

College

Newsletter



MacKillop

St Mary MacKillop College Canberra



Volume *Two*

24 February 2023

Coming

Up

MON 2 7 F E B

- School Photos (Padua)

TUE 2 8 F E B

- Moderation Day (Pupil-Free Day)
- Year 11 AST Trials
- Senior Student Leadership Day

WED 0 1 M A R

- Year 7 Community Day

THU 0 2 M A R

- School Photos (St Peter's)

FRI 0 3 M A R

- Opening Mass

TUE 0 7 M A R

- School Photo Catch-Up Day

THU 0 9 M A R

- College Athletics Carnival

MON 1 3 M A R

- Canberra Day Public Holiday

WED 1 5 M A R

- NAPLAN begins



Principal's Letter

Principal's Prayer

Lord, may we reflect and grow during this time of Lent. Amen.



Dear parents/carers, teachers and students,

Ash Wednesday

Thank you to Assistant Principal for Faith, Mission and RE Clare Kinnane for her leadership and organisation of prayers, readings and the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday this week. Thank you also to our readers and to those who assisted with the distribution. This is always an event at MacKillop marked by dignity and community reflection. In a busy and secular world, the opportunity for a Catholic community that welcomes everyone to pause and reflect on how we might grow is welcomed.

Project Compassion 2023

Project Compassion is an initiative of Caritas Australia, an almsgiving branch of Catholic Social Services. 97% of all funds raised go to the support and promotion of dignity through material relief of those less advantaged than ourselves.

This is a very worthwhile initiative. Project Compassion will be run by Pastoral Care classes throughout Lent, and is one of the few charity programs at MacKillop which is not designed to support local need in our Canberra community.

I do understand these are challenging times for many of us within our own MacKillop community, and it is not for me to tell you how to spend your money. Were you able to find funds to donate to a worthy charity, this is certainly it.

Year 11 Information Night Cooma 2023

Thank you to Colby Cruwys, Paul Durham, Lachlan McNicol, Jane Cunneen and Maria O'Donnell who joined me in Cooma with families from the Monaro district who access MacKillop for Years 11 and 12. Our Cooma appearances are valuable for imparting information and continuing to build upon this important relationship. We'll be down again in May.

College Swimming Carnival 2023

Our last swimming carnival was in 2020. COVID, lightning and thunder have prevented us holding one since then. A huge amount of work goes into the preparation of this very popular event in the College calendar. 2000 students and over 200 staff present at the Dickson Aquatic Centre is an event by any measure. This year was a fabulous day with Meup Meup finishing as worthy winners of the Championship Cup and Ngadyung of the Spirit Cup. Thank you to Romina Schofield for her expert organisation and to the staff and student leaders who made the event safe and fun.

A Note of Interest

Last week, MacKillop hosted Courage to Care, an organisation devoted to the fight against racism and bigotry. Ana, a Holocaust survivor, who survived the horrors of Belsen, bore magnificent witness to a group of students. Ana is one of few remaining survivors of the Holocaust and all of us were privileged to hear her story and admire her courage.

Yours sincerely in St Mary MacKillop and written on Ngunnawal land,

Mr Michael Lee
College Principal





College Swimming Carnival

Meup Meup and Ngadyung claimed the honours at this year's Swimming Carnival, taking out the Championship Trophy and Spirit Cup respectively at the Dickson Aquatic Centre on Thursday 23 February.

With the past few years impacted by COVID restrictions and thunderstorms, this was MacKillop's first Swimming Carnival since 2020. Interestingly, this event was the first time the College's Padua Campus students had ever experienced a MacKillop Swimming Carnival.

Meup Meup's performance in the pool enabled them to retain the Championship Trophy, while the previous winners of the Spirit Cup, Mindygari, were narrowly defeated by Ngadyung, who brought up their sixth Spirit Cup in the past decade.

The energetic and enthusiastic showing in the pool, in the stands, at Caritas Corner, and in the novelty events made for an enjoyable day for all. Students are to be congratulated for their teamwork, spirit, high levels of participation, and their displays of athleticism. Thank you to the staff – especially the new Sports Facilitator, Mrs Romina Schofield – who played a crucial role in making the day a great success.





