MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

Newsletter.

Volume *Nine*

14 August 2026

Principal's Letter.

Principal's Prayer

Loving God, on the Feast of the Assumption, we thank you for Mary, raised into heaven with you. Help us to follow Jesus with trust and courage, to love as Mary loved, and to bring hope to those who need it. Keep our school and families close to you today and always. Amen.

Dear Parents/Carers, Staff and Students,

High School Musical Takes Centre Stage!

There is an incredible buzz across the College this week as our production of *High School Musical* takes to the stage. Months of dedication, rehearsals, and hard work from our students and staff have culminated in a truly exceptional show that has captivated audiences and showcased the remarkable talent within our community.

With tickets selling out and excitement building for every performance, the production has become one of the highlights of the year. From outstanding performances and vibrant choreography to the energy and enthusiasm radiating from the stage, *High School Musical* is a celebration of creativity, teamwork, and student excellence.

We congratulate our cast, crew, and production team on delivering a spectacular performance, and thank our College community for the overwhelming support. If the level of audience participation and sold-out performances are any indication, this is a show that will be remembered for years to come.

Congratulations to Coordinator of Performance, Charlotte Gearside, Technical Coordinator, Harry Hattch, and Performing Arts Coordinator, Bella van Doorn, for their leadership. Special thanks to Jacinta Paquay, Chantelle Henderson and Helena Maher for their expertise behind the scenes. Also, thanks to all teachers who helped supervise and coordinate operations.

Year 12 Retreat

It was a pleasure to attend the Senior Retreat with our Year 12 students in Collaroy last week. I had the opportunity to speak with them about **identity and purpose**, and what they stand for as young people preparing to step into adulthood. The retreat provided an invitation to pause amid the busyness of Year 12 and reflect not only on what they hope to achieve, but also on who they are becoming.

I encouraged our students to remember that their worth is not defined by an ATAR rank, their achievements, or the expectations of others. Rather, it is shaped by the values they choose to live by, the relationships they nurture, and the person they choose to be each day.

Congratulations to Year 12 Pastoral Coordinators, Leonie Sullivan and Charles Bootes for their leadership and organisation of a very successful Retreat.

Congratulations

Congratulations to **Colby Cruwys** and **Tristan Burg**, who were announced last week as recipients of the **2026 Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) ACT Excellence in Educational Leadership Award**. This prestigious recognition reflects their outstanding leadership and significant contributions to education, both within our College and the broader educational community.

Principal's Letter.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Pilgrimage to Eden

Last weekend, Nathan Wood, Chantelle Henderson and I accompanied students to Eden for the annual pilgrimage celebrating the Feast of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Led by Archbishop Christopher Prowse, the pilgrimage honours Australia's first canonised saint and her enduring legacy of faith, service, courage, and compassion, particularly for those on the margins.

Students had the opportunity to connect with peers from Lumen Christi Catholic College, Pambula, learn more about Mary MacKillop's life and contribution to the local community from the Sisters of St Joseph, and visit the Eden Killer Whale Museum. It was a valuable experience of faith, learning, and community within our Archdiocese.

As the patron saint of our College, Mary MacKillop's example continues to inspire us to live with courage, serve others generously, and, in her words, to "never see a need without doing something about it." Her legacy remains at the heart of who we are as a MacKillop community.

CATHOLIC VOICE: PILGRIMAGE VIDEO

Semester 1 Student Awards

One of the great privileges of being part of the MacKillop community is witnessing the extraordinary potential of our young people. I congratulate our Semester 1 award recipients, whose achievements reflect not only academic excellence but also the character, determination, and growth we seek to foster at MacKillop.

Archdiocesan Assembly

The Archdiocesan Assembly 2026 is a gathering of the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn centred on prayer, discernment, and synodal evangelisation. Catholic school families are warmly encouraged to participate in this important opportunity to contribute to the life and mission of our local Church. The Assembly will be held on **Saturday 22 August**, from 9.00am to 4.00pm. Further information and registration details are available via the Archdiocesan Assembly website and the accompanying flyer.

