MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

Newsletter.

Volume Eight

24 July 2026

Principal's Letter.

Principal's Prayer

Lord, as we begin this new term, fill our hearts with hope, purpose, and a willingness to learn and grow together. May we support one another with kindness and courage, and use our gifts each day to bring Your light to our community. Amen.

Dear Parents/Carers, Staff and Students,

Welcome to Term 3!

I hope all families enjoyed a restful holiday break and the opportunity to spend meaningful time together. Thank you to our students, staff and parents for your support throughout a busy and rewarding Term 2. The term concluded with two significant experiences for our Year 7 and Year 10 students, and it was a privilege to be involved in both.

To share one moment that stood out for me - I was deeply impressed by the engagement of our Year 10 students at Urban Challenge as they prepared meals for people experiencing homelessness. The work of the organisations in Kings Cross and Bondi is remarkable, producing hundreds of thousands of meals each year. At the end of our session in Bondi, I was genuinely moved to see meals being packaged with our MacKillop logo - and then to know those same meals were distributed that evening to people in need.

It was a powerful, tangible example of faith in action, and a learning experience I'm confident our students will carry with them.

Congratulations

I am delighted to announce that Sophie O'Donnell is one of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) 2026 National Award winners receiving the ACEL Keith Tronc Award for Outstanding Teacher Leadership. This award recognises a teacher in their first five years of teaching who has demonstrated outstanding practice in the classroom, and as a result, has made a significant difference to colleagues and the lives of students. Sophie will be formally recognised at the Awards Ceremony during the National Conference in Perth from 30 September - 2 October 2026.

The MacKillop community warmly congratulates Sophie on this wonderful achievement.

NAIDOC Week

The NAIDOC Week 2026 theme is "50 Years of Deadly".

Celebrated nationally from 5 to 12 July 2026, the milestone theme honours the five decades of the NAIDOC Week movement. It is a powerful tribute to the Elders, organisers, activists, and artists who built the movement, and it reflects the pride, strength, and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In Indigenous culture, "deadly" does not mean dangerous; instead, it is a term of high praise that signifies excellence, brilliance, and something to be deeply proud of.

This year's NAIDOC Mass took place today, Friday 24 July at St Christopher's Cathedral, Manuka. We proudly acknowledge Darcie Kickett (Year 9), who received the Sports Award, and Mr Jeremy Margosis, who received the Leadership Award during the NAIDOC Mass. Both of their selections reflect the high regard in which they are held by the judging panel and wider community. Congratulations!

"In the Footsteps of St Paul" - Archbishop's Pilgrimage

MacKillop staff members, Jane Cunneen, Michael de Raadt and Helen Jacobs accompanied Archbishop Christopher Prowse and key Catholic Education staff on the recent pilgrimage to Greece and Türkiye participating in the Footsteps of St Paul. Similar to my experience in April, this pilgrimage explored St Paul's influence on the development of the Church and his model of Catholic leadership. Walking in the footsteps of St Paul provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on their leadership and to grow as a leader in Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Principal's Letter.

Pope Leo's First Encyclical

As you may be aware, Pope Leo has released his first encyclical, 'Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence.' The full text can be found **HERE**.

Some commentary on the document can be found **HERE**.

Apostolic Action Plan 2027-2033

Over the past six months, an ambitious program of work has taken place with our Archdiocesan Schools Office (ASO) to ensure the long-term sustainability of our Catholic school system. This program of work has two projects at its core: the School Planning Project and the Financial Sustainability Project.

At the heart of what ASO is attempting to do is identify and balance needs across our 56 schools, develop frameworks for the equitable distribution of resources and ensure that Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Education Limited (CACGEL) are making prudent, evidence informed decisions that will ensure that Catholic education in this Archdiocese will continue to flourish for the benefit of our Catholic mission, and all students and families that form part of our school system, now and into the future.

The new Strategic Plan 2027–2033, now renamed the Apostolic Action Plan, will be launched on 20 August at the Convention Centre. Central to the new strategy are two bold goals for teaching and learning.

1. ***Faith oxygenates every learning area in the curriculum.***
2. ***Every school achieves above expected growth in literacy and numeracy.***

Key representatives from schools across the Archdiocese have been invited to the launch.

