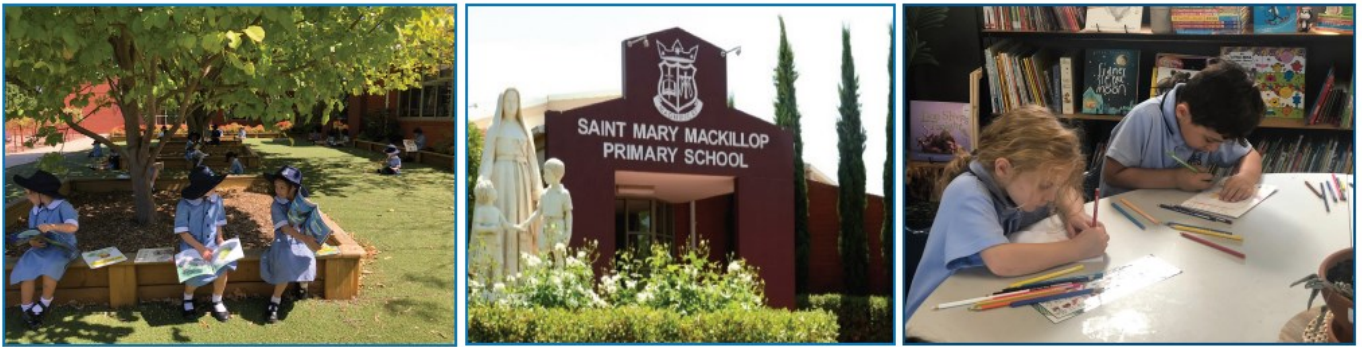


Friday 01 May, 2020

# ST. MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

152 Odessa Avenue Keilor Downs, Vic 3038 [www.mmkeilordowns.catholic.edu.au](http://www.mmkeilordowns.catholic.edu.au) T: 03 9367 6199



## *Staying Connected... Update 5*

Dear Community,

Last evening there was a meeting held involving a number of schools, across the sectors from this region. I am absolutely delighted to report that the general comment in reference to the Remote Learning being offered at SMMPS, is that we “are setting a bench mark!” I stand very proud as Principal leader of SMMPS!

**Six weeks ago the education sector was turned upside down. We moved from what we have always known into a new frontier, called Remote Learning. We had to adapt fast! And adapt we did!**

I stand very humbled in gratitude for the patience, 99% of parents have shown towards the school as we moved into this brave new world. We have listened as we worked this out together. I am grateful for the respectful and constructive feedback we have received. We have acted on that feedback, and implemented changes as we have moved forward. We are all learning together and we recognise that you as parents and/or carers, are the persons managing and supporting your children, as they learn at home. Thank you for your trust and patience.

Thank you to the boys and girls of SMMPS who are engaging in their learning. I can see the marvellous work you are doing by the videos and posts you are making daily. In some cases, many times a day! I am proud of the independent learning happening. Keep it up boys and girls!

We must acknowledge and thank our teachers. Their work is simply incredible. With virtually no notice, they have adapted their pedagogy and are now providing remote learning which is creative and connects our kids with our school. This fact is so important for the children's wellbeing and mental health. They need to know they belong. Their efforts go a long way to making this sense of connectedness and belonging a reality. The feedback our teachers are providing is sound, constructive and lets the individual child feel acknowledged and cared about, by their teacher.

As a passionate Catholic leader, I appreciate the prayer they lead each morning with their class. This keeps our Catholic identity shining. Thank you!

We appreciate our staff onsite, day in day out, working in admin, maintenance and caring for our children who need to be at school for whatever reason. They provide wonderful support to the children. Their commitment, humour, empathy and gentleness makes our school a happy place to be.

Our school leaders are working behind the scenes all week, listening to feedback, meeting and then mapping the way forward, so as to support the community by making necessary adjustments and through providing clarity. They spend a lot of time answering questions from teachers and parents and then provide them with additional resources as needed. Their work is invaluable to the success of our Remote Learning.

