Dear Parents and Friends of St Mary MacKillop Primary School,

Welcome back to an exciting 2013. Welcome back to all of our students from Year 1 to Year 6, and our families! Welcome back to our dedicated staff! I extend a very warm welcome to the new children in grades other than Kinder, and their families. A HUGE welcome to our 63 new Kindergarten children and to new families joining St Mary MacKillop this year. I also extend a special welcome to our new staff: Mrs Leesa Gillard- Acting REC and Year 2G teacher. Mrs Kimberley Mathewson and Miss Sarah Archer-Year 3K teachers. Mrs Sandra Gibson- Teachers Assistant. Mr Tim Martin & Mr Phil Rooke– CAPA teachers.

I am looking forward to a fantastic year of learning.

Religious Reflection:

As we commence 2013 I invite you to pray the words of our school song for your child, family and yourselves.

“TOGETHER WE GROW” Amanda McKenna

Like the tree on the hill, Planted deep –branching out into the world
Open each day to the sunshine and the rain

We are one-family, Growing strong as we learn to get along
Doing our best every step along the way.

Like Mother Mary. Together we touch people’s lives
Love one another and follow the footsteps of Christ

Together we grow, Together we grow
Doing our best- showing respect. Helping each other every day
With friends by our side –and Jesus our guide
Together we grow.

Expectations for the New Year:

As we welcome back the new school it’s a good time to consider what you expect of your children.

Having expectations that are high - yet also realistic - is essential for school success. Think of a balloon. If there’s no air (like no expectations), it’s flat. If you put in too much air (expectations that are too high and impossible to meet), the balloon bursts. Finding the right balance of expectations will stretch children to grow without frustrating them.

Tips for primary school children:

• Help children develop predictable routines around waking up, getting ready for the day, eating nutritious meals, taking care of their bodies, going to bed at a regular time, and getting enough sleep. Children are more likely to be successful when their routines help them thrive.
• Build on your children’s interests. They’re more likely to meet high expectations when they’re doing things they enjoy.
• Talk with your children about the goals you have set and achieved in your life. Explain how you overcame obstacles to meet your goals.
• Expect bumps along the way. Achieving high expectations is not like climbing a ladder where each step is a step up. Expect setbacks and doubts. They’re all part of the process. The key is to work through the difficulties along the way.
• Encourage children to grow and develop at their own pace. Don’t compare your child to other children. Some are early walkers. Some are late walkers. Both are normal. Follow your child’s lead.
• Watch out for pressures that you place on your child because of your preferences rather than your child’s needs. For example, not all sports-mad parents are going to have sports-mad children.
• Give children extra time to practise new things. Expect the process to be bumpy and slow. Be encouraging and don’t expect perfection.
• Have high expectations for homework and schoolwork. Help children break large, difficult tasks into smaller, more manageable tasks. This is called ‘chunking’ and can build confidence as they achieve each part.

Thank you:

Sincere thanks to Mrs Pletkan and the P&F team for providing and serving Morning Tea for our kindergarten parents and the wonderful parents who helped make our swimming carnival a huge success.

Reminder:

I would like to draw your attention to a number of upcoming events. Our First Friday Morning assembly tomorrow commencing at 8.45am in the hall. Opening School Mass and Name Change celebrations of St Mary MacKillop Primary School on the 22 February at 9:30am. All members of our school community are invited to this special event.

Thought for the Week

“Life’s most treasured and inspired moments often come unannounced”

Have a Blessed Week
Michael Siciliano
Wednesday 13 February is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. The Season of Lent is the 40 days prior to Easter (Sundays are not included in the count) and is a time of preparation for the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday.

Ash Wednesday is the day for us to take stock of our spiritual lives and we are encouraged to attend Mass on this day in order to mark the beginning of the Lenten season. As Lent begins, we should set out specific spiritual goals we would like to reach before Easter and decide how we will pursue them—for instance receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

To celebrate the beginning of Lent all students will attend an Ash Wednesday Liturgy at 10:00am. All parents and family members are warmly invited to attend this special prayer time.

During the liturgy, the ashes which give Ash Wednesday its name will be distributed. The ashes are made from the blessed palms used in the Palm Sunday celebration of the previous year. While the ashes symbolise penance and contrition, they are also a reminder that God is gracious and merciful to those who call on Him with repentant hearts.

The distribution of ashes, is a tangible reminder of our own need to focus on being better people. Through acts of penance comes a change of heart – a coming back to God. Our personal Lenten journey should be marked with reflection, prayer and penance. Throughout Lent we should strive to model the actions of Christ. As the prophet Joel wrote:

‘Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks – come back to me with all your heart.’

**Project Compassion**

Ash Wednesday also marks the beginning of the annual Caritas Australia Project Compassion appeal. Donations to Project Compassion allow Caritas Australia, the Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development, to work with local communities around the world to alleviate poverty, hunger, oppression and injustice. Each classroom will receive a Project Compassion box and all children are invited to donate some money to help others in our world. Please encourage your children to put their compassion into action this Lent by supporting the [Project Compassion 2013 appeal](http://www.caritas.org.au). You can also donate online via the website at [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au). During each week of Lent you will be informed of what Caritas Australia, through your kind donation, can do for others.