Leading From Within – National Leadership Development Program for Middle Leaders

MacKillop leaders, Lisa Buckland, Lorraine Gannon, Braden Longo and Trent Wilson were in Brisbane during the first week of the break as part of their involvement in The Brown Collective's flagship program, Leading from Within.

Leading from Within supports and enhances the formation of middle leaders through the exploration of key aspects of their roles such as leading teams, supporting and enhancing student engagement, and leading teaching and learning. This professional learning was exceptionally valuable, providing participants with practical strategies, reflective leadership practices, and a deeper understanding of their capacity to influence positive outcomes within their school communities.

Pupil Free Day - Years 7 to 12

Please note the following amendments to the dates currently published in the Student Diary:

- **Friday 21 August** will be a normal school day (Day 5).
- **Monday 31 August** will be a Pupil Free Day to enable staff participation in a Staff Spirituality Day.
- **Wednesday 26 August - Year 11 AST Writing Trial:** Year 11 students seeking an ATAR will be sitting a trial exam (Writing) in Periods 4 and 5.

As we move into Semester 2, we have a lot to look forward to as a learning community. Together, we can achieve great things! Please know that you have my full support as we continue to work together in the care and education of your children.

We continue to pray for all families needing our prayers at this time.

With respect and encouragement to you.

Jacqueline Heffernan • Principal

MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra
Disney
HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL
ON STAGE!
©Disney
FOUR SHOWS • 10-15 AUGUST
TICKETS AVAILABLE THROUGH COMPASSTIX
GET TICKETS

What's Been Happening

Year 10 Urban Challenge

Team Sydney Safari had an unforgettable experience on Urban Challenge packed with laughter, teamwork and plenty of memories. On day one, we dove straight into the *Clue Chase*, solving puzzles and finding clues left around Pyrmont Bay. As part one of our final clues, we had to do the human knot challenge, but thanks to some excellent teamwork, we untangled the code and found our way out of the bind. Moving out of Pyrmont Bay, we caught the ferry which was our favourite mode of transport for the whole trip. After some relaxation time, we engaged in the night activity of bowling! It was a great way to cap off the day and have a laugh with friends. When all the pins had folded, we headed to dinner at WingHaus where some spicy spicy wings caused a few troubles for some of our members.

Day two was just as exciting! We started the day cooking for the less fortunate, at *Kids Giving Back*, and in combination with some other teams we were able to cook 204 meals. After cooking, our activity was a scavenger hunt. Whilst completing set challenges we also kept our eyes peeled for any additional items on the list to gain extra points. For most of day two we spent our time at Bondi Beach where some highlights included meeting a member of the Norris Nuts and a delicious sushi lunch. In the night, we travelled to Chinatown and ate Chinese for dinner and to finish the day we caught the ferry in the rain to see the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House.

On day three, we surveyed the botanic gardens and had fun exploring the area. As we moved on, we stopped and made a human pyramid in the foreground of the Opera House. After that we headed into the shopping district for lunch and a treat to finish off our amazing Urban Challenge experience.

Oliver Donnelly • Year 10

What's Been Happening

YEAR 10 REFLECTION DAY
In Week 11 of Term 2, Year 10 participated in a Reflection Day which focused on team building, creativity and communication.

WELCOME BACK!
This week we welcomed students back to school. We wish everyone all the best for the new semester!

NAIDOC MASS
Today, MacKillop Mob students attended the NAIDOC Mass. Congratulations to Darcie Kickett (Year 9) and Mr Jeremy Margosis on their awards.

Learning Commons

Romeo & Juliet Installation

The Padua Learning Commons has been busy updating the space with various objects such as vines, doves, flowers, statues, and much more! Thank you to the students who helped the Learning Commons staff with creating and arranging the installation.

Kelli Donovan • Library Assisant

Student Achievements

Sophie Luchterhand (Year 11) was selected into the Australian Flag Football Girls U17 squad which competed in the 2026 Summer Series in Los Angeles in June.

Reid Stewart (Year 12) has had a successful year winning the NSW state series, ACT Championships and placing 3rd in the NSW state titles for BMX. Reid qualified to race for Australia at the BMX World Championships which occurred in Brisbane in July.