Honours Assembly

The annual St Mary MacKillop College Honours Assembly was held on Tuesday 21 February at the St Peter's Campus. The assembly, which is held every February, acknowledges the achievements of MacKillop's senior students from the previous year.

The Assembly commenced with an address from our Principal and the presentation of the 2022 College Dux, Georgia Aldred. Since graduating from MacKillop, Georgia has commenced a Bachelor of International Security at the Australian National University.

This was followed by the presentation of a range of academic, community, and leadership certificates, as well as the Year 11 2022 Perpetual Awards.

The College congratulates all recipients on their achievements in 2022! Good luck for 2023!





St Mary MacKillop

"Remember who your teachers were; from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." For many years countless young people throughout Australia have been blessed with teachers who were inspired by the courageous and saintly example of zeal, perseverance and prayer of Mother Mary MacKillop. She dedicated herself as a young woman to the education of the poor in the difficult and demanding terrain of rural Australia... She attended to the needs of each young person entrusted to her, without regard for station or wealth, providing both intellectual and spiritual formation."

- Homily of His Holiness Pope Benedict, on the occasion of the Canonisation of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, 17 October 2010.

Pope Benedict's reflection on the life of St Mary MacKillop, the teacher, is a lens through which we can look at what happens every day in the classrooms at our school. Through their study of the Catholic faith in Religion classes, every student at MacKillop is being equipped with a religious voice through which they can view the world. In her time as a teacher St Mary MacKillop was able to pass on to a younger generation both faith and wisdom. Our Religion curriculum and Religious Education teachers are striving to deliver this same faith and wisdom to our students in a way that is both meaningful and relevant for them.

To be able to do this, students from Year 7-12 are challenged to embrace what it means to be a young person of faith and a young person with faith. These two are both distinctly different and yet very complimentary. There is the classroom teaching and learning of Religion and there is also the Religious Life and Catholic and Christian ethos of our school community. Students are exposed to the Catholic faith through both their religion classes as well as whole school events such as Mass, the Rosary, prayer and other liturgical observations such as Ash Wednesday and the feast of the Assumption.

Our students are keen fundraisers when it comes to supporting charities throughout the year. These events provide students with the opportunity to have a deep understanding of Catholic Social Teachings through the message that is promoted from supporting these charities. In order to be able to engage with both the dimensions of teaching students Religion and also teaching them to be religious we at MacKillop are hoping to move into the space where students are going to be able to engage in these dimensions through both their actions and understanding.

If as a parent/carer within our MacKillop community, you are involved in a group, organisation or charity where our students can get involved could you please get in touch: clare.kinnane@mackillop.act.edu.au

Thankful for 25 years of MacKillop education on Ngunnawal land.

"Gee and be grateful" - Mary MacKillop, 1884

Clare Kinnane • Assistant Principal for Faith, Mission and RE

The Learning Commons

At St Mary MacKillop College we have two Learning Commons that are the physical and virtual learning hubs of the College community. The Learning Commons teachers aim to drive future-oriented learning and teaching experiences across both campuses. The programs and activities are designed as catalysts for intellectual engagement and encourage students to experiment, be creative and expand their learning capacity.

The Learning Commons value information and media literacy, critical thinking, and a reading culture in line with the Catholic Education of Canberra Goulburn goal that 'every student is a competent reader'. We are committed to providing a safe and welcoming space for diversity and self-expression.

At The Padua Campus The Learning Commons:

- provides fortnightly sessions for targeted reading, inquiry research and critical thinking skills, referencing and literacy building
- incorporates a student-centred approach with fun events, programs and clubs
- offers supervised Homework Club, Monday to Thursday, with Maths Club Tuesday and Thursday
- opens during term time from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Thursday, and 8.30am to 3.30pm on Friday

Dr Curtis Watson & Amanda Knott • Learning Commons Coordinators



At The St Peter's Campus The Learning Commons:

- provides 'Just In Time' coaching for students, assisting with scaffolding assessments, and motivation with task completion
- offers tutorials on referencing, source analysis and academic writing
- organises events and workshops that encourage a reading culture, critical thinking and lifelong learning
- adopts a student-centred approach in which students are encouraged to attend during study periods
- offers sessions with specialist teachers and after-school subject-specific tutorials
- opens during term time from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Thursday, and 8.30am to 3.30pm on Friday

Courage to Care Foundation



On Thursday 16 February various Year 10, 11 and 12 students had the privilege to be given a presentation from the Courage to Care Foundation and Ana, a Holocaust survivor. The presentation began with a discussion about the difference between an upstander and a bystander, and everyone was encouraged to think about situations in which they had been either. After that, we were all given a brief history lesson about the Holocaust and the events that led up to it. Then we were told stories about people who risked their lives to save children from the Holocaust. Ana then told us the story of her and her family's experience and how they survived. Given all she had suffered she was surprisingly upbeat and an amazing public speaker. The presentation was heartbreaking but also gave us a lesson in gratitude and, most importantly, taught us to be upstanders rather than bystanders to intolerance and injustice. Overall, it was a rare and eye-opening experience, and I'm sure everyone walked away with a new view on life and to strive to be upstanders.

Abbey Robb • Year 12

To handwrite or to type?

For many of our students, putting fingertips to the laptop keyboard is a preference when it comes to participating in classwork, taking notes and preparing for assessment. However, handwriting has considerable benefits for students and it is worth looking at the research to understand the value of putting pen to paper, and in considering a balance between handwriting and typing in the classroom. In the Australian Curriculum, literacy skills reflect digital, written and spoken skillsets, and it's important to consider how these skills are developed to provide our students with the most successful learning path.

We know that some students pride themselves on being able to type more words than they can handwrite in the same amount of time, and while the skill of touch-typing may not be as strong for all students, the seeming ease of the keyboard to help produce a document is appealing to our students. They can receive instant feedback on spelling and grammar and even use automated software to help them to take notes and to create texts. While this is not necessarily a negative aspect, and we do ask our students to utilise technology, we need to be mindful of the benefits that handwriting provides for long-term skill development.

As we handwrite, our hand connects to the word, our eyes track the word and shares information with the language processing area of our brain. In this sense there is a unique relationship between the hand and the brain when it comes to composing thoughts and ideas. Therefore, the multisensory activity of handwriting ideas and class notes provides learning benefits that typing on a keyboard cannot.

Overwhelmingly, research tells us that handwriting is an essential skill to develop in all of our students because it engages the brain in learning. There is also a significant impact on reading, writing, creativity and critical thinking that is developed through students handwriting their class notes.



Handwriting is a skill that has been shown to:

- Increase brain activation in learning – turn brain power on
- Help people remember information and recall it later
- Impact performance across all academic subjects
- Provide a foundation for higher-order skills
- Contribute directly to writing fluency
- Help to keep our mind active, even as adults
- Reduce cognitive load and enable students to put more brain power towards critical thinking and organising thoughts

For most students, striking a balance between when to put pen to paper (even stylus to touchpad!), or fingertips to keyboard is therefore important to consider. Perhaps understanding the genuine benefit to learning rather than simply because the teacher asked them to handwrite, may make handwriting a more meaningful exercise for students in the classroom.

Erin White and Lyndall Baker • English Coordinators

Maths Club

Maths Club on the Padua Campus for Years 7, 8 and 9 students runs most Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:20 – 4:20pm (please see schedule below).

Term 1

Week 5	Thursday 2 March
Week 7	Tuesday 14 March
Week 7	Thursday 16 March
Week 8	Tuesday 21 March
Week 8	Thursday 23 March
Week 9	Tuesday 28 March
Week 9	Thursday 30 March

Term 2

Week 12	Tuesday 2 May
Week 12	Thursday 4 May
Week 13	Tuesday 9 May
Week 14	Tuesday 16 May
Week 14	Thursday 18 May
Week 15	Tuesday 23 May
Week 15	Thursday 25 May
Week 16	Tuesday 30 May
Week 16	Thursday 1 June
Week 17	Tuesday 6 June
Week 17	Thursday 8 June
Week 18	Tuesday 13 June
Week 18	Tuesday 15 June

There is one maths teacher who is always rostered on to assist students with mathematics or simply for students to attend to complete class work and homework. Please be aware this is not a one-on-one tutoring program as often up to 30 or more students will attend. Students attend by signing in at the Learning Commons.

