MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

Newsletter.

Volume Twelve

16 October 2026

Principal's Letter.

Principal's Prayer

Loving God,

As we begin this new term, may we be attentive to those around us, courageous in seeking what is right, and grateful for the gifts each person brings to our community. Guide us to use this term well, growing not only in knowledge, but in kindness, wisdom and faith. Inspired by the example of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, may we never see a need without doing something about it.

Amen.

Dear Parents/Carers, Staff and Students,

Welcome to Term 4. I hope the holiday break provided our students and families with an opportunity to pause, recharge and enjoy some time together. As we begin the final term of the year, there is much to look forward to across our College community.

It was lovely to welcome families to the St Peter's Campus yesterday for Parent-Teacher Interviews. We place great value on the partnership between families and the College, and these conversations provide an important opportunity to celebrate student learning, acknowledge progress and consider areas for continued growth. Our next Parent-Teacher Interview evening is scheduled for next Tuesday 20 October at the St Peter's Campus.

Inspire Art Exhibition

Inspire is a celebration of creativity at MacKillop. With a longstanding history at the College, the exhibition gives students the opportunity to share their artistic voice and showcase their skills, imagination and mastery. From emerging artists to some highly talented staff, Inspire is a wonderful opportunity for our community to create, participate and celebrate art together. Families are warmly invited to the St Peter's Campus next Monday evening, 19 October for the opening of the 2026 Inspire exhibition.

Our New Organisational Identity – CACGEL

As previously communicated, significant system change has taken place over the past 18 months. As of 21 August, we came together under one identity as Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Education Limited (CACGEL). CACGEL represents us as one Catholic education system, bringing together our Schools, Early Learning Centres, School Aged Care Services and the Archdiocesan Schools Office in service of communities across the Archdiocese. For St Mary MacKillop College, this renewed identity reinforces our shared commitment to Catholic education, formation, excellence and service.

Principal's Letter.

France and Belgium Tour

Our students and staff have recently enjoyed an outstanding learning and cultural experience through the France and Belgium Tour. Thank you to Marie Lancaster, Rachael Nugent, Bryce Svensson, Nathan Wood and Paul Durham for generously accompanying and supervising our 30 students. Opportunities such as these enrich learning well beyond the classroom and are only possible through the commitment of our staff and the support of families.

A student reflection and some photos have been included elsewhere in this newsletter.

Celebrating Excellence

During the break, Sophie O'Donnell was recognised as one of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) 2026 National Award winners, receiving the ACEL Keith Tronc Award for Outstanding Teacher Leadership. This prestigious award recognises a teacher in their first five years of teaching who has demonstrated outstanding classroom practice and, through their leadership, made a significant difference to colleagues and the lives of students. I congratulate Sophie on this well-deserved recognition of her professionalism and impact as an educator. Sophie was formally acknowledged at the ACEL National Awards Ceremony held during the National Conference in Perth from 30 September to 2 October 2026.

Looking Ahead to 2027

This term we are also developing our 2027 Annual Improvement Plan. Our priorities will be informed by College data and aligned with the CACGEL Apostolic Plan Bold Goals, with continued attention to literacy and numeracy growth. While our NAPLAN results demonstrate strong achievement across most domains, writing will be a particular focus for improvement in 2027. Importantly, NAPLAN is only one measure of student growth, and our planning will draw on a broader range of College data and priorities as we continue to strengthen learning outcomes for every student.

I look forward to a positive and rewarding final term as we continue to encourage one another and create the conditions in which every young person can flourish. Please keep our senior students in your thoughts and prayers as they prepare for upcoming exams.

With respect and encouragement to you.

Jacqueline Heffernan
Principal

Grounded in Faith
Growing in Service

What's Been Happening

Term 4 begins

Students commenced Term 4 on Tuesday 13 October, returning to school refreshed, enthusiastic and ready to finish the 2026 academic year strongly.

We wish everyone the very best for a successful and rewarding term ahead.

Student Achievements

Josh Prstec (Year 11) was part of the NSW Athletics Officials team officiating at the All Schools Track and Field Championships at Sydney Olympic Park.

Chloe Prstec (Year 9) has been selected on the ACT track and field team to compete in the 800m at the National Track and Field Championships in Perth in December.

Mackenzie Holdway (Year 9) will represent the ACT at the National School Sports Touch Football Championships.

Zara McCann (Year 8) has been selected to represent the ACT in the upcoming Bigham Cup for gymnastics.

