining a safe environment for everyone. Your cooperation in these matters is greatly appreciated.

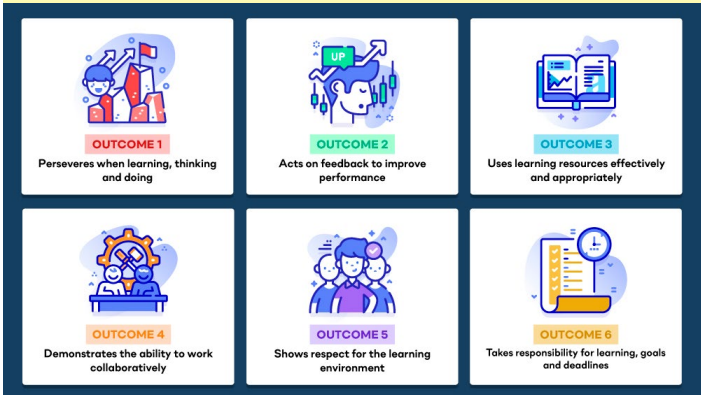
Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

Approaches to Learning

Developing agency, student capacity to understand their own contribution to their learning and shape their success, is a key goal for students at MacKillop. An important part of developing agency is a focus on **Approaches to Learning (ATL)**. These six outcomes target the learning factors that are within the control and influence of each learner; are focused on effort and improvement; and are consistent and achievable for all students in all subjects. They underpin academic success within school and successful participation in workplace and community endeavors beyond school. They feature on semester reports and are detailed below.

These ATL are always present in the teaching and learning at MacKillop, but in the next two months there will be a specific College-wide focus on them. Faculties will be providing subject-specific examples and activities where students can discuss and apply the ATL; they will feature on boards in all classrooms; and teachers will be actively seeking opportunities for responsive teaching and positive reinforcement of them in lessons. The goal being to support students to embrace the ATL and to grow their skill in applying them to their learning.

Tristan Burg • Assistant Principal, Academic Care



Information & Notices

Sustainability Club

We are the Sustainability Club, a student-run club open to all students on the senior campus. Our club is passionate about how we treat our environment and the steps we can take to make our Earth a better, more sustainable place for everyone. Our goal is to encourage the MacKillop community to incorporate simple, sustainable practices into their daily lives.

At the recent Swimming Carnival, the Sustainability Club ran a bottle collection initiative. Together, we collected 477 bottles, raising money for Project Compassion, double what we made last year. Thank you to everyone who contributed by putting their bottles in our bottle bins instead of throwing them away.

If you'd like to get involved, come along to JTW Block on Thursdays at recess. New members are always welcome!

SUSTAINABLE TIP - TRANSPORT

This week, try swapping one car trip for a more sustainable option, such as walking, carpooling, or catching the bus. Choosing these options helps cut carbon emissions and save petrol, which is better for the planet and your wallet.

Ailys Dulguime • 2026 Sustainability Captain

Second-Hand Uniform Shop

The SHUS is generally open on Tuesdays by appointment. To make an appointment please email uniforms@mackillop.act.edu.au or text 0427 089 370. The SHUS is currently well stocked and is ready to assist with your winter uniform requirements.

Did you know that you can place an order via email? You need to advise exactly what you are after. The order can then be delivered to your preferred front office to collect and pay. Further, the SHUS has many spare uniform buttons. Just email through your requirements and the buttons can be collected from the front office or sent home with your child.

Judy • SHUS Manager

School Fees

Fees for Term 1 should now be finalised unless paying by Direct Debit or other approved arrangement. **Any outstanding fees should be paid immediately.** Please Note – Direct Debit is our preferred payment method. To arrange a Direct Debit through Bpoint please contact fees@mackillop.act.edu.au. For other approved payment methods or if you are experiencing difficulty paying the fees please contact the Fees Office.

Michelle Predovan • Fees Manager

Community Notices

FESTIVAL OF DEMOCRACY

Visit Australia's oldest Parliament, learn about democracy in NSW, step inside history with guided tours and get creative in workshops and role plays. Join in the fun reenactment of King John signing the Magna Carta, visit heritage rooms, vote with the NSW Electorate Commission, participate in a committee role play, enjoy live music and more!

When: Friday 17 April, 9.30am – 3pm
Where: Parliament of NSW, 6 Macquarie Street
Cost: Free Entry - **bookings are required**

What's Coming Up

College Athletics Carnival **24 MAR**

Year 12 Relay for Life **28 MAR**

TUE	**24** MAR	• College Athletics Carnival
WED	**25** MAR	• Physical Theatre Workshops
THU	**26** MAR	• Physical Theatre Workshops • Year 10 Immunisations
FRI	**27** MAR	• Year 10 Immunisations
SAT	**28** MAR	• Year 12 Relay for Life
MON	**30** MAR	• Physical Theatre Workshops • 5.30pm: University Direct Entry & UAC Info Evening

What's Coming Up

Term 1 Concludes **02 APR**

ANZAC Assembly **22 APR**

TUE	**31** MAR	• 6.00pm: Year 10 Urban Challenge Parent Info Session
THU	**02** APR	• Term 1 Concludes • Holy Thursday • Easter Liturgies
FRI	**03** APR	• Good Friday (Public Holiday)
MON	**20** APR	• Pupil-Free Day
TUE	**21** APR	• Term 2 Begins
WED	**22** APR	• ANZAC Assembly (St Peter's)

MacKillop

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Tuggeranong ACT 2901

Mackinnon Street, **Wanniassa** (Years 7-9)
Ellerston Avenue, **Isabella Plains** (Years 10-12)

Absentee SMS Line
0429 131 463

Socials

www.facebook.com/
mackillop.act

www.instagram.com/
mackillop_act

www.youtube.com/
stmarymackillop

www.linkedin.com/company/
st-mary-mackillop-college-canberra

https://bsky.app/profile/
mackillop-act.bsky.social

Do you need help with a particular issue?

IT Support, Compass and Canvas	helpdesk@mackillop.act.edu.au
Enrolments	enrolments@mackillop.act.edu.au
Fees and Finance	fees@mackillop.act.edu.au
School Reports	reports@mackillop.act.edu.au
Absences & Attendance	attendance@mackillop.act.edu.au