Mrs Keppel • Padua Mathematics Coordinator

Year 10 CSYMA

St Peter's Campus Year 6 Retreat Day: Journey with Jesus

On Tuesday 7 February, the St Peter's Campus hosted the Year 6 cohort from Holy Family Primary School for a leadership and CSYMA youth ministry retreat. Our senior youth ministry students supported by presenting skits centered around God's Love, assisting in ice breakers, and being a friendly helpful face for our visitors. Well done to all who were able to assist on the day. I spoke with many Year 6 students who expressed their excitement at the prospect of joining our College community in Year 7 next year.

Miss Richardson • Year 10 CSYMA teacher

Get to know the SRC

This year, the SRC at the St Peter's Campus is focusing on reaching new milestones, and breaking all records set in the past. We would like to raise more money, get more engagement, and create a more diverse and accepting community. We made a pledge when we received our badges in Week 2 and we stand by what we agreed to. We will lead the school with faith and courage, and will follow in the footsteps of St Mary MacKillop. It is the greatest honour to be a part of the SRC in our jubilee year.

The Swimming Carnival took place yesterday and required a lot of planning and preparation, and I would like to thank all the staff involved for the hard work they put in to ensure the carnival was an enjoyable day. We are now looking forward to the Athletics Carnival and all the other opportunities coming up this year!

We are here to make a real difference, and to make the most out of this exciting jubilee year. To keep up to date with SRC activities you can follow @mackillop_src on Instagram. There are also some introductions so that you can meet the Year 12 members of the SRC.

Toby Barber • Communications & Connections Captain

Year 11 Student Representative Council

At the beginning of this year, elections for the Year 11 SRC took place. Congratulations to the students elected to represent their Houses:

Mindygari: Mia Vecera

Gurabang: Daniel Perin

Meup Meup: Avari Peterson

Ngadyung: Quinn De Waard

These students joined other SRC members in being inducted into their positions of leadership at the opening assemblies on each campus.

Elections for Year 7 representatives will take place at the end of Term 1.

Change of Date

The Year 10 ACT High School Immunisation Program date has changed to Term 4 following the recent announcement by Canberra Health Services. **The new dates are 20 and 21 November 2023.**

College Photos

College photos will be taken on **Monday 27 February** for the **Padua Campus**, and **Thursday 2 March** for the **St Peter's Campus**

Students have been provided a 'photo envelope' which contains an individual 'shoot key' for ordering photos online. Photo envelopes should not be returned to the College, but retained by parents/carers so that reference can be made to the 'shoot key' when ordering photos online.

Boys will be required to wear the College tie in their photograph and have been asked to bring this with them to school on Monday. For students in Year 7, or others who are new to the College, who may not yet have their own tie, one will be provided for the photograph.

Tips for Success and Wellbeing in Year 11 and 12

Year 11 Study Day was a great opportunity to remind students of the important foundations for good mental health and well-being throughout their Senior Studies. Students were encouraged to establish both an Academic Plan alongside a Well-being Plan for year 11 and 12. Discussion focused on the importance of routine, good nutrition, quality sleep and consistent exercise in helping set the foundations for positive well-being.

The direct link between "food and mood" and the key principles for balanced nutrition were highlighted, encouraging all students to eat breakfast and bring food to school to nourish their bodies and minds. The benefits of a consistent bedtime routine and 8-10 hours of sleep for the adolescent brain was a hotly debated topic. It was encouraging to hear students recognise the beneficial link between quality sleep and their capacity to manage stress, strong emotions and to assist in learning, storing and recalling new information.

The role of regular exercise in helping to build resilience, process strong emotions, stress and natural pressures of assessment was also covered. Finally, students were encouraged to consider balance in their daily schedule, ensuring time for themselves, connecting with friends and family and prioritising a balance of study and employment.

