

# ST. MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

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*Staying Connected No.18, 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2025*

## The First Week of Advent - A Season of Hope

This week we begin the beautiful season of Advent - a time of quiet preparation, hopeful waiting and turning our hearts towards Jesus. In classrooms and in our gathering spaces, you will see the Advent wreath with its first purple candle lit, reminding us of the gift of hope: hope in God's promise, hope in one another, and hope for a world where kindness, justice and peace grow.

As a school community, we are invited to slow down just a little, to notice those around us who may need a smile, a helping hand or a word of encouragement. In the spirit of St Mary MacKillop, who said, "*Never see a need without doing something about it,*" may our small acts of love and service become our Advent prayers.

We pray that, as we journey through these four weeks, our children and families will find moments of stillness, gratitude and joy, and that the light of Christ will shine ever more brightly in our school and in our homes.



**The school year is fast coming to a close.**

There is lots to remember as we move towards the end of our school year.

**Tuesday 2nd December 9:30am** our Final Mass for 2025 as a School Community. All Welcome.

**This Thursday, 4th December** we have our Annual Christmas Carols concert on the oval. See details below.

**This Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December is a school closure.** All staff will be involved in Professional Learning supporting SMMPs continued roll out of MACS directed explicit teaching in Maths. We want to get straight into this explicit teaching at the beginning of next year; hence the school closure this year to put us on the front foot.

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December is a school closure.** It is a planning day for 2026 with new level teams. All new staff will be in attendance.

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December: Year 6 Secondary School Orientation**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December: Year Six Big Day Out**

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December:**

**Final Day for Year 6 children**

**Year 6 Guard of Honour @ 12:45pm - 1:00pm**

**Year 6 Graduation @ 7:00pm - 8:00pm**

**Tuesday 16 December:**

**Final Day for classes for Years Prep-Five**

**School concludes for the year at 1:00pm.**

St. Mary MacKillop Primary School is committed to child safety. We believe all students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

**Have a happy week everybody.**



**Anthony McCluskey**  
Principal

### **MESSAGE FROM PERFORMING ARTS**

**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

We would like to invite you to the *Mary of the Cross* performance on **10th December** in the **school hall at 2:30pm**.

This performance would not have been possible without the support of **Loretta, Mrs K, and our wonderful Year 6 volunteers**. The students have been working very hard, and we hope you will be able to join us and enjoy the performance.

Kind regards,

**Year 6 students: Anastasia P and Zara M**

## ADVANCE NOTICE of STARTING DATES and TERM DATES for 2026

**Teachers resume:** Tuesday 27 January

**Testing Years P-6:** Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 January

**First Day of Classes for Years 1-6:** Friday 30 January

**First Day of Classes for Prep:** Monday 02 February

### TERM DATES

**TERM 1:** Friday 30 January - Thursday 02 April (Good Friday 03 April)

**TERM 2:** Monday 20 April - Friday 26 June

**TERM 3:** Monday 13 July - Friday 18 September

**TERM 4:** Monday 05 October - Tuesday 15 December  
(Year 6 finish Friday 11 Dec)

### FEES and LEVIES 2026

St. Mary MacKillop Primary School is owned and operated by Melbourne Archdiocese Schools (MACS). As our governing body MACS sets Policies which we are mandated to follow. MACS also set Fees and Levies in collaboration with the school.

Most Catholic and Independent schools around Australia and MACs schools use a **tiered family fee structure**. St. Mary MacKillop is committed to introducing a **tiered family fee structure** in 2026, as it positions our school as consistent and aligned with sector expectations.

A **tiered family fee structure** is fairer and more sustainable. It ensures that school fees are distributed more equitably across families with each child's enrolment contributing to the resources and opportunities they receive.

The **tiered family fee structure** allows the school to meet rising costs and to ensure programs, staffing and facilities for all students.

With a tiered family fee structure, the total fee a family pays are adjusted according to how many children they have enrolled at the school.

**FAMILY FEE: \$2800 plus \$100 for each additional child**

The Family Fee largely supports business administration costs, building and grounds maintenance, power and services costs and additional staffing costs.

**CURRICULUM LEVY for each child: \$835.**

The Curriculum Levy provides for all:

Student books, stationery, classroom supplies, library books and specialist supplies (e.g. Phys.Ed equipment), IT hardware, software, and licenses, excursions including transport (buses) and entrance costs.

*An additional camp levy will be charged for children in Years 4, 5 and 6. These prices are to be confirmed depending on costs.*

**CAPITAL LEVY \$450 (\$112.50 per term)**

*This levy supports capital loan repayments which provide for the continual upgrade of buildings and facilities.*

A decision to adjust Fees and Levies is never made lightly, nor without careful and thorough consideration of our students' needs and our school's capacity to provide an excellent education experience. We are also cognisant of the financial pressures that many families have experienced this year.

We are committed to supporting you through this transition. Please be assured that all existing arrangements and discounts for families holding valid cards (including Health Care Card) will continue and we will work compassionately with any family experiencing genuine financial difficulty.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

**Anthony McCluskey**  
Principal



# PRINCIPAL AWARDS





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## INFORM & EMPOWER

Cyber Safety & Digital Wellbeing

Dear Parents and Carers,

On **10 December**, Australia will introduce a world-first law setting the **minimum age for social media use at 16 years**. This landmark decision reflects growing concern about the impact of social media on children's wellbeing and aims to create safer online spaces for young people.

**We want to take this opportunity to remind all parents and carers of our shared responsibilities in this space.** While some students may already have social media accounts, this new law provides an important opportunity for a reset. Your child's school is committed to child safety, both offline and online, and we ask for your support in upholding this collective effort.