We have had many successes, however, over the past weeks we have learnt a few things:

- **Our students miss school and staff miss students.**
- **Technology is amazing, but it's not the same as going to school.**
- **Teachers are great at responding with solutions for complex problems.**
- **When this ends- and it will end- it will be wonderful to be able to learn together again.**

Now it is the weekend, so no home schooling is to be completed. Relax and we will pick it up again on Monday.

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP

This week, our **School Captains, Lily Sorpreso, Carla Sultana and Darko Krslovic**, made contact with me, offering their support and wondering how they can lead at this time. I reassured them that they have, perhaps more than any other time, the opportunity for authentic leadership. I am so proud of them.

We engaged in a Google Meet and discussed opportunities. They came up with possibilities. We then collaborated on a Google doc and together they created a letter of support and inspiration for the student body of SMMPS.

This wonderful initiative from our school captains was published on Seesaw, however if you missed it, I include their letter below for your interest.

**St Mary MacKillop.... Pray for us and our country.**

Keep well and safe everyone.



Anthony McCluskey  
Principal

## RETURN TO SCHOOL

I appreciate you may hear a lot of conflicting information regarding returning to school. Despite what our Prime Minister says, we take our directives from the State Government of Victoria, who advises the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. We have a Premier who really cares about the health of the Victorian community, so we look to his leadership and await his directives on when we return to school.

But, just between you and me, let's hope our return to school is not too far away!

## A Note to Families-From Year 6 Captains

At the beginning of the year, when we were elected to be the 2020 School Captains, we would have never thought we would be taking on this role at such a difficult time. There has never been a better time to be a leader and show our leadership skills. We are so proud to be in this position.

Some people think these are some of the hardest times we have ever gone through, but if we believe, we can get through this together. As the teachers and leadership team have been working very hard, we want to thank them for all the hard work and effort they have put into this new type of learning. They are always there trying to support us and making sure we are comfortable while remote learning. We as students understand that this pandemic has had an effect on everyone's life and it is hard to cope with new changes but we, as school captains, are hopeful that we will get through this tough time and are open to helping all the students in our school.

To maintain a positive attitude, we suggest you go outside at least for 1 hour a day to get some physical activity and fresh air that you would usually get on a daily basis. We also encourage everyone to spend more time with your family in your household and to keep connected with loved ones.

During this time of remote learning, students are learning new routines and ways to overcome their difficulties when they are lost or stuck. It can be difficult without a teacher but we can always power through those situations and soon be on the road to success. Some students have been working really well and got the hang of doing this everyday, but some are having some trouble getting into a new routine. That is okay! Keep at it and be persistent!

In the next few weeks students have been given the chance to be in contact with our teachers and peers through a Google Meets or in a phone call. In this time we will be able to stay connected with our teachers and peers since we can't see each other's faces like we usually do. Teachers will now be sending out a new learning grid each week because the teachers found that the students were not motivated when doing their work and they would be very distracted at times because they are doing the same thing over and over again, which can be very repetitive for some. We can only keep trying new things to see what works for the people in our community.

## Good-News Stories:

These are challenging times, sometimes people just want to hear good news in this pandemic which is why we're going to start a new topic in the newsletter called good news stories. Each newsletter will have a few heart-warming stories. Here are some stories that we would like to share with you this week:

- \* A ninety year old man named Jack had a balcony birthday. A whole hotel in Tugun came out of their apartment to say happy birthday to old Jack.
- \* Nova 100, the radio station, hosted a karaoke or Corona Karaoke for viewers to join into and sing.
- \* Ann Sturgess, a cooking lover, has gathered a group of chefs and created a new group called the 'Food Army'. The group is designed to help the nurses, doctors and other health workers with food, since they can't get food due to the current pandemic.
- \* An old man and little boy were playing a game of Tic-Tac-Toe on a window with the boy on one side and the man on the other.