Through our Pastoral Care and Counselling program, students will continue to be supported to recognise the normal signs of pressure and stress and to manage these in a healthy and effective manner. Further information and resources will be available via the Wellbeing Page on Canvas. If your child requires additional support, please feel free to reach out to one of the Year Coordinators or make a direct referral for counselling support via email: counsellor@mackillop.act.edu.au. A copy of the presentation is on the Canvas Wellbeing site.

Lisa Seidel and Rachel Davidson • St Peter's Counsellors



Student Mentoring

Throughout each semester, students have an opportunity to participate in Student Mentoring lessons within their PC Class. This week students have taken time to set academic and personal goals for the coming semester/year. Students have also completed a Semester 1 Assessment Planner. This provides an overview of due dates for each assessment task. It assists students to organise their time and the attention they give to each task to ensure that all assessment is complete by the due date and to a high standard.

Parents can access this information in the Student Diary:

- 2023 Student Goal Setting – Page 24 & 25
- Semester 1 Assessment Planner – Pages 22 & 23

Uniform Expectations

Our College uniform is highly recognisable in the Canberra community and a symbol of our collective identity. Our teal check, navy, white and grey uniforms are easily identified by members of the Tuggeranong Valley community, so they know a MacKillop student when they see one. Every student is an ambassador for our College and there is an expectation that uniform will be worn in a responsible and respectful manner, to the highest standard of presentation.

Please familiarise yourselves with the uniform guidelines and support the College in its efforts to ensure the uniform is worn with pride and respect. [MacKillop Uniform](#)

Staff will be working closely with students and families to follow up on any uniform concerns to reinforce our belief that the uniform helps create a sense of belonging.

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

Boys' Uniform



Girls' Uniform





String Workshop

On Sunday 12 February, 25 students from both Padua and St Peter's took part in a String Workshop. Students had the opportunity to work with tutors on their specialised instruments and took part in group rehearsals, culminating in a final concert in the afternoon. The afternoon was a huge success! Students had a lot of fun working with tutors and each other, putting on a fantastic performance for parents and families. A big thank you to everyone involved, especially the tutors and Head of Music, Veronica Boulton. Well done also to the students!

MacKillop Choir

Love to sing? Want to sing with others? Want to be a more confident performer? Join the MacKillop Choir! MacKillop Choir is a new initiative starting in 2023. Singers will have the opportunity to sing in a mixed cohort, non-auditioned choir. The choir will be made up of singers from both Padua and St Peter's Campus. Anyone is welcome to join.

Rehearsals are Monday afternoons, 3:45-4:30pm on the St Peter's Campus, starting in Week 6. If you would like to join, [click here](#) or collect an Extra Curricular note outside the Music room on both campuses. For more information email: henry.south@mackillop.act.edu.au

Student Movement Passes

Reminder that student movement passes must be used for all instrumental lessons where you are leaving a timetabled class to attend instrumental lessons. These should be signed by the instrumental teacher and shown to the subject teacher before leaving and upon returning to class.

Henry South • Performing Arts

Music at MacKillop

Students can participate in our in-school instrumental tuition through the College. If you would like to take part or for further information, please speak with Ms Boulton or Mr South.

Instrumental tuition that is available:

Woodwind – Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone

Brass – Trumpet, Trombone, French Horn, Euphonium, Tuba

Percussion – Drum Kit and Orchestral Percussion

String – Violin, Viola, 'Cello, Double Bass, Guitar, Bass Guitar

Piano

Voice

Our Ensemble Program:

Mon	MacKillop Choir	St Peter's	3:45-4:30pm
	PCoPA	St Peter's	4:30-5:30pm
Wed	Guitar Ensemble	Padua - Music Room	8-8:45pm
	Senior Wind Ensemble	St Peter's - Music Room	3:45-5pm
	St Peter's String Ensemble	St Peter's - ARC Theatre	3:45-5pm
Thu	Junior Band	Padua - Ensemble Room	8:15-9am
	Junior Strings	Padua - Music Room	8:15-9am
	Musical	Padua - Theatre	3:45-5:30pm
Fri	Padua Concert Band	Padua - Ensemble Room	8-9am
	Padua String Ensemble	Padua - Music Room	8-9am