WEBSITE FLYER

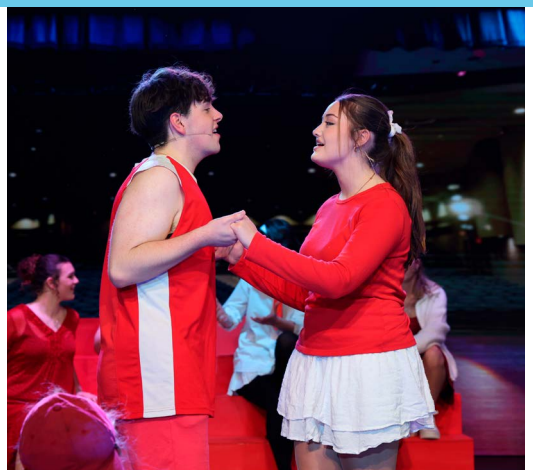
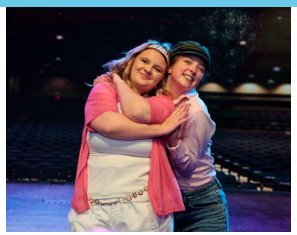
Feast of the Assumption

Tomorrow, Saturday 15 August, the Catholic Church celebrates the **Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. In Australia, it is a **holy day of obligation**, along with Christmas Day. Mass times vary, and many parishes offer a Vigil Mass on the evening before.

With respect and encouragement to you.

Jacqueline Heffernan • Principal

What's Been Happening

The College Musical

High School Musical

Congratulations to the cast and crew of the College's 2026 production of High School Musical, who have delighted audiences with the opening two performances of this year's school musical.

The show became the first production in MacKillop history to sell out prior to opening night, with more than 1,300 tickets purchased across the four performances at the St Peter's Campus Performing Arts Centre. MacKillop's production of High School Musical features a talented principal cast, a large ensemble, skilled dancers and singers, creative lighting and sound technicians, and an enthusiastic backstage crew.

The students have been led by the College's Coordinator of Performance, Ms Charlotte Gearside, who directed and choreographed the production, and Mr Harry Hattch, who coordinated the technical aspects of the musical. A team of staff members and students also assisted with production support, costume design, props and sets, front of house, and event promotion.

Congratulations and thank you to everyone involved in the production for their months of hard work and dedication. Thank you also to the many audience members who have supported the show. It is always wonderful to see the wider community enjoying and celebrating the talents of our staff and students!

What's Been Happening

Year 12 Retreat

Last week, Year 12 travelled to Collaroy, a nostalgic return to the site Year 7 camp, which for us, happened in Year 8. The familiar surroundings set a reflective tone as students considered their journey from Year 7 to 12 and wrote positive affirmations for one another.

Across the three days, students engaged in individual reflection, PC group activities, and whole cohort moments. A liturgy on the first night, centred on the Beatitudes, grounded the retreat's themes, followed by inspiring talks from Ms Sullivan and Mr Bootes. Day two offered extended time in PC groups, strengthening connections built over six years, and students opened letters they had written to themselves in Year 11 – a meaningful moment to recognise growth and change.

On the final night, Mrs Heffernan addressed the cohort before everyone came together for a celebratory disco and learnt the graduation dance. The last morning included PC photos, teacher thank yous, and the iconic Year 12 cohort photo.

After two sunrise walks, six excellent meals, and plenty of emotion, Year 12 headed back to Canberra ready to continue their final semester.

The retreat was a wonderful success, and Year 12 extends their gratitude to all staff who made it possible. We are thankful to have experienced our retreat in such a meaningful way and hope future cohorts gain just as much from it!

Alec McLennan & Matthew Andrew • Year 12

What's Been Happening

Awards Assemblies

On Wednesday 5 and 12 August, the Padua and St Peter's Campuses held their Awards Assembly, respectively, which recognised student achievement from Semester 1. Congratulations to all who received an award!

Ngadyung House Charity Week

This week has been Ngadyung's House Charity Week where all funds go towards MacKillop House. Students got involved in the various events which occurred throughout the week including the selling of hash browns and hot chocolates, donation day, hoodie/oodie day and performances at the St Peter's Campus.