During these times of hardship it is easy to lose sight of the important things in life. Sometimes we are overcome with challenges but, it is important to have time to reflect on what matters most.

- \* Things that have gotten better because of the impact of COVID 19 e.g. Climate Change
- \* Nice things that people have done to help others
- \* Positive stories e.g. People dropping off groceries for the elderly
- \* New Activities e.g. People are trying new things that they have never tried before.

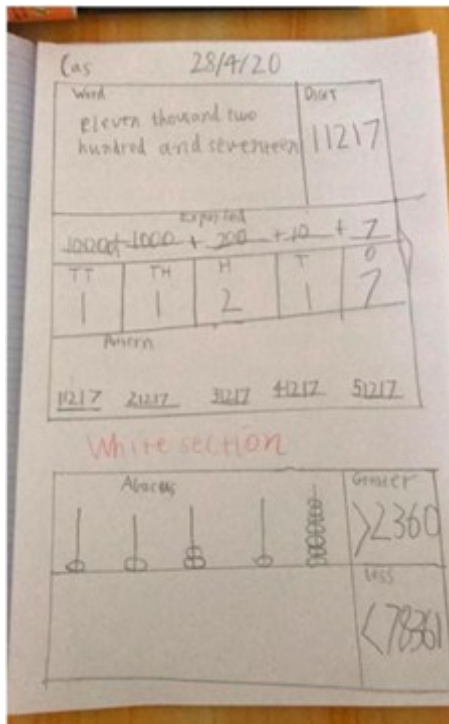
Check out some of the fantastic work students have already posted to Seesaw...



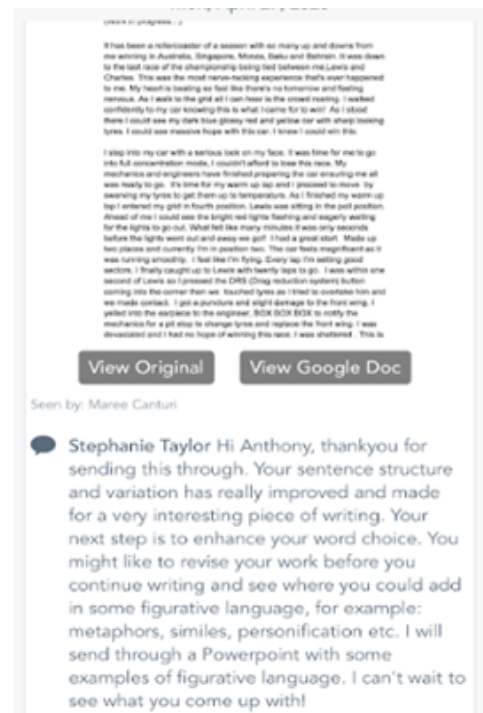
Religion - Mia Doria, 1G



Reading - John Toth, Prep B



Mathematics - Cas Nguyen, 4Y



Writing - Anthony Canturi, 6Y

## Things to do when you are bored:

As lots of students are bored being in their houses most of the time, we wanted to list some things you could do while you are at home. The following activities have been tried and tested by us:

Read a book

Write a story

Visit an online zoo or other online places

Bake/Cook something new

Clean/organise your room (or other places in your house)

Exercise

Play a board game or a card game

Painting

Gardening

Drawing

Listening to music

Sing a song

Build lego

Practise a musical instrument

Do some artwork

Play a sport

Meditate

Go for a walk or ride your bike, skateboard or rollerblades

Draw with chalk

The world has changed but we must have hope and believe that everything is going to be okay and everything will soon go back to normal.

All the best to each and every one of you. We hope you keep safe, happy and healthy during these times and we can't wait to be back at school with you all.

As St. Mary Mackillop said in 1904, "May God give you patience and courage."

From your School Captains,

**Lily Sorpreso, Darko Krslovic and Carla Sultana**