Harper Dickson (Year 7) and Samuel McCabe (Year 12) have been selected into the ACT Cross Country squad for the upcoming National Championships.

Alana Fraser (Year 12) played for the Allies (Canberra/NSW/NT/Tasmania) in the U18 AFLW National Carnival where she made the top 5 for marks per game during the tournament.

Information & Notices

New PC Teachers

As a result of some staffing changes at the College, a small number of Pastoral Care Classes have a new PC Teacher in Semester 2. The new PC Teachers are:

PADUA CAMPUS

- **7E3 -** Alenka Rheuben
- **7F3 -** Tony Lazzarato
- **8E4 -** Courtney Guy & Alyssa Best
- **8W3 -** Hasham Butt
- **9A4 -** Sophie O'Donnell

ST PETER'S CAMPUS

- **10F3 -** Rebecca Donnelly & Hope Darrington
- **10W4 -** Tim Sherwin
- **11E3 -** Melissa Tonnet & Lidia Galea
- **12F1 -** Francesca Miller – 5 Weeks

Pastoral Program *for Term 3*

The Pastoral Program for Term 3 focuses on the theme of Relationships, Future Responsibility and Leadership across Years 7 to 12.

Each cohort will concentrate on a different topic within the broader theme including building resilience in personal relationships, managing conflict with peers, relationships with self and others, personal growth, respectful leadership and preparation for future success. Students will investigate aspects such as personality traits, causes of conflict and strategies for managing themselves and others positively.

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

INSPIRE Art Competition

The annual INSPIRE Art Competition is open to students in Years 7 to 12 and prizes are awarded in the following categories: Overall Winner & People's Choice Award, Digital & Media Arts, Drawing, Painting, Photography and Sculpture.

Following a display of all entries at MacKillop Day, a selection of the best works will be exhibited in the 7 Brunswick Street Building at the St Peter's Campus.

Artworks are due by Friday 28 August.

Tamara Murdoch • Visual Arts Coordinator

Information & Notices

Padua Campus – Transport

STUDENT PICK UP AND DROP OFF

A reminder that parents and carers are asked to drop off and pick up their children from the basketball courts at the Padua Campus. The front carpark at the Campus provides limited access for parents and carers arriving to attend organised meetings with staff and for those collecting their children from sick bay. The front carpark must remain accessible for emergency vehicles at all times.

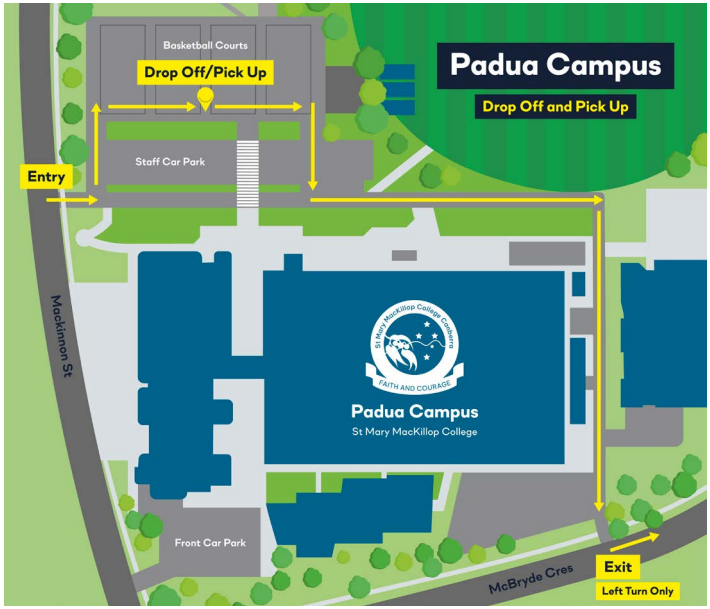
BUS BAY PARKING

Parking along the curb on MacKinnon Street in the afternoons can present challenges for bus drivers to navigate a narrow entry to our bus bays. The safest location for your child to be collected from the College is on site at the basketball courts. Please avoid double parking and waiting by parking alongside the College bus bays.