What's Been Happening

Archbishop's Pilgrimage to Eden

Last Friday the Padua Campus Captains and choir members from Year 8, 10 and 11 travelled down to Pambula Beach and Eden as part of the Archbishop's Pilgrimage to Eden. Students met and interacted with students from Lumen Christi Catholic College, being offered tours of the College, performing for a number of classes and then headed to the beach to check out the local scenery.

After this we got to visit Mary MacKillop Hall in Eden. We listened to Jospehite Sister, Sr Marie, who spoke to us about Mary MacKillop, her mother Flora and the connection that Mary had with the local community.

We visited the Eden Killer Whale Museum, where we learnt about Eden's past and how Eden changed over many years. We then joined Archbishop Christopher Prowse and pilgrims for a walk from the beach to the Church to celebrate Mass. Our choir sang beautifully during the Mass, contributing to a wonderful celebration of our patron saint.

Students reflected on what Mary MacKillop and her mother Flora had done for the community in Eden. The pilgrimage, Mass, and visiting Lumen Christi Catholic College was a wonderful experience. Thank you to Mrs Heffernan, Mr Wood and Ms Henderson for taking us on this pilgrimage – memories that will stay with us forever.

Noah Tapp & Charlotte Cooper • Padua Campus Captains

Year 9 Decorate Their Way to Success

Year 9 Food by Design students are currently completing an exciting cake decorating design task. As part of the unit, students are designing and creating their own speciality cake while developing practical skills and exploring a range of decorative techniques. Students have been learning to use buttercream piping, chocolate ganache drips, fondant and chocolate shapes to transform their cake designs into creative and appealing finished products. They have demonstrated excellent attention to detail, creativity and perseverance throughout the process. The students have achieved some wonderful results so far, and we look forward to seeing their completed specialty cakes.

Monique Nutt • Food and Textiles Teacher

What's Been Happening

AI Student Voice Forum

On Thursday 30 June, student leaders from our College attended the AI Student Voice Forum, organised by Mr David de Carvalho, Executive Director of Catholic Education Canberra Goulburn.

The forum brought together secondary students from across the archdiocese to discuss their experiences with artificial intelligence, its role in learning and the opportunities and challenges it presents for education.

Our students represented the College admirably, contributing thoughtfully to discussions and sharing insights into our approach to AI. They described the experience as valuable, providing an opportunity to hear a diverse range of perspectives while also affirming the College's balanced and proactive approach to the use of AI in teaching and learning.

A parent information session on Education Perfect's AI tools, that are being incorporated into classwork and assessment preparation across the College, will take place later this term. More information will be made available in the coming weeks.

Trent Wilson • Digital Learning Coordinator

Life Inside Corrections

Guest Speaker: Mr Joshua Warner

Year 11 Legal Studies students were treated to an engaging and eye opening presentation from Mr Joshua Warner, an ex Corrections Officer who is currently a security expert with the ADF. Mr Warner offered a rare behind the scenes look at how Australia's correctional facilities operate, explaining the different tiers of prisons, how inmates are classified within the system, and the range of corrections tools and rehabilitation programs available to inmates to support positive change.

Students were captivated by his mix of entertaining escape stories—some bold, some baffling—and heart warming accounts of inmates who turned their lives around, later returning to help others facing similar challenges. His visit brought classroom theory to life, giving students a deeper understanding of the complexities, pressures, and human stories within the corrections system.

Melissa Tonnet • HASS Teacher

ADFA's Production of Grease

On Friday 7 August, Year 7-11 Defence students and Year 8 Drama and Music classes went to ADFA to see their production of the musical Grease.

Grease follows the main couple Sandy Olsson and Danny Zuko in a rom-com style high school drama set in the late 1950's. We met many fun characters and explored the story of these high school students from their first day back at school after summer to their prom night.

We had an amazing time socialising with the many staff and students at ADFA and greatly enjoyed the well thought out musical production.

