

Thursday 12 August 2021

ST. MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Staying Connected No. 21. 2021.

Dear Families,

I appreciate the stress we are all under as we enter another week of lockdown. It's disappointing, frustrating and a cause for a great deal of angst as we worry for our children and their well-being and education. Let alone as we worry for ourselves. We all miss our social connections, our families and perhaps we have the added worry of income loss, job loss and the pressures that these factors can cause in the home. It's not easy. I know I have said this many times before, but as a father and a grandfather, I absolutely understand, as I listen to and try and support my own family with their stresses.

Despite all this we have to have faith our leaders are doing their best for us. It is sad that COVID is being fought along political lines, however, it is apparent across Australia and around the world, that lockdowns are the most effective way to beat this pandemic. We have to stay safe and live in hope that this will all end soon and we might resume some sense of normality in our lives.

As a grandfather I long to hold my grandchildren again, as I know that you long to be with your loved ones again. We work hard to play by the rules so that we might be together again one day.

As always, we look to St. Mary MacKillop for inspiration.



PARENT TEACHER CHILD CONVERSATIONS

Thank you to the teachers for their commitment in going online to meet with you and your children to have a conversation about your child's learning.

I offer my sincerest thanks to all families. Despite the enormity of home schooling, I believe most families are positive and supportive of the direction the school is moving in with home learning.

I am confident we are doing a great job in providing learning at home for all of our students. All schools handle learning at home differently. We have put much thought into our model and I am most grateful to our Leadership team and teachers who have prepared and implemented the model.

Learning at home cannot possibly be like a usual day at school. A usual day involves many different learning structures, indoor and outdoor activities, recess and lunch breaks, and interactions with teachers, support staff and peers.

Our learning grids are similar to the typical lesson structures that the students experience in a classroom. They include guidance, independent tasks, small group work, and feedback. Some students require more support than others, some require modified tasks, but all are encouraged to work towards success and independence.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) have set guidelines within which schools must operate:

Wellbeing check-ins – in addition to recording student attendance, schools must have processes and procedures to ensure that student wellbeing check-ins take place regularly, on a group and/or individual basis.

For students in Years 3 to 6 and 7 to 10, schools should provide daily learning programs that include the following as a minimum:

- *literacy: 45–60 minutes*
- *numeracy: 30–45 minutes*
- *physical activities: 30 minutes*
- *additional curriculum areas: 90 minutes.*

as appropriate to the school context and student needs.

We also provide Optional Activities and Educational Websites where the children might find some additional challenges.

SMMPS is well and truly working within the guidelines, within our school context.

In an effort to minimise large amounts of time on-screen, we have decided that Wellness Wednesday is necessary.

I appreciate that some students will 'have it easy', whilst other students are really struggling. Finding the right balance between whole-class teaching, independent tasks, small groups and student wellbeing is a challenge. We appreciate that each family is different, but the overwhelming feedback that we receive from parents is that our learning grids and teacher contact provide them with the flexibility to organise their day around the needs of their family whilst still receiving support from teachers.

THE PARENTS GROUP

I was most disappointed that we had to postpone our inaugural The Parents Group meeting. As you would understand, we were preempting a lockdown and we needed to get organised in anticipation. It was pretty full-on!

We look to rescheduling another meeting in the week we return to school, whenever that might be! I am committed to getting The Parents Group off the ground and up and running! I already have lots of ideas and I look forward to your contribution and what we might be able to achieve together.

Keep well and safe everyone and once again we call on Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Mary MacKillop to protect us and our nation.

Anthony McCluskey

Anthony McCluskey

Principal



Children's Book Week is the annual celebration of books for young people and the joy of reading. During this time schools and public libraries spend time celebrating Australian authors and illustrators. At SMMPS we have started to read and enjoy some of the shortlisted books with the students. We are focusing on visual literacy and the importance of images to support the meaning of a text.

We would like to have some fun and celebrate Book Week by asking the students to dress up as a book character. **There will be no pressure for families to purchase costumes, in fact we are asking students to either wear something they already have OR just bring along their favourite picture book or novel to share with their class.** Children are asked to use their imaginations and think how everyday items may be used to create a costume eg: a piece of fabric could become a cape or a skirt, a hat etc. Unfortunately, there will be no whole school book parade, but classes will celebrate and have fun in their own grade. We will be celebrating this special day on **Monday 23rd August 2021**

Jenny Melki and Rita Krnac - Literacy Leaders



UPCOMING *events*

TERM 3

Sunday 15 August

Feast of the Assumption

Monday 16 August

School Closure Day (Postponed)

Monday 23 August to Friday 27 August

Book Week

Tuesday 24 August

Year 6 Open Door Program

6.00pm and 7.30pm (More details soon)

Monday 06 to Friday 10 September

Book Fair (New dates)

Friday 17 September

Last Day of Term 3

Students finish at 1.00pm