**Project Compassion, Week 1**, brings you the story of Ditosa. Since her parents died, Ditosa lives with her grandmother and aunt in Matuba, Mozambique. At the Matuba Children’s Centre, Ditosa receives food, medicines and support. She also learns important life skills. This support is a lifeline for the families supported by the Centre, and is enabling them to improve their livelihoods. Your donation to Caritas Australia’s Project Compassion provides children like Ditosa with the opportunity to learn new skills, to become self-supporting. [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au)

**Opening School Mass and Official Name Change Ceremony**

Please join us for our Opening School Mass and Official Name Change Ceremony in our Multi Purpose Centre on Friday 22 February at 9:30am. As we gather as a school community we will pray for God’s blessing on this school year and acknowledge St Mary MacKillop’s canonisation and life of service to God. Looking forward to seeing you there as we celebrate our Catholic Faith together.

*Mrs Leesa Gillard*

Acting Religious Co-ordinator
From the Assistant Principal

Swimming Carnival:
Congratulations to all involved in the Primary Swimming Carnival held on Monday. Thanks to the careful planning and organisation of Mrs Rowan and of course the fabulous support of our many parents who assisted on the day, the carnival was a huge success. At present we are collating all the results to determine our winning House colour, age champions and zone representatives. If you wish for your child to be considered for selection in the 200m Individual Medley at the zone carnival, paper work needs to be sighted to determine whether the personal best time is under the qualifying time set by the zone conveners.

Mathematics Assessment Interviews:
Over the past week the teachers have been busy conducting the Maths Assessment Interviews, (MAI’s) for the children in their class. Many thanks to the parents who took the time to bring their child up to the school out of normal school hours so that the assessment could take place. The interview provides the teachers with valuable insights into the thinking strategies the children are using when answering questions across the four domains of counting, place value, addition/subtraction and multiplication and division. This information is then used to inform the teaching so that all children are being challenged appropriately.

Uniform:
Most children have returned to school in their correct school uniform. I thank you as parents for supporting the school in ensuring that the uniform is worn correctly. A reminder that sports shoes should be predominantly white in colour. Detailed explanation of our uniform policy can be accessed on our school website, however a reminder that:

No jewellery is to be worn. One set of gold or silver studs/sleepers may be worn in pierced ears. If hair is below shoulder length, it must be tied back with a bottle green ribbon or scrunchie. Hair is not to be coloured for either boys or girls. Haircuts are to be suitable for school for both boys and girls.
No mullets, spiking, No. 1 zig zags or razoring etc.

Parent information Evenings
A reminder that Parent Information Evenings will take place next week.
Monday 11 February - 7.00pm – Kindergarten and 8.00pm – Year 3 and 4
Tuesday 12 February - 7.00pm – Year 1 and 2 and 8.00pm – Year 5 and 6

Student Absences:
A reminder that if your child/children are away from school due to family holidays, you are required to complete the ‘Application for Exemption from Attendance at School’. This needs to be completed even if your child misses one day at school. This application can be found on our school website or can be picked up from the school office.

Welcome BBQ:
I look forward to seeing many of you at our 2013 ‘Welcome BBQ’ which will be held at school from 6:00pm-8:30pm. A special thanks to our wonderful P&F committee for organising this special community event.

God Bless,

Mr Steve Cauchi
Assistant Principal
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<th>DAY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>7 February</td>
<td>6:00pm-8:30pm</td>
<td>P &amp; F Welcome BBQ - All Welcome</td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
<td>10 February</td>
<td>11:15am</td>
<td>Reconciliation Meeting at St Nicholas of Myra</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>11 February</td>
<td>7:00pm-8:00pm</td>
<td>Parent Information Evening - Kindergarten - Year 3 and 4</td>
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<td>7:00pm-8:00pm</td>
<td>Parent Information Evening - Year 1 and 2 - Year 5 and 6</td>
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<td>Year 3 - CSIRO Incursion</td>
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<td>19 February</td>
<td>7:30pm</td>
<td>P &amp; F Executive Meeting</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>20 February</td>
<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>Parent Reading Helpers Workshop-</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>22 February</td>
<td>9:30am</td>
<td>St Mary MacKillop Opening School Mass and Name Change Ceremony - All Welcome to attend</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>26 February</td>
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<td>Zone Swimming Carnival</td>
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<td>Diocesan Swimming Carnival</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<td>Year 1 Liturgy</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<td>9:30am-10:00am</td>
<td>Year 5 Liturgy - 2P Assembly</td>
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<td>25 March</td>
<td>7:00am</td>
<td>2014 Kindergarten Parent Information Session</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>Holy Thursday</td>
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<td>29 March</td>
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<td>Good Friday-Public Holiday</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>1 April</td>
<td>9:30am-11:30am</td>
<td>Year 3 Liturgy - 4W Assembly</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>5 April</td>
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**Parent Reading Helpers Workshop**  
Wednesday 20 February 2013  
Library 2:00pm  
All Welcome!

Parents who are interested in assisting in the school as reading tutors are invited to attend a one-hour workshop. The workshop is designed to provide information on how children develop as readers and the approach we use at St Mary MacKillop to reading instruction. It is compulsory to complete the workshop if you wish to be a parent-reading tutor in the school. The workshop only needs to be completed once so parent-reading tutors who have attended the workshop previously do **NOT** need to attend.

If you are intending to complete the workshop could you please complete the form below and return to school.

Many thanks  
Mrs Elizabeth Devlin

I will be attending the Parent Reading Tutor Workshop on Wednesday 20th February, 2013.

Name: ____________________________  Child/s name: ____________________________  Child/s class: ___________