James Quinn • Year 10

What's Been Happening

CMAG Secondary School Photography Prize

Congratulations to Felix Miller (Year 10), who was awarded Second Place in the Years 7–10 category of the CMAG Secondary School Photography Prize on Saturday 27 July.

The competition, presented by Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG), challenged students to create a photographic response to a stimulus inspired by the Spiders of Paradise exhibition. Felix produced a creative and thoughtful photograph that demonstrated strong photographic skills, composition and visual storytelling.

This is a fantastic achievement and a wonderful recognition of Felix's creativity and developing talent in photography. Congratulations, Felix!

Kelli Campbell • Visual Arts Coordinator (acting)

Year 11 Snow Sports Camp

In Week 1, 24 Year 11 Health & Physical Education students spent three days in Perisher for the inaugural Snow Sports Camp. Students elected to Ski or Snowboard and received lessons from snow sports instructors. Following their lesson, students had time to ride in small groups to further develop and practice their skills.

All the students had a great time and showed great growth throughout the program.

Bryce Svensson, Kate Warren and Peter Johnson • Teachers

What's Been Happening

Lola Middleton

Athlete Profile

YEAR 10 • CHEERLEADING

Representation Level
Competed with Team Australia. My home team is YUAG.

Best sporting memory/achievement
Becoming a Cheerleading World Champion in April of this year.

How do you balance your sport and academic studies?
When I have a day without training, I focus and get my school work done.

What is your current training schedule?
I train 13 hours per week, but when training with Team Australia I was doing up to 20 hours per week plus traveling to Sydney regularly for interstate training camps.

How long have you been in the PE Pathways program and how has it supported you as a student athlete?
I have been in PE Pathways since the start of Year 10. PE Pathways has helped me in many ways, but in particular, provide me with time to complete my training homework, such as 3km runs, allowing me to focus on my school work at home.

Favourite thing about being in PE Pathways
There are many things, such as the overall help and support that I get from teachers and students, learning about different strength exercises and injury prevention, and being in a class that targets everyones specific sports.

Favourite strength and conditioning exercise and why?
My favourite exercises are trap bar dead lifts and barbell back squat. I enjoy these exercises because they help me build my leg strength for my tumbling and stunting.

If you could give advice to your younger self, what would it be?
Trust the process and talk to your teachers/coaches if you don't understand something, they are there to help.

What is your 'big' sporting goal?
I would love to compete for Team Australia again when I am older and compete in the Cheerleading Worlds with my Canberra club.

Student Achievements

Lola Middleton (Year 10) represented Australia at the World Cheerleading Championships in Orlando, USA in April and was crowned Champions.

Daniel Georgiadis (Year 11) represented Australia in Judo at the Hong Kong & Macau Cadet and Junior Men Cups finishing in 7th place in the 73kg section.

Anna Watt (Year 11) will be touring Singapore and France with the Australian Girls Choir in September.

Jack Miels-Barrett (Year 12) will be representing the ACT at the Australian School Golf Championships in August.

Felix Botticchio (Year 7) has been selected to represent the ACT at the Australian Cross Country Championships in Ballarat and All Schools National Cross Country Championships in Sydney.

Lily Christian (Year 10) will be competing in Malaysia for a basketball competition in December.

Congratulations to the following students for completing their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award: Eva Baker (Year 9), Annabelle Cawte (Year 10) and Juliet Cawte (Year 10).

Information & Notices

Assessments *Unit Outlines and films*

At this time of year, assessment is underway in many classes and students should have started documenting their assessment dates. These assessment dates can be found on the Unit Outlines published to the Canvas page of each subject. These unit outlines will contain details of the content of each course their child is enrolled in, the assessments they will undertake and the due dates.

This year, the Years 7-10 outlines also detail what PG film and print resources will be used in the teaching of that unit. These resources have been approved by the coordinator to be age-appropriate to the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social development of the students. Should parents wish to discuss the resources, they are welcome to contact the relevant Faculty Coordinator. Any M-rated teaching resources in Years 7-10 will meet this same criteria, however parents will be contacted separately for specific parental consent.