Veronica Boulton

Director of Music & Performance

MacKillop Mob

The support times for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for Semester 1 are:

Padua Campus

Year 7 - Tuesday A Period 3

Year 8 - Thursday A Period 1

Year 9 - Wednesday B Period 2

St Peter's Campus

Year 10 - Tuesday B Period 1

Year 10-12 - Before school Friday A and Tuesday B from 8:30am

Year 11-12 - During Study lines on:

Monday A Periods 1 and 2

Friday A Periods 1 and 2

Tuesday B Periods 1 and 2

Thursday B Period 2

Make sure you check the MacKillop Mob Canvas page for information about cultural events and opportunities.

Jeremy Margosis • Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Support

Drama Club



Come get your Drama on every Wednesday morning from 8:15am in the Theatre!

Everyone is welcome to come along and have fun playing Drama games and learning new skills.

Please see Mr Margosis in the Performing Arts Staffroom for a permission note.

See you there!

Jeremy Margosis • Performing Arts

Sport

Student Achievement

Emma Leonard (Year 11) has been selected to represent Australia in the U19 Women's Futsal Team at the Costa Blanca Futsal Cup in Spain in late June to early July.

In the holiday break Alyssa Brown (Year 11) toured Europe, especially Ireland, representing Australian in Gaelic Football.

Sam Whyte (Year 7) and Liam Dunn (Year 9) will be representing the ACT in Oztag in the NSW State Championship at the end of February.

Rhys Watson (Year 8) has been selected to compete in the National Baseball Tournament at the end of May.

Dakota Berry and Cody Owen (Year 9) made the National Championships in Downhill Mountain Biking.

This past weekend Meaghan Scott (Year 10) and Brodie Maguire (Year 12) won the U18s Girls State Cup Touch competition in Wagga.

Technology

Our Year 10 Automotive class is in need of some old lawn mowers. If you have an old lawn mower that you would like to donate, please call 62090164 or email: john.solari@mackillop.act.edu.au to arrange a drop off time.

Fees

Term 1 Fees were sent electronically to family email addresses on **7 February 2023**. Fees are due to be paid by 3 March 2023 unless paying by Direct Debit or other approved method.

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

Community News

The Network

The Healthy Schools Network ACT is a collaboration of over 20+ local Not-For-Profit organisations that actively promote health and wellbeing in ACT early childhood settings, primary schools and secondary schools. [Click here](#) to read more about the Network. It was developed here in Canberra for Canberra schools.

The Network priorities areas are:
Physical Activity, Food and Nutrition, Health Conditions, Mental Health Wellbeing, Health and Safety and Professional Learning.

BellaMonaro Women's Football Club

Bring a friend and come and try football in a female friendly environment partnered with the Brindabella Blues and Monaro Panthers and they are looking for girls aged 11 to 18.

Every Wednesday in February and March from 6-7:30pm at David Madew Oval, Jerrabomberra.

Contact: michael@bellamonaro.org or call: 0423 824 192
2023 registrations are now open: www.bellamonaro.org/

Point Hut Pond Parkrun

A free, weekly timed 5km walk, jog or run at 8am every Saturday.
Open to all ages and abilities.

For more information visit: parkrun.com.au/pointhutpond or email: pointhutpond@parkrun.com

Cooma Homework Club

Homework Club at CUC Snowy Monaro: Years 9-12

- Mondays and Wednesdays during term, starting 27 February
- Drop in any time from 3-5.30pm
- Students have supervised access to the Centre for quiet study or to relax after school
- Bring your own device if you can

University of Wollongong Future Me Program: Year 12

- Tuesday afternoons 4-5.30pm at CUC Cooma
- Students who complete the program are eligible for guaranteed early entry to UOW. Applications are now open and close 12 February. Application is just about eligibility but it is essential: [Click here](#) to access the application.



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](http://www.facebook.com/mackillop.act)



[www.twitter.com/
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[www.youtube.com/
stmarymackillop](http://www.youtube.com/stmarymackillop)



ISSUE 1 | TERM 1 | 2023

Starting the year right

Welcome to 2023. The holidays are over. School is back. And routines are recommencing. For many families this means:

- extra stress (some kids don't feel excited about heading to kindy/prep/reception or school),
- extra costs (let's face it, uniforms, shoes, and the rest of it all)
- extra challenges (ADHD, dyslexia, other needs, friendship issues, learning difficulties).

