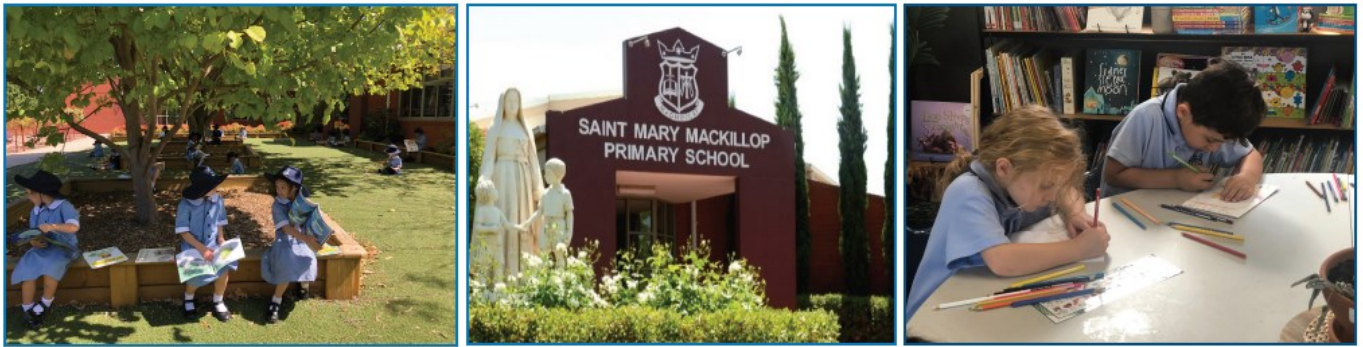


Tuesday 13 July 2021

ST. MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

152 Odessa Avenue Keilor Downs, Vic 3038 www.mmkeilordowns.catholic.edu.au T: 03 9367 6199



Staying Connected No. 16. 2021.

Dear Community,

Welcome Back to Term 3 and the second half of our school year. I trust you have all enjoyed the past two weeks and were able to spend some quality time with your children.

I am confident that our teachers are rested and are ready for the successes and challenges that lay ahead as we care for and educate your children with whom you have entrusted us.

We take the trust you show in SMMPS very seriously. As Principal of our school, I am very aware of what is happening across the school. I expect the best for your children and believe our staff do their very best. I know we all make mistakes along the way, but I am confident in the good intentions of each of our teachers. **'Trust'** is the key word here. **We appreciate the trust that you show in us.**

Mary MacKillop viewed the world through a very simple yet profound belief, being **'Trust in God.'**

Sometimes, when we are confronted with challenges, difficulties or sadness and then unhelpful mind games and self-talk starts happening, we need to trust and to pray that all will be well. Prayer can be difficult though, particularly when stressed or overwhelmed. However, I take solace in the wisdom of St. Anthony who said, *"Prayer is not knowledge and human understanding, but the Spirit present within your heart"*. Believing in these words of wisdom, certainly points to a trust in God and gives us some hope. Perhaps we are called to 'Trust in God' a little more!

PREP 2022

I am proud to see that the local community which feeds to our school has trusted us and the work that we do here at SMMPS. We have 3 classes of Prep enrolled for next year. We were in a position to have 4 classes, but we have made the decision to move our school towards being a 3-stream structure for the foreseeable future. This will leave our student population at around 580-600, which is not too large, yet remains large enough to ensure we can continue the programs and services we offer.

The IMPACT OF COVID on the school.

As we move forward, I look back and acknowledge COVID has provided many challenges in the life of our school. We celebrate that Victoria is managing COVID so well at this time, however, we never know what is around the corner.

We move forward with a positive mindset. To support and enhance our school, **I look to refocusing and reconnecting with our Catholic identity and sense of school community.**

In regards to Catholic identity, our teachers have done a great job online with prayer, reflection and RE lessons, as they continue to do in their classrooms. **For that, I am very grateful.** Our celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation have also been significant moments of Catholic identity. Even gathering as a school community on Monday morning at Assembly, where we pray as a school community builds our Catholic Identity. Sacramental celebrations and our Assembly also support and build community.

However, **I now desire to lead a charge, where we will once again strengthen our Catholic identity and school community.**

We look to have **a whole school Eucharist to celebrate Mary MacKillop Feast Day.** We believe we will be able to gather as a student and staff body. (Unfortunately, COVID restrictions will not allow parents present at this time.)

We are a Catholic school, so it is vitally important for us to gather as a Eucharistic community and to celebrate Mass together. I look forward to ensuring the Mass is part of our school life again. Monsignor, Lucy Vassallo (Religious Education Leader) and I will be mapping a way forward here.

