

ST. MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Staying Connected No.19, 11th December, 2025

From the Principal

Dear Families,

As we come to the end of another remarkable school year at St Mary MacKillop Primary School, I want to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to every member of our community. This year has been shaped by faith, learning, growth, kindness, and the unmistakable spirit that defines our school.

With Gratitude to Monsignor Portelli and Fr. Vinh.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to Monsignor Portelli and Fr. Vinh for their faith leadership and unwavering support throughout the year. Their presence enriches our community and grounds us in the mission and values that guide our work. We are grateful for the way they shepherd our parish and school with humility, strength, and genuine care.

To Our Dedicated Staff

To our extraordinary staff—leaders, teachers, LSOs, office staff, specialists, and everyone who contributes to the life and culture of the school—thank you. Your dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to excellence shine through in every classroom and every interaction. You continue to ensure that our children are known, supported, and challenged each and every day. You are the heart of St Mary MacKillop.

To Our Wonderful Students

To our children: thank you for your openness, your generosity, your kindness, and your joyful approach to learning. Your enthusiasm, curiosity, and determination to be the best you can be inspire all of us. You remind us daily of the purpose and privilege of our work.

To Our Parents and Families

A sincere thank you to our parent community for your ongoing support, encouragement, and trust. Your partnership strengthens everything we do. The way you walk alongside us—supporting learning, attending events, and contributing to the life of the school—creates a strong and united community for our children to grow within.

Farewell to Our Year 6 Students and Families

To our graduating Year 6 students: Congratulations. You have been leaders in our school, role models for the younger students, and living examples of our values of respect, kindness, and courage. We are proud of the people you have become. As you leave St Mary MacKillop, know that you take with you our blessing, our admiration, and our confidence that you will thrive in secondary school and beyond. Continue to strive, continue to be kind, continue to ***“never see a need without doing something about it.”***

To the Year 6 families who now conclude their journey with us—thank you. Some of you have been part of our community for many years. Your support, involvement, and partnership have helped shape the school we are today. We are truly grateful.

Farewell to Children and Families Moving Away

We also farewell a number of children and families who are leaving St Mary MacKillop for various reasons. Whether you have been with us for many years or just a short time, we hope you take with you fond memories, friendships, and a deep sense of belonging. You will always remain part of our story, and we wish you every blessing in the years ahead.

Farewell to Staff Leaving Us

At this time of year, we also pause to acknowledge and farewell staff who are leaving St Mary MacKillop Primary School. Each person has contributed in their own meaningful way to the life, spirit, and growth of our community.

To those staff moving on to new roles, new schools, or new chapters in life:

thank you for your dedication, your professionalism, and the care you have shown our children. Your presence has enriched our school, your efforts have made a lasting difference, and your impact will continue to be felt long after you leave.

We are grateful for the gifts you have shared with us—your expertise, your creativity, your compassion, and your commitment to our values. You have helped shape the culture and identity of St Mary MacKillop, and for this we are sincerely appreciative.

Thank you:

Denise Thorne (1999- 2025)

Laura Kantzidis (2010-2025)

Ross Botoulas (2021- 2025)

Noah Mountjoy (2024-2025)

And we wish **Matthew Saxon** a happy year of renewal as he takes 12 months leave.

We also congratulate **Aaron Kuras (2014-2025)** on his appointment as Principal of Holy Child in Dallas. We are grateful for his leadership and wish him every success as Principal.

As you step into the next stage of your journey, may you take with you the friendships formed, the memories created, and the knowledge that you have been an important part of our story. We wish you every blessing, much joy, and continued success.

As we move into the holiday break, may this be a time of rest, joy, and connection for all families. Thank you once again for your collective contribution to another successful year at St Mary MacKillop. I look forward to welcoming the new year as we continue to grow, learn, and live out our shared mission.

“Let us be grateful for the past and hopeful for the future.”
— *St Mary MacKillop*

“May God bless you and keep you this Christmas, and may the year ahead be filled with peace and joy.”
— *St Mary MacKillop*

Warm regards,



Anthony McCluskey

Principal

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



The Year 4 Team would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who came along to our Christmas Market Stall on Wednesday 3rd December. We would like to acknowledge the generosity and kindness of our school and parent community, as none of this would have been possible without your support. Your willingness to contribute, participate, and give so generously not only made the event a success but also helps create meaningful experiences for our students. We are truly grateful for everything you do.

We are also delighted to share that the money raised (over \$1800) will go towards the Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal , helping to brighten the Christmas of children in our community who are less fortunate. Your support will make a meaningful difference to families in need during this special time of year.