Tristan Burg • Assistant Principal, Academic Care

INSPIRE Art Competition

Only two weeks left to enter... 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. Information on how to enter and submit your online details can be found on Canvas in **Student Information**. Scroll down to enter and click on the links to complete. Any questions relating to the competition contact Kelli Campbell Visual Arts Coordinator (acting) via email: kelli.campbell@mackillop.act.edu.au.

Kelli Campbell • Visual Arts Coordinator (acting)

Information & Notices

SchoolTV *Understanding Adolescence*

Adolescence is a period of significant growth and change as young people transition from childhood to adulthood. During this stage, teenagers experience physical, emotional and cognitive development while forming their identity, building relationships and increasing their independence. They may also face challenges such as academic pressures, navigating the digital world, managing emotions and making responsible decisions. By understanding these changes and maintaining open communication, parents and caregivers can play a vital role in supporting their child's wellbeing, resilience and development.

VIEW THIS WEEK'S FEATURE

Term 3 eSafety Parents and Careers webinars

This term, parents and carers are invited to attend a series of eSafety webinars designed to strengthen understanding of young people's online experiences:

- The Trust Trap: Navigating friendships, pressure and manipulation online
- Influencers, Ideology and Impact: Understanding how algorithms can shape and reinforce harmful beliefs.
- Exploring the Online Experiences of Boys and Young Men

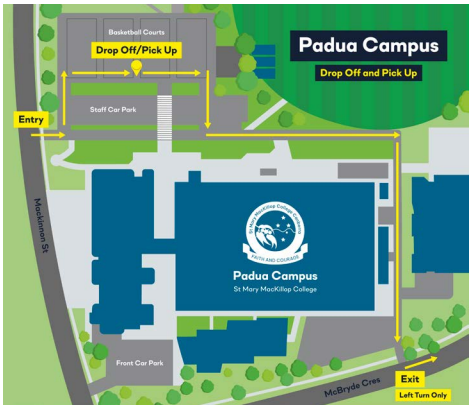
These webinars provide practical advice and insights to help families support safe, positive and informed online engagement.

More information and to register now.

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

National Science Week - next week!

Competitions will be held across each campus next week. Check student messages and PC announcements for more information.



Safe drop-off and pick-up behaviours

Unsafe driving and parking behaviours increase the potential road safety risk for students around schools. Road safety is a shared responsibility. It is important the road rules are followed at, and around, the St Mary MacKillop campuses to ensure the entire College community remains safe.

Failing to follow simple road rules like parking on the verge, in bus bays, near crossings and on surrounding streets increases the risks to students. Please drop-off and pick-up students before and after school on the Basketball Courts at each campus to ensure a safe environment around the College.

Paul Durham
Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

Information & Notices

Book Week 2026

Symphony of Stories

CBCA Book Week is an annual celebration of reading, and we will be celebretating this event again this year at MacKillop. The theme for Book Week 2026 is "A Symphony of Stories" – a reminder of the joy and power of stories. During Week 6 (24-28 August) students on both campuses will be invited to complete book week PC challenges and activities in their Learning Commons that will be advertised in Student Messages. The highlight of the week will be Dress Up day on Friday 28 August where students have the opportunity to dress up as a book character. Please remember to follow school expectations regarding required shoes for physical / practical subject lessons. If students choose not to participate in the dress up date they must wear full school uniform as normal. Your Learning Commons Teams are looking forward to celebrating this event with you.

Sarah Kearns & Amanda Knott • Learning Commons Coordinators

School Fees

Term 3 Fees are due 14 August 2026 unless paying via Bpoint Direct Debit or other approved payment arrangements.

To arrange a Direct Debit through Bpoint please contact us by email at fees@mackillop.act.edu.au. For other approved payment methods or a payment plan, or if you are experiencing difficulty paying the fees, please contact the Fees Office.

Michelle Predovan • Fees Manager

Senior Work Experience

Senior students wishing to engage in work experience

If you are in Year 11 or 12 and looking to complete a work experience placement. You will find all the important information (dates and forms etc.) on the **Careers Canvas page**. Have a look and if you have any questions, please contact Mrs Schofield either at school or via email: romina.schofield@mackillop.act.edu.au.