**Your child's school is taking a proactive approach to cyber safety and digital wellbeing through their partnership with us.** Every student participates in an age-appropriate online safety session each term, building their skills and confidence as they grow.

**Which apps are restricted?** Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Reddit & more.

**How will the age limit be enforced?** Social media companies will be required to verify a user's age.

**What if someone under 16 already has an account?** These accounts will be closed or suspended.

**What if my child finds a 'workaround' to be on social media and experiences online harm?** They will not get into trouble with the law (and neither will you, as their parent or carer). They can still report it and seek help.

For more detailed information, please visit: [www.esafety.gov.au/parents/social-media-age-restrictions](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/social-media-age-restrictions)


**We encourage you to talk openly with your children about the new laws.** Help them understand that this change is not about punishment, but protection. Social media has not been designed with young people's health or wellbeing as a priority.

### You might like to:

- agree on alternative apps or websites where they can safely enjoy connection, entertainment and creativity
- explore offline activities to help maintain a healthy balance of screen time and green time
- remind them that they can always come to you, or another trusted adult, if something online makes them uncomfortable
- let them know that Kids Helpline ([kids.helpline.com.au](https://kids.helpline.com.au)) is always available for support

Sincerely,

  
**Marty McGauran**  
eSafety Expert

  
**Carley McGauran**  
Psychologist

 **Trusted eSafety Provider**  
esafety.gov.au



# SMMPS SUPPORTING THE



# Starlight

Children's Foundation

An SRC Initiative

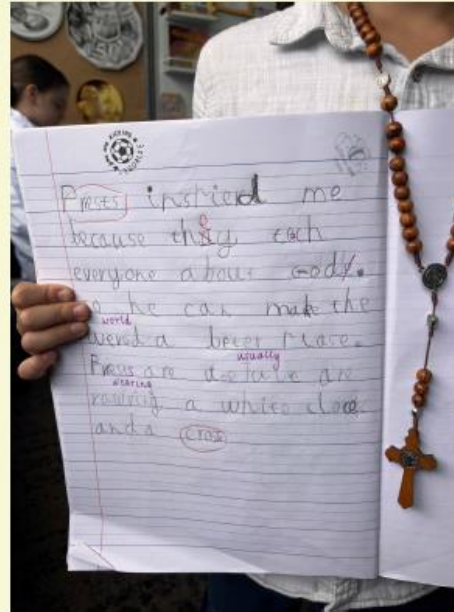
Hi, we are the Year 6 SRC reps, Ella, Alessia and Sierra. We want to tell you about the Starlight Foundation and their mission, which we fundraised for today.

Today is inspired by Savannah in 1 Yellow, who spent large amounts of time in hospital this year, and Starlight helped and supported her through it.


The Starlight Foundation is dedicated to brightening the lives of seriously ill children and their families. Its purpose is to bring joy, comfort and hope to kids who spend long periods of time in hospitals or are facing medical treatments, through programs such as hospital entertainment, wish-granting, and fun experiences. Starlight helps children reconnect with the simple pleasures in life.

When a child is diagnosed with a serious illness, life can be consumed by hospital and treatment. It is scary and overwhelming for them, and that's why Starlight exists. Through play, creativity and social connection, they create fun and happiness. Seriously ill children and their families are helped to get through their toughest times with Starlight.

With today's donation of **\$570**, Starlight will be able to brighten up the day of many more kids, just like our Savannah.







The Grade 4 students warmly invite all families and friends of SMMPS to join us on  
**Wednesday 3rd December** for our **Grade 4 Christmas Market Stall!**

This special event is a wonderful way to celebrate the festive season together while supporting a great cause  
— raising money for the **Kmart Wishing Tree Foundation**.

Come along and explore our delightful range of **handmade Christmas ornaments and decorations**, lovingly crafted by the Grade 4 students. Each piece has been made with care, creativity, and a generous dash of Christmas spirit. Over the years, this fundraiser has become a much-loved tradition at SMMPS, strengthening our wonderful partnership with the Kmart Wishing Tree and bringing joy to those in need.

This year, all funds raised will help brighten Christmas Day for families who are less fortunate. We would love your support in making this our most successful year yet — so bring your festive cheer, enjoy the holiday spirit, and help us make a difference this Christmas!

**Kind regards - Grade 4 Team**

## IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE: 2025

### Thursday 04 December

Christmas Carols @ 6:30pm on the Oval  
Children in classrooms at 6:00pm

### Friday 05 December

School Closure: Vision for Instruction - Mathematics

### Monday 08 December

School Closure: Planning for 2026

### Friday 12 December

Final Day for Year 6 children  
Year 6 Guard of Honour @ 12:45pm - 1:00pm  
Year 6 Graduation @ 7:00pm - 8:00pm

### Tuesday 16 December

Final Day for classes for Years Prep-Five  
School concludes for the year at 1:00pm.

## IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE: 2026

### Monday 26 January

Australia Day Public Holiday

### Tuesday 27 January

Staff Return

### Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 January

Student Testing days: Details to come

### Friday 30 January

Years 1 to 6 start @ 9.00am

### Monday 02 February

Preps start @ 9.00am

### Wednesday 04 February

No school for Prep students

### Wednesday 11 February

No school for Prep students

### Monday 09 March

Labour Day Public Holiday

### Wednesday 11 March to Monday 23 March

Naplan for Years 3 and 5

### Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 March

School Photos

### Thursday 26 March

Year 3 First Reconciliation @ 12pm

### Thursday 02 April

End of Term 1: Students finish @ 1pm