PARISH CARPARK

Our local parish carpark is not a suitable pick up and drop off location for your child. The church carpark and adjacent land is not part of the MacKillop school grounds. It is important students do not congregate in these areas. I kindly request that parents and carers do not use the church carpark for picking up or dropping off their children to school.

Jacklyn Johnstone • Head of Campus (Padua)



MacKillop Mob

Student Support times for Semester 2

PADUA CAMPUS

- **Year 7 -** Wednesday A Period 2
- **Year 8 -** Tuesday B Period 1
- **Year 9 -** Wednesday B Period 2

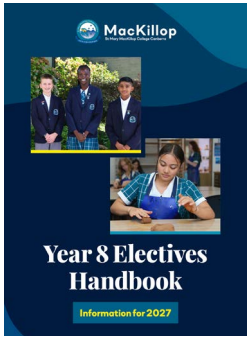
ST PETER'S CAMPUS

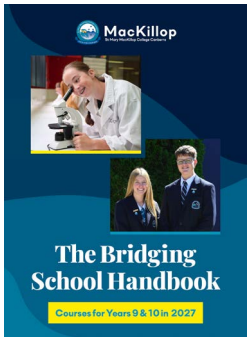
- Monday A Periods 3 and 4
- Thursday A Periods 3 and 4
- Friday B Periods 1 and 2 and 3

New cards will be handed out to students in Years 7-10 in the next week.

Jeremy Margosis • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Contact Teacher

Information & Notices





Subject Selections for 2027

Current Year 7, 8 & 9 Students

This is the time of year when students in Years 7-9 make their elective subject selections for 2027. Elective subjects are important in shaping a student's educational experience and thus the College provides a broad range of electives, re-designs the timetable each year to maximise the number of students gaining their top elective choices, and provides targeted information to students and families so well-informed decisions can be made.

Year 9 students attended a Course Preview Day at the St Peter's Campus on Thursday 25 June to help inform their decisions about Year 10 2027 subjects. Year 7 & 8 students had a subject selection presentation on Wednesday 22 July, and that was followed by a Parent Information Session for the families of current Year 7- 9 students about electives selections for 2027.

The information provided in those sessions can be found in the **Elective Presentation Slides** and details about the course content, learning outcomes and assessment types in each elective can be found in the **Year 8 Elective Handbook** and **9-10 Bridging School Handbook**. These handbooks are a vital source of information to help inform elective decisions.

A weblink and access code to our online subject selection portal was emailed to current Year 7-9 students on Thursday 23 July. A step-by-step process to complete elective selections on the portal can be found within the presentation linked above. **Elective choices must be made, with the parent-signed selection printout returned to school, by Friday 7 August.** All elective selections that are submitted by that date are treated equally in the timetabling process. However, late submission may affect student choices and changes requested after selections have been timetabled may not always be possible.

If you have any questions about the elective selection process please contact Lisa Buckland (Padua Teaching and Learning Coordinator, lisa.buckland@mackillop.act.edu.au) or Tristan Burg (AP Academic Care, tristan.burg@mackillop.act.edu.au).

Tristan Burg • Assistant Principal, Academic Care

Status Awards

Congratulations to the following students who were presented with Status Awards at this week's Assembly:

Bronze Status: Arie De Ligt (7A1), Adam El Siblani (7A1), Hayden Moore (7A1), Charlotte Pike (7A1), Mikayla Buchanan (7A2), Amaya Nash (7A2), Olivia Hawkins (7A4), Azaylia Atkins (7E1), Summer Steinlein (7E1), Samuel Bilney (7E4), Zane Dickson (7E4), Charles McLachlan (7E4), Jasmine Peisley (7E4), Dominic Pippen (7E4), Ella Stevens (7E4), Amaya Cribb (7F1), Khalid Elfadil Musa (7F1), Elena Randall (7F1), Maddi McLean (7F2), Harper Dickson (7F3), Xola Geier (7F3) and Luci Roseler (7W1).

Silver Status: Charlotte Roempke (7F1).

Information & Notices

AusAlert National Test

The Australian Government is introducing AusAlert, a new national emergency warning system designed to send alerts directly to compatible mobile devices during emergencies and natural disasters.