Catholic children from our Year 3 classes will be receiving the Eucharist for the first time on Saturday 16 October .

The celebration of First Holy Communion and all Masses for that matter are significant occasions in the life of our Catholic school.

The need to rebuild community and parent involvement is essential to the life of a well-functioning school. It is in fact, one of the five spheres of Catholic schooling as set out by MACS.

To this end, I look to establish a parent group again this year to support fundraising and organising events for the school community. I am considering calling it, quite simply, **The Parents Group.** I am inviting for expressions of interest from parents and volunteers from staff to support this initiative, depending on what the activity or event may be. We all have a variety of talents and may be able to contribute. We might meet during school time or after hours depending on the parents who are available and willing to be a part of the group.

To this end, I am asking any parent who may be interested in being part of The Parents Group, please shoot me or Anthony D'Amico an email, simply giving us:

- your name
- your children's names and classes
- your availability to have an initial meeting. We'd like to know the day (Monday to Thursday) and time (2:30pm or 6:30pm) that is most suitable.

We will then choose the time that receives most nominations. We will meet and decide on the way forward, form a leadership team and start exploring options.

Perhaps, some parents might only be available occasionally. What I propose is calling for support with specific events. If you consider you might have a contribution to make at different times when convenient, that will be okay too.

Watch this space for more information.

Other important things that come to mind:

Student Reports to parents go out on Friday 23 July 2021

Parent Teacher Student Conversations will be held on Tuesday 10 August from 1:00pm and Wednesday 11 August from 3:45 pm. These conversations will be formative and positive conversations involving the children. Details to be forward home soon.

We have scheduled a School Closure for Monday 16 August. It is mid-term, so it is timed appropriately. You might remember we had planned to visit the Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre, however, COVID put a stop to that. Now density limits, restrictions and the centre's availability are an issue.

SMMPS refocus on Catholic identity is too important to let go, so we have secured the services of Sr. Rita Malavisi rsj. Rita is working with us in designing a day where we will be invited to **re-imagine Mary MacKillop**. This day will involve rediscovering the story of Mary MacKillop, appreciating her spirituality and discovering how we might live this spirituality in the day to day life of SMMPS. It promises to be an exciting day that will enhance our school's Catholic identity and in turn make our school a richer place for your children to learn and grow.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

You may have noticed the back shed has been taken away. We have exciting plans for that space of our yard to enhance the children's recreational and sporting opportunities and increase play space in the yard.

We are also nearly ready to begin preparing to build our new Library, Digital Technologies Studio, Art Studio and some other spaces. I'll share plans for this project in the next weeks.

We are also busily renovating the Mary of the Cross building (near the front Carpark). We are opening it up, raising ceilings, plastering over all the drab brick inside, painting and improving lighting. Our renovations will ensure this building is much more conducive to learning as it will be a light, bright and airy space for the children.

I am sure there is so much more I need to communicate with you. I will do so as it comes to mind and as it becomes relevant. However, enough is enough for one week.

Of course, all these dreams in a busy term are dependent on COVID and lockdowns or not. Please God, we don't have to lockdown again. However, if we do, we will remain positive and make the best of it!

As Mary MacKillop said, on 11 June 1877, '**God will provide for the future**'.

We move forward with a positive 'can-do' attitude! Have a great term of learning everyone. Go well.



Anthony McCluskey

Principal

BOOK FAIR

Monday 26th July- Friday 30th July

PARENT HELPERS

We are looking for parent helpers for the book fair.

If you are interested in helping could you please leave your name, contact no. & the day /days or hours you are available to help with Kellie at reception.

You must have a current Working with Children Check

We will contact you during week 1 of 3rd term.

Regards

Denise Thorne & Jenny Melki

She Who Belongs. She Who Thrives.



Enrol now
for Year 7 in 2023

Applications close on Friday, 20 August 2021

Book a College Tour and find out more at:

www.avemaria.vic.edu.au or contact

registrar@avemaria.vic.edu.au



AVE MARIA COLLEGE
She Who Belongs. She Who Thrives.

UPCOMING *events*

TERM 3

Friday 23 July

Student Reports available

Monday 26 July-Friday 30 July

Book Fair

Friday 6 August

Mary MacKillop Feast Day

Tuesday 10 & Wednesday 11 August

Parent Teacher Conversations-see details



UPCOMING events

TERM 3 continued...

Friday 13 August

Feast of the Assumption

Monday 16 August

School Closure Day-see details

Monday 23 August to Friday 27 August

Book Week

Tuesday 24 August

Year 6 Open Door Project

6.00pm and 7.30pm-more details soon

Friday 17 September

Last Day of Term 3

Students finish at 1.00pm