Final SRC Report for 2025

During our final SRC meeting, we came together to reflect on the great success of our 2025 Student Representative Council. Here are some of our thoughts:

What did we enjoy about being in the SRC?

- hearing everyone's ideas and being able to share our thoughts
- fundraising and thinking about how we can help people in need
- being a leader and role model for others
- having a sense of purpose and feeling useful



What would you say to someone who is considering applying for the position next year?

- lead by example
- it helps you to build confidence to speak in front of people
- it is an important position and not about popularity
- it helps you to see how team work can make the dream work

What was our best fundraiser and what made it so successful?

Our Fight MND fundraiser was very successful!

It was a great deal of fun, with the whole school participating in lots of ways. We felt highly engaged in the organisation and promotion of this social justice action because we were all involved in organising posters for our levels and speaking to classes across the school about this great cause. One of the best parts of the day was seeing the teachers and Mr McCluskey get iced!

What have you learned from being on the SRC?

Being on the SRC has helped us to:

- build confidence to speak to and in front of others
- think about others and how we can help and support them
- develop public speaking skills
- know that we can all be role models
- think about how we can stay on top of things and get our jobs done right
- be brave and kind
- be confident in sharing ideas
- stand up for our beliefs
- improve our social skills

Christmas Mass Times 2025

Wednesday, 24th December – Christmas Eve

5.00 pm	St Mary MacKillop Church
6.30 pm	St Paul's Church
7.30 pm	St Mary MacKillop Church
9.00 pm	St Mary MacKillop Church-Carols
9.30 pm	St Mary MacKillop Church

Thursday, 25th December- Christmas Day

8.00 am	St Paul's Church (Maltese)
9.00 am	St Mary MacKillop Church
10.00 am	St Paul's Church
11.00 am	St Mary MacKillop Church

There will be NO evening Mass on Christmas Day

Thursday, 1st January 2026 – New Year's Day

11.00 am	St Mary MacKillop Church
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2025 Confession Times

Wednesday 17th December 2025

10 am - 11 am	St Mary MacKillop Church
7 pm - 8 pm	St Mary MacKillop Church

Thursday 18th December 2025

10 am - 11 am	St Paul's Church
7 pm - 8 pm	St Paul's Church

Friday 19th December 2025

10 am-11 am	St Mary MacKillop Church
7pm-8pm	St. Paul's Church

Monday 21st December 2025

10 am – 11am	St Mary MacKillop Church
7pm – 8pm	St. Paul's Church

Tuesday 22nd December 2025

10 am - 11 am	St Mary MacKillop Church
7 pm - 8 pm	St Paul's Church

BRIMBANK SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

**FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-14 LIVING OR
SCHOOLING IN BRIMBANK**

JANUARY 2026

**NO
COST!**

**TUE
13**
10AM-12PM

BREAK THE ICE

Sunshine Library
301 Hampshire Rd, Sunshine VIC 3020

**WED
14**
10AM-12PM

MINDFUL MOVERS

Sunshine Library
301 Hampshire Rd, Sunshine VIC 3020

**TUE
20**
10AM-12PM

GAME ON

St Albans Community Centre
33 Princess Street, St Albans VIC 3021

**WED
21**
10AM-12PM

FUN FANATICS

St Albans Community Centre
33 Princess Street, St Albans VIC 3021

**FOR MORE INFORMATION & TO
REGISTER GO TO
BRIMBANKYOUTH.COM/SERIES/2026
-BRIMBANK-SCHOOL-HOLIDAY-
PROGRAM OR SCAN THE QR CODE**



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

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 (kidshelpline.com.au) is always available for support

Sincerely,


Marty McGauran
eSafety Expert


Carley McGauran
Psychologist

Sacraments 2026

IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE: 2025

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: Book via School Interviews

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

IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE: 2026 CONTINUED...

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

2026 is a School Review year. Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) and the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA) will be doing a comprehensive review of our school. These reviews happen every 5 years.

To enable this review to happen there will be 2 school closure days in Term 1. We will notify you of these dates ASAP when confirmed by MACS.

Save the Date

Reconciliation Family Faith Evening

Tuesday 10th March 2026
7pm
Multi-Purpose Room

Sacrament of First Reconciliation

Thursday 26th March 2026
12pm
SMM Church

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Holy Communion Family Faith Evening

Wednesday 20th May 2026
7pm
Multi-Purpose Room

Sacrament of First Holy Communion

Saturday 30th May 2026
10.30am and 12.30pm
SMM Church

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Confirmation

Family Faith Evening

Wednesday 10th June 2026
7pm
Multi-Purpose Room

Sacrament of Confirmation

Saturday 20th June 2026
10am and 12pm
SMM Church