In the last edition of the newsletter, we mentioned some students who were headed to the Oztag World Cup, which is currently being held in Coffs Harbour. Sam Whyte and Eddie Lester (both Year 10) are also competing at the World Cup. Yesterday, Eddie was featured in an article by The Canberra Times.

Status Awards

Congratulations to the following students who have been presented with Bronze Status Awards at the Padua Campus Assembly:

Zoe Jacobson (7A1), Alisha Dring (7A1), Patrick Thomas (7A3), Harshaan Randhawa (7A3), Grace McLachlan (7A4), Lucas Ramirez de Arellano (7F2), Stephanie Machin (7W2), and Laura Green (7W3).

What's Been Happening

The France and Belgium Tour

Bonjour! Over 18 unforgettable days, students and staff travelled through France and Belgium, exploring beautiful cities, experiencing French culture, trying new foods, practising their French, and making memories that will last a lifetime. From the bright lights of Paris to the moving battlefields of the Western Front, the 2026 France and Belgium Tour was about so much more than sightseeing. It was about friendship, history, independence and saying *oui* to every opportunity.

Our adventure began in Paris, where we explored the Latin Quarter, visited Notre-Dame and discovered the city's stunning architecture. We wandered through the Opera District and climbed the many stairs to Sacré-Cœur for amazing views over Paris. We also admired the Arc de Triomphe, cruised along the Seine river and climbed the Eiffel Tower at night. One of the biggest highlights was the Palace of Versailles where we got to take in the history that once took place there. And, of course, no trip to France would be complete without Disneyland Paris!

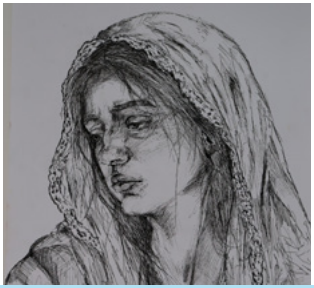
A very special part of the trip was our time in Le Havre with our host students and families. We got to attend classes, share meals with our host families and experience everyday French life. We visited the breathtaking cliffs and natural arches of Étretat, explored towns including Honfleur, Deauville and Mont-Saint-Michel, and enjoyed activities such as laser tag, bike riding, horse riding and trips to the beach.

The tour also took us to some of the most important sites of World War I and World War II. We visited the Flanders Fields Museum, Hill 62, the Wellington Quarry, Fromelles, Becourt Cemetery and the Franco-Australian Museum in Villers-Bretonneux. At the Menin Gate Last Post Ceremony, some students laid wreaths on behalf of MacKillop, representing our school with pride.

The trip was about so much more than the places we visited; it was about the friendships we made along the way. From trying new foods and exploring new places, to laughing through long bus rides and practising our French, sharing these experiences brought us closer together. A huge *merci beaucoup* to Mr Johnson and Mrs Peck for organising the tour, and to Mr Wood, Mr Durham, Mr Svensson, Mrs Nugent and Mrs Lancaster for everything they did for us. To anyone thinking about going on a future France and Belgium tour: take the opportunity. It is a once in a lifetime experience to see the world, learn outside the classroom, challenge yourself and create memories you will treasure for years to come!

Neve Senior & Eula Pooley • Year 10

What's Been Happening



INSPIRE Art Competition Winners

Thank you to all our particpants in this year's Inspire Art Competition. The winners are:

Overall Winner:	Milo Nilsen (Year 12)
Drawing:	Hannah Claudianos (Year 11)
Digital:	Ellie Gasparovski (Year 9)
Photography:	Matthew Hoskinson (Year 11)
Sculpture/Mixed Media:	Willow Kildey (Year 11)
Painting:	Emily Hartcher (Year 11)

The following students also received Highly Commended for their artworks: Audrey Eldridge, Vivienne Katindoy, Madeleine Klomp, Millie Kook (Year 7); Emily Dwyer, Nataleigh Howell (Year 8); Ellie Gasparovski (Year 9); Isaac Brown, Maggie Kane, Remi Sidney, Lucille Sparks (Year 10); Lara Bryan, Zarrie Faustino, Sienna Radulovich, Ripudaman Singh (Year 11); Sam Bailie, Katya Mangos, Milo Nilsen, Elise Warner (Year 12).

The opening of the Inspire Exhibition will be held on Monday 19 October in the Phoenix Gallery at the St Peter's Campus from 5pm.

The People's Choice Winner will be announced at the exhibition opening on Monday evening.

Kelli Campbell • Visual Arts Coordinator (Acting)

ACT Training Awards

Graduates of the College had a successful evening at the 2026 ACT Training Awards in September.