As part of the rollout, a national test alert will be conducted on Monday 27 July at 2:00 pm. During this test, compatible mobile phones, tablets and smart watches may receive a notification that includes a loud siren-like sound and vibration lasting approximately 10 seconds. The alert may override silent mode and "Do Not Disturb" settings. The Australian Government has prepared this **social story** to help explain the alert to children.

Students have been informed about the upcoming test and reminded that there is no need to respond to the alert. In preparation, the College has also reinforced our mobile phone expectations and procedures. Students are reminded that mobile devices should remain stored appropriately during the school day, either in their school bag or locker, unless required for an approved educational purpose on the Senior Campus.

Parents and carers should be aware that students who have a mobile device at school may receive the test notification during the school day. No action is required, and the alert can be ignored. However, in the event of a real emergency, it is important to follow the instructions provided in the alert to help keep yourself and others safe.

We appreciate your support in reinforcing our school's mobile phone expectations and helping students remain focused on their learning throughout the day.

SchoolTV *Dealing with Conflict*

Conflict is a normal part of growing up but learning how to manage it positively is an important life skill. Whether disagreements happen at home, at school, or online, young people need support to navigate challenges respectfully and build healthy relationships.

This month's SchoolTV edition, *Dealing with Conflict*, offers practical strategies for parents and carers to help children develop emotional awareness, communicate effectively, show empathy, and resolve disagreements constructively.

By working together, families and schools can help young people build the confidence and resilience needed to manage conflict and strengthen relationships. We encourage all parents and carers to explore this valuable SchoolTV resource and the range of support materials available through the link below.

VIEW THIS WEEK'S FEATURE

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

Information & Notices

Book Week

Your Learning Commons Teams are looking forward to celebrating Book Week on both campuses in Week 6 of this term. This year's theme is 'Symphony of Stories' and there will be opportunities for all year groups to participate in activities throughout the week celebrating books, music, and stories. More information will be available in the coming weeks, but you may want to start thinking about dress-up options as all students and teachers are invited to wear a costume to school on the Friday of Book Week inspired by a book or book character.

WHY WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE TEENS TO READ AND LISTEN TO BOOKS

At the end of Term 2, the Learning Commons staff focused on encouraging students to read and/or listen to books regularly outside of school. There is a strong body of research showing that reading plays a central role in academic success. Interestingly, reading for pleasure has been linked to stronger progress in subjects such as Mathematics (Sullivan & Brown, 2015) and Science (Zhu, 2022, cited in Crowther Centre, 2022).

Audiobooks are a great option when we're short on time. Students can listen in the car, while walking or running, at the gym, or while doing art or craft activities. Our students are fortunate to have access to a range of excellent audiobook options. Spotify now includes audiobooks, ACT Libraries offer BorrowBox (via the app), and students can access SORA at school for free audiobooks and ebooks.

How to access SORA via the App:

1. Select ACEN (Australian Catholic Education Network).
2. Search for school (and select St Mary MacKillop College Canberra)
3. Select "Sign in using St Mary MacKillop College Canberra" and use normal school sign in credentials.

Sarah Kearns and Amanda Knott • Learning Commons Coordinators

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award

Gain international accreditation for your non-academic interests. The Duke of Ed framework is open to anyone aged 14-24 and involves spending time doing physical recreation, service, and a skill and also completing an adventurous journey! The activities you complete are up to you and there are three levels to progress through (Bronze/Silver/Gold). Do one level or do all three - it's completely up to you!

Anyone interested in finding out more about the program can drop in to a meeting anytime or email Ms Claire Peck (Duke of Ed Coordinator): claire.peck@mackillop.act.edu.au.

- **Padua:** Friday Lunchtime (L1)
- **St Peter's:** Monday Recess (IRC4)

Congratulations to **Jhanvi Madhu**, **Harrison Lowes** and **Cayleigh Cocks** for recently completing their Bronze Award.

Claire Peck • Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Coordinator

Information & Notices

Transport Canberra

On Thursday 30 July 2026, Transport Canberra bus services will not operate between 9.30am and 1.30pm to allow for all bus drivers to attend an important meeting to be conducted by the Transport Workers Union.

