Dear Parents and Caregivers,

A very warm welcome back to all children, staff, parents and friends to the 2012 school year. A special welcome goes to the Kindergarten children and new families joining us this year. Hoping that your Christmas Break was both restful and spiritual. Many thanks to the Parents, Staff and Children who have welcomed me to the school community. It was great to see so many parents at the parent information sessions during this week. With the entire community I am looking forward to continuing the Educational focus of Mary MacKillop that has been a rich part of the school culture.

I have included a verse titled, ‘I Dream a School’ for reflection this week. This is a favourite of mine, which challenges and reminds us to continue making our Catholic learning communities places that address the individual needs of our children. As you read through the poem reflect on how we communicate these aspirations of the author through word and action for the children at Mary MacKillop.

I dream a school
where learning will be celebrated
where there will be laughter and loving
where there will be songs and dancing
where all people will celebrate
the joy of living and learning.

I dream a school
where there is a balance
of order and spontaneity
where learning is open to discovery
and where innovation is praised and valued.

I dream a school
where both playground
and classrooms
will be places of safety and fun
and everyone will have a friend.

I dream a school
that has a rich curriculum
which is child focused and culturally enriched

I dream a school
where there is enough discipline
and enough freedom and
enough structure to make it work

I dream a school
where young children
will listen to older ones
and where older children pay attention to young
people and all will be glad of everyone
I dream a school where what I read in the
Gospels comes alive
in the way we treat one another

I dream a school
where all differences will be put aside
and where each person is accepted and valued
for who they are

I dream a school
where the youngest and the weakest
will be guides and encouraged and supported by
the rest of the school
and where those that have talents will be guided
and challenged

I dream a school
that places God first where each
member will read and write
and compute and pray and grow each day in faith
and hope
and love and respect for each other

I dream a school
that celebrates its past and is open to the future

In 2012 what are your educational dreams and goals for your child/children? Are they in line with your child’s educational goals and aspirations? What strategies and activities at your child’s level are put in place to help achieve these targets?

2012 Implementation Plan

As part of the Parramatta Diocesan Schools System Mary MacKillop staff have designed an implementation plan to give direction and focus to teaching and learning throughout the year. In 2012 the Mary MacKillop Implementation plan will continue the extensive work done in 2011 and will consist of a goal in faith formation and a goal in Numeracy. As 2012 is the National Year of Reading we will also continue to place emphasis in this exciting and important area of the curriculum. We’re off to a great start with all our teachers from Kindergarten to Year Six conducting maths assessment interviews on a number of children in their class. This information provides teachers with knowledge of your child’s understanding in numeracy and assists in further teaching & learning.

Reminders

I would like to bring your attention to a number of special events occurring during Term one at Mary MacKillop. These include: The P&F Welcome BBQ, Opening School mass at St Nicholas Church, P&F Annual General meeting, preparation for the school fete, School cross country and Stage 3 Touch Gala day at St Mary’s. Please refer to the term calendar and see if you can attend some of these special events. Please contact your child’s teacher if you have any questions regarding these events.

Thought for the Week

Love & Kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference.
They Bless the one who receives them, and they Bless you the giver.

Have a Blessed Week

Mr Michael Siciliano
Principal
Warmest greetings to all of you as we begin the new year with renewed enthusiasm and vigour for all that 2012 has to offer.

Sacramental Program
It was wonderful to see so many parents gathered at our parish last Sunday for the Reconciliation Program. Father Chris spoke of sacraments as signs and symbols, gifts which are meant to be nourished. I pray that involvement in the program provides parents with opportunities for their own personal reflection and a deeper sense of belonging to our parish community.

In Term 2, students in Year Four and above will be invited along to prepare to receive the Sacrament of Eucharist and in Term 3 those in Year Five who have received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist will prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. If you have any questions about the Sacramental Program please don’t hesitate to contact myself via the school office or the Parish Sacramental Coordinator, Mrs Anne Tucker, via the parish office – 02 4721 2509.

Opening School Mass
Our Opening School Mass will be held at St Nicholas of Myra on Friday, 17 February at 10:00am. We will be joining with St Nicholas of Myra School for the Mass, which will be presided over by Father Chris. All are welcome to attend, as always, but we ask your patience and understanding as it is likely to be very crowded and we need to ensure all the children have a seat.

Looking forward to connecting with you all throughout the year at these times of communal prayer and reflection.
God bless,
Scott Carroll
Religious Education Coordinator

2012 Primary Swimming Carnival
Congratulations to all of our primary children who attended the swimming carnival on Monday. It was a fun day and the exhaustive cheering made for a wonderful community event.

Congratulations to all the children who swam in an event to gain points for your House colour. I would like to offer my appreciation to many who made the carnival a success. Firstly, the many parents who volunteered their time and expertise in recording, ribbon writing, place judging, timekeeping and starting. These events are not possible without your assistance. I would also like to acknowledge the fantastic job that our sports captains did in leading the war cries, and organising their teams ensuring that no children missed their event. Last but not least I would like to thank the Mary MacKillop staff for your help both prior to the day and on the day. With the recent wet weather, we were not sure whether we would have to revert to ‘Plan B’ but we were blessed with a warm sunny day for the carnival. Special thanks to Mrs Masina who spent the best part of last week entering the children’s data prior to the carnival so that the day will run smoothly. Zone representatives will be announced shortly. The Nepean Zone Swimming Carnival will be held on Tuesday 21 February. Congratulations to the Girralong team who were the winning House colour for 2012.

As the 200m Individual Medley is not held at our school swimming carnival, if you would like your child to compete in the 200m IM at Zone, please inform Mr Cauchi. Please note that there is a qualifying time for this event.

Book Club
Please note that all Book Club order are due Wednesday 15 February 2012. No late orders can be accepted after this date. Please make sure that the order form is in the envelope with your child’s name and class and correct money, as change cannot be given.
Sport News

Throughout the year, children at Mary MacKillop have the opportunity to participate in a variety of representative sport. This can be through a variety of channels.

1. Zone/Diocesan representative in swimming, cross country or athletics. (These teams are selected based on qualification through school carnivals).

2. Diocesan Gala days:
   • Stage 3 Touch Football, (Girls, mixed, boys)
   • Girls Netball, (Junior and Senior teams comprising of children from Years 3-6)
   • Stage 2 and 3 Boys Soccer

These teams are selected both on interest level and school trials.