Of course, it's not all bad news. Some families are delighted. Holidays create stress because of babysitting challenges, costs for entertainment, and more.

And fortunately, there are tens of thousands of our kids that actually enjoy school and are glad to be back.

As it happens – so are we! Parenting Ideas has been providing helpful parenting advice to parents in early learning centres, primary schools, and high schools around Australia, New Zealand, and the world for over two decades! This year it's no different.

How can we help?

As we dive into 2023, we want to know how we can be most useful to you. Headed up by Dr Justin Coulson, co-host and parenting expert of Channel Nine's Parental Guidance and host of Australia's #1 parenting podcast, Dr Justin Coulson's Happy Families, Justin and a team of experts will be bringing you a range of articles designed to give you the best parenting advice available to help make your family happier.



If there's a major challenge you'd like help with, email us and let us know. Title your email "Parenting Ideas advice" and email schools@happyfamilies.com.au. We're here to help.

For the first Insights article of 2023, we're going to look at how we can get our routines on track at the outset and keep everyone focused on what matters most for making your family function.

Starting the year right

If you're like most parents, you really wanted to start things off well, but it's been a little rocky. Getting back into a routine, being on time, sorting out school lunches... it's a bit tricky. Best laid plans haven't quite been as smooth as you might have liked. To dial in your morning and evening routines, I'm going to suggest a few principles to help.

Get clear on what 'getting it right' actually means.

You might know what you want the morning to look like. But is it clear to you? Can you write it down? Can you put it on the fridge? Can you explain it to your kids and help them to buy into why it matters? Clearly explaining what you want and why is going to be a critical first step.

Set up a system.

Author, James Clear, says that "you do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems." So what does your system look like for making things happen? Can you create a system that will facilitate a smooth morning for every member of the family?

Workshop it.

Setting up a system when you're a parent is pretty easy. But bringing the family along can be trickier. By having a meeting and developing the system with input from your kids, you get to be clear, establish the system, and create buy-in. Ask your children to make suggestions and design the morning based on their ideas. Fashion it with your expert knowledge. And watch the results improve because your children have been part of it. Involvement is a central success pillar when it comes to developing a system that works in any family.

Curate competence.

The real secret to successful routines is helping the kids become self-sufficient. It takes time, but teaching them to toast their bread or crumpets, fry or scramble some egg, or organise their cereal or yogurt, or even blend a smoothie means that there is less friction with your routine. They feel good about doing what needs to be done because they know how to do it. And while it's slow at first, it becomes wonderfully efficient over time.



Support autonomy.

Kids love to have choices. They appreciate being able to make their own decisions. Support them in that while ensuring they know what the guidelines and boundaries are for making things happen well.

Here are the golden rules of a magic morning (from a dad of six who has talked with thousands of parents about getting this right):

1. Your morning begins the night before. Get the prep done for tomorrow at bedtime so uniforms are ready, bags are packed, and library books or sports gear is sorted.
2. Create margin by waking up a little early, and getting the kids up (gently) a little early too. Room to breathe makes everything work better.
3. Create the structure so everyone knows what needs to be done.
4. Keep the kids accountable in a supportive way.

In spite of your best efforts, things will go pear-shaped now and then. When this happens, stay calm (remember: emotions are contagious), don't sweat the small stuff, be flexible for the morning... but get it back on track the next day by having a calm conversation in the evening, reinforcing the system, and working together on making it work.

Whether it's magic mornings or excellent evenings, the process is the same. Work as a team, and watch the magic happen... at least sometimes.



AUTHOR

Dr Justin Coulson

Dr Justin Coulson is a dad to 6 daughters. He is the parenting expert and co-host of Channel Nine's Parental Guidance, and he and his wife host Australia's #1 podcast for parents and family: The Happy Families Podcast. He has written 6 books about families and parenting. For further details visit happyfamilies.com.au.