Nathan Snow (Class of 2017) was named the ACT Trainee of the Year for his work in Early Childhood Education, while Elizabeth Bond (Class of 2025) was the runner up in the same category.

Some past students also presented awards on the evening, for categories they had won in 2025.

Information & Notices

Year 10 Examinations

Each semester Year 10 students sit whole-cohort examinations in English, Mathematics and Science in the Gym. The dates for these examinations are in the College Community Calendar:

- Monday 9 November - Periods 1 and 2 - English
- Tuesday 10 November - Periods 1 and 2 - Science
- Wednesday 11 November - Periods 1 and 2 - Mathematics

A part of this examination process is preparing students for the expectations of Senior Studies. Therefore, this semester we are bringing in examination attendance guidelines more consistent with expectations in Years 11 and 12. If a student is absent from one of these examinations due to illness, they must provide medical documentation (from a doctor, pharmacy or telehealth) to substantiate their absence and avoid a penalty.

Tristan Burg • Assistant Principal, Academic Care

Host Families Required

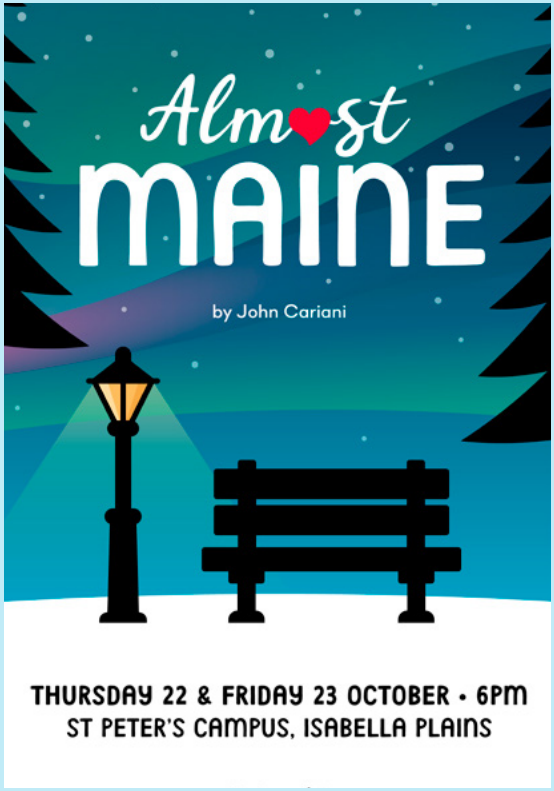
We require 20 families to host a French student from 19 February – 3 March 2027. Hosting an international student is a rewarding opportunity to share your family, culture, and everyday life while creating lifelong friendships. It offers students a supportive home away from home and gives host families a unique chance to learn about another culture, broaden their perspectives, and make a meaningful difference in a young person's overseas experience. Many host families find the experience enriching, enjoyable, and memorable for everyone involved.

Email Ms Peck if you are interested in hosting:
claire.peck@mackillop.act.edu.au

Claire Peck • International Programs Officer

College Production

The College Production is on NEXT WEEK! Tickets are available on CompassTix for just $5



Information & Notices

International Study Tours 2027

Apply by 23 October

Applications are now open for the College's exciting 2027 International Study Tours, including the Japan Study Tour (4-17 April 2027*) and the Greece & Italy Study Tour (18 September-7 October 2027*).

These immersive overseas experiences provide students with unique opportunities to deepen their understanding of history, language and culture through authentic travel experiences, interaction with local communities, and visits to significant historical and cultural sites.

Applications are open to students in Years 9-12 in 2027, with priority given to students studying relevant language and history courses as well as those who have previously hosted an exchange student. Interested students can find full program details and application forms on the **Student Info Canvas** page or on our College website. Applications close on **Friday 23 October**, and late applications will not be accepted.

*Dates subject to change.

Claire Peck • International Programs Officer

Transport of NSW

Apply for a school travel pass or School Opal card! School travel applications for 2027 are now open. For further information please visit their website.

Year 7 Immunisations

A reminder that Year 7 immunisations will take place next week, between Wednesday 21 October and Friday 23 October. Please ensure that the completed immunisation consent cards, which were distributed to students last term, are returned as soon as possible. If you have any questions or need a replacement card, please contact the school office.

Personalised Learning Plan consultation

Throughout the year, the College will formally write to parents and carers of students with Personalised Learning Plans to offer periods of consultation. This occurs during both Semester 1 and Semester 2. We know that many families are in regular communication with the Inclusive Education Faculty, and families do not need to wait until these consultation periods to contact the Faculty should there be any queries or to provide updated documentation.

Parents/carers and students can access all current Personalised Learning Plans via the Compass Parent Portal, under Academic Reports. Parents/carers and students are invited to review their learning plans and the adjustments that are currently in place and to provide feedback should they wish to.

Consultation opportunities will be available during Weeks 13–14 of Term 4 for families who would like to discuss their child's plan in more detail. A notification will be shared on Compass in Week 12 to enable families to book a consultation session. However, if you have feedback or updated documentation, please contact the Inclusive Education Coordinator for your child's campus:

Inclusive Education Coordinators

Padua Campus:	Ms Nicole Handford – nicole.handford@mackillop.act.edu.au
	Mrs Kerry-Anne Kwong - kerry-anne.kwong@mackillop.act.edu.au
St Peter's Campus:	Mrs Jen Croker - jen.croker@mackillop.act.edu.au
	Mrs Kerry-Anne Kwong - kerry-anne.kwong@mackillop.act.edu.au

Erin White • Assistant Principal, Teaching & Learning

Information & Notices

2027 SRC Elections

During the coming weeks, elections will take place for House Captains and SRC members from the current Year 7, 8, 9, and 11 cohorts. For interested students on the Padua Campus, nomination forms are now available on request from Pastoral Care Coordinators.

Many of our students have great leadership capacity and attributes to lead in both formal positions of leadership and informally. Often students may not consider nominating for the College SRC unless they are individually encouraged to do so. Having a conversation with your child about seeking a formal leadership role may prompt them in pursuing the opportunity of obtaining an SRC position within the College.

Dates for the closing of nominations and elections are listed below:

College House Captains (Current Year 11s)
- One female and one male from each of the four Houses
- Applications have closed
- Election: Thursday 29 October

Padua Campus Captains (Current Year 8s)
- One female and one male from each of the four Houses
- Applications close Wednesday 28 October
- Election: Wednesday 4 November

College House Captains (Current Year 8s)
- One female and one male from each of the four Houses
- Applications close Wednesday 28 October
- Election: Wednesday 18 November

SRC Positions (Current Year 7s and 9s)
- One student from each House in Year 8
- One student from each House in Year 10
- Applications close Friday 30 October
- Election: Wednesday 18 November

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

The Learning Commons: Supporting Students

Both campuses offer ongoing support to students in the lead up to the end of year exams.

Padua Campus:
Students at the Padua Campus are encouraged to make the most of the Learning Commons after-school support programs. Homework Club operates Monday to Thursday until 4:30 pm, with specialist Mathematics teachers available on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Students may also organise one-on-one tutorial sessions with their subject teachers or Coordinators at a mutually convenient time. These support options are an excellent strategy for consolidating learning and preparing for assessments.

Senior Campus: Exam preparation support
Over the coming weeks students are able to access 'Power Up' workshops to support exam preparation. The following sessions are coming up:

- Setting up an Exam study Schedule (Week 12)
- How to revise effectively – strategies for different subject areas and how to use AI as a study partner (Week 13)
- Essay Writing – how to structure an essay, write a strong thesis and analyse effectively (Weeks 14 & 15)

Small group/individual support will be available following each session in the Learning Commons teaching space. Staff can also run sessions at other times 'on demand' – students welcome to come and chat.

Details will be available in Student Messages each week for Power Up workshops.

Sarah Kearns & Amanda Knott
Learning Commons Coordinators

Information & Notices

CACGEL Approach to Bullying Behaviour

As part of CACGEL's preparation for the implementation of the new anti-bullying requirements in Term 1, 2027, they have developed a parent communication series for schools to share with families throughout this term:

Why is our approach changing?
This is the first in a series explaining how our schools are preparing for new anti-bullying requirements in Term 1, 2027.

Every student deserves to feel safe and included at school. A national review found that students and families can have different experiences of how schools recognise and respond to bullying behaviour. The national and NSW anti-bullying frameworks aim to make school responses clearer and more consistent.

Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Education Limited (CACGEL) is strengthening its approach across our schools. CACGEL will publish the Anti-Bullying Policy at the beginning of 2027, while each school will set out its procedures in an Anti-Bullying Statement of Practice.

Families who would like more details can read the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework.

What will change for families?
Schools will follow the CACGEL Anti-Bullying Policy. Each school will also publish its own Anti-Bullying Statement of Practice on its website. This will explain the school's procedures, including how to report a concern.

Schools will use a process to assess concerns, respond to safety needs, record actions and follow up. When bullying behaviour is reported or observed, schools are expected to make reasonable efforts to begin a response within two school days.

Please be mindful that this does not mean every review will be completed in that time. Some concerns require further conversations and careful consideration of the information available.

Next time, we'll explain how schools distinguish bullying behaviour from other harmful behaviour.

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

SchoolTV

Dealing with disappointment

Disappointment is a natural part of life and an important part of growing up. Whether it comes from unmet expectations, setbacks, or missed opportunities, learning how to navigate disappointment helps young people build resilience, perspective, and emotional strength. Rather than shielding our children from disappointment, we can support them in developing healthy ways to understand and respond to these challenges.

In this edition, we explore practical strategies to help young people manage disappointment, including acknowledging emotions, keeping situations in perspective, choosing positive responses, and using tools such as journalling to process their feelings. These skills not only help them cope with setbacks today but also prepare them for the challenges and opportunities of adulthood.

VIEW THIS WEEK'S FEATURE

Information & Notices

Enrolments & Withdrawals

If families have made alternate arrangements and are withdrawing students from MacKillop at the end of 2026, please notify us via email enrolments@mackillop.act.edu.au at your earliest convenience. We typically require at least two weeks' notice but notifying us as soon as possible will assist with our planning and staffing for 2027. Notification is required in writing via the **Student Leaver Form.**

Families wishing to make amendments to their personal details are required to email us in the first instance.

- Changes to addresses, legal names or additional phone numbers must be made in writing.
- For mobile phone and email updates, each guardian can update this directly via the parent portal Compass.

Jo Lubinski & Rebecca McKenzie • Enrolments

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 summer uniform requirements.

Thank you for the recent uniform donations. These items will be rehomed and saved from landfill.

Judy • SHUS Manager

Community Notices

OLYMPIA JUDO CLUB

Come along to a free Come and Try Evening on Wednesday 28 October, at the Padua Campus of MacKillop - Juniors at 4:30pm, Seniors at 5:30pm. Register by Monday 26 October to take part!

Information: Website | Flyer

MacKillop Mob

We have a lot of opportunities for the MacKillop Mob this term both here and outside of the College.

All permission forms for activities will be on Compass and will be added throughout the term as they are approved.

In addition to the table below, on the MacKillop Mob canvas page are links to the Yawarj Mara Youth Group activities for young men aged 10-18 at Yerrabi for the term and information for Year 10 and 11 students who are interested in a school-based traineeship with Indigenous Allied Health Australia in 2027.

Term 4 MacKillop Mob activities:

Didgeridoo Lessons (St Peter's Boys)
• Thursday 15 October, 12:00 – 1:00pm
• Friday 23 October, 9:30 – 10:30am
• Monday 26 October, 12:00 – 1:00pm

Weaving and Art (St Peter's Girls)
• Thursday 29 October, 11:45am – 1:15pm

Art (Padua All)
• Friday 20 November, 11:45am – 12:45pm

Tidbinbilla trip for students Years 10-12*
• Wednesday 25 November, 8:30am – 3:00pm

*Please note Senior students who would like to return to the College for the Tidbinbilla excursion are encouraged to do so. This is an initiative organised by two Catholic Education dioceses, and we have been invited to represent our diocese.

Mandaang Guwu (Thank you in Wiradjuri language)

Jeremy Margosis
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Contact Teacher

What's Coming Up

Mindygari House Charity Week **26 OCT**

Inspire Exhibition Opening **19 OCT**

MON	**19** OCT	• PAT Reading (Years 7-10) • Inspire Exhibition Opening
TUE	**20** OCT	• PAT Mathematics (Years 7-10) • AST Second Sitting • Parent-Teacher Interviews
WED	**21** OCT	• AST Second Sitting • Year 7 Immunisations
THU	**22** OCT	• Year 7 Immunisations • PAT Catch-Up (Years 7-10) • College Production
FRI	**23** OCT	• Year 7 Immunisations • College Production
MON	**26** OCT	• Mindygari House Charity Week

What's Coming Up

Senior Hospitality Parent Dinner **28 OCT**

Year 9 Outdoor Ed Camp **28 OCT**

WED	**28** OCT	• Year 9 Outdoor Ed Camp • Senior House Captain Elections • Senior Hospitality Parent Dinner
THU	**29** OCT	• Year 9 Outdoor Ed Camp
FRI	**30** OCT	• Year 9 Outdoor Ed Camp
WED	**04** NOV	• Campus Captain Elections (Padua) • Long Tan Assembly (St Peter's)
MON	**09** NOV	• Year 10 Exams • ISART Exhibition Opening • Year 12 Drama Performances
TUE	**10** NOV	• Year 10 Exams • Senior Music Performances • Stage Performance Production

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