Romina Schofield • Careers and Vocational Education and Training Coordinator

Year 7 Health Survey

ACT Government

The ACT Government annually conducts a Year 7 Health Survey to monitor the Health and Wellbeing of students. Year 7 represents a time of significant change in young people's lives as they adjust to a new school, study schedules and social life while navigating the developmental changes of adolescence.

The survey is brief and self-administered anonymously online. Year 7 students may choose to complete the survey with the permission of their Parents/Carers at home. Further survey details and the link to complete the survey are enclosed **here**. The survey will be open Friday 14 August – Friday 4 September 2026.

NAPLAN Results

2026 NAPLAN results for Year 7 and 9 students have been mailed out to families this week. The NAPLAN tests provide valuable feedback on Literacy and Numeracy across each cohort. The College is currently analysing the data to inform teaching practice.

Information & Notices

CACGEL

UPDATE TO BPOINT DIRECT DEBIT AGREEMENT TERMS FOR SCHOOL FEE PAYMENTS

Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Education Ltd's (CACGEL) Direct Debit Agreement Terms are being updated, effective 1 September 2026.

- The key change is a reduction in the notification period from 30 days to 14 days.

All active BPOINT Direct Debit families were emailed a copy of the updated Direct Debit Agreement on 31 July 2026.

We encourage all families to locate the updated document in their emails and familiarise themselves with its contents. If you are unable to locate your copy, please reach out to the school and we will forward you a copy of the updated terms.

Second-Hand Uniform Shop

Appointments are being taken for your summer uniform requirements. The best way to request an appointment is to email uniforms@mackillop.act.edu.au or you can text on 0427 089 370.

Reminder the SHUS will be closed 18 and 25 August. The phone and email will be monitored during this closure. The SHUS is grateful to receive your uniform donations. These donations are accepted at either campus front office.

Judy • SHUS Manager

Enrolments & Withdrawals

If families have made alternate arrangements and are withdrawing students from MacKillop, please notify us via email to enrolments@mackillop.act.edu.au at your earliest convenience.

Jo Lubinski & Rebecca McKenzie • Enrolments

Gifted and Talented Programs

Is your child in Year 7 looking for a challenge? BRAINways EDUCATION is running Quest Tutorials for Gifted and Talented students at the Australian Catholic University Canberra on 29-30 September this year.

The three program areas to choose from are:

- The Mathematics of Games
- The Chemistry in a Prescription: The Science of Pain
- What is Art? The Philosophy of Beauty

If your child is interested, please contact Emily Kelly (emily.kelly@mackillop.act.edu.au) by Wednesday 19 August 2026, and you will be provided details about the College nomination process.

Community Notices

NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE

NFSA's Arc Cinema is showing films this spring.

Information: Flyer | Website

SAVER PLUS

Build lifelong, life-changing saving habits.

Information: Flyer | Information Session | Website

SPECTRES SOFTBALL

Make friends and have fun with Spectres Softball Ages 8-17.

Information: Flyer | Website

SUTHERLANDS SOFTBALL

A sport that is a hit with the whole family.

Information: Flyer | Website

What's Coming Up

College Musical **15 AUG**

Book Week Dress-Up Day **28 AUG**

SAT	**15** AUG	• College Musical
MON	**17** AUG	• Science Week Begins
MON	**24** AUG	• Book Week Begins • Year 12 Assessment-Free Week
TUE	**25** AUG	• Year 12 AST Breakfast • AST Sessions 1 & 2
WED	**26** AUG	• AST Session 3
FRI	**28** AUG	• Book Week Dress-Up Day

What's Coming Up

MacKillop Day Mass and Feast Celebrations **11 SEP**

Floriade Performances **16-18 SEP**

MON	**31** AUG	• Staff Spirituality Day (Pupil-Free Day)
THU	**03** SEP	• Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod - Choirs
FRI	**04** SEP	• Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod - Bands & Orchestras
FRI	**11** SEP	• MacKillop Day Mass and Feast Celebrations
WED	**16** SEP	• Floriade Performances
THU	**17** SEP	• Floriade Performances

MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

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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