The meeting, which is authorised by the ACT Government, is a necessary step towards finalising a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA).

1. Transport Canberra bus services will not operate between 9.30am and 1.30pm, Thursday, 30 July 2026. This is to allow drivers to attend an important all-driver meeting.
2. Limited services will be available between 9.00am – 9.30am and 1.00pm – 1.30pm to allow for drivers to come off the road for the meeting in the morning and services to start back up in the afternoon.
3. Peak travel and school services will not be affected.
4. Light rail services will not be affected.
5. Supported School Transport and Flexible Bus Services will not be affected
6. CDC Canberra buses will not be affected.

Please plan ahead during this time to avoid any inconvenience.

We apologise for this disruption in service and thank the Canberra community for their understanding and cooperation. For more information visit **HERE**.

School Fees

Term 3 fee statements will be sent electronically next week. Thank you to the families who have paid Term 2 fees. Any outstanding fees should be paid immediately unless paying by Direct Debit or other approved arrangement.

It is most important that you notify the College regarding any changes to your email address as this is our primary form of communication.

If you require more information regarding Direct Debit arrangements or other approved payment methods or are experiencing difficulty paying the fees please contact the Fees Office.

Michelle Predovan • Fees Manager

Second-Hand Uniform Shop

Please note the SHUS opening days for the coming weeks.

- Wednesday 29 July, Tuesday 4 August and Tuesday 11 August
- **CLOSED** Tuesday 18 and Tuesday 25 August
- Regular Tuesday openings will resume in September.

Please note, from 21-28 July, the SHUS email and mobile will not be monitored.

Remember, you can email your order through at uniforms@mackillop.act.edu.au and your order can be sent to your school front office.

Judy • SHUS Manager

Information & Notices

Community Notices

ABBOTT FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Outward Bound Australia is offering 18 fully funded scholarships to the Abbott Foundation Leadership Program for October and December.

Information: Flyer | Website

BRINDABELLA CHORUS

Brindabella Chorus is welcoming new harmony singers into their group. Come along to their new members night.

Information: Flyer | Website

CACGEL School Engagement Survey

HAVE YOUR SAY! HELP SHAPE YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Education Ltd (CACGEL) is proud of our strong school communities and is committed to continuing to improve the experience of our students and families.

This August, we will again invite parents and guardians to complete our annual **School Engagement Survey**. Your feedback will help us understand what is working well and where improvements can be made to better support our students, families and school communities.

The survey will only take about **10 minutes** and opens on the **3rd of August 2026.**

Students in Years 4 to 12 will also be invited to complete an age-appropriate survey during school time and school staff will also be invited to take part.

Further information on how to access the survey will be provided closer to the time. **Please complete this important survey when it opens and share your feedback.**

Your views will help strengthen our schools and better support students and families.

What's Coming Up

Year 12 Retreat **5-7 AUG**

Awards Assembly (Padua) **5 AUG**

THU	**30** JUL	• Year 9 YAM
TUE	**04** AUG	• Australian Mathematics Competition • Year 12 Retreat Preparation
WED	**05** AUG	• Year 12 Retreat Departs • Year 9 YAM • Awards Assembly (Padua)
THU	**06** AUG	• Elective Selections Due • Year 10 Course-Counselling Catch-Up
FRI	**07** AUG	• Year 12 Retreat Returns • Pilgrimage to Eden Departs • Year 10 Course-Counselling Catch-Up
SAT	**08** AUG	• Feast of St Mary of the Cross • Pilgrimage to Eden Departs

What's Coming Up

Awards Assembly (St Peter's) **12 AUG**

College Musical **10-15 AUG**

MON	**10** AUG	• Ngadyung House Charity Week • College Musical
TUE	**11** AUG	• Year 11 Course Info Night (Cooma)
WED	**12** AUG	• College Musical • Cooma Course Counselling (Year 11 2027) • Awards Assembly (St Peter's)
THU	**13** AUG	• Moderation Day (Pupil-Free Day)
FRI	**14** AUG	• College Musical
SAT	**15** AUG	• College Musical

MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

Contact details

02 6209 0100

info@mackillop.act.edu.au

www.mackillop.act.edu.au

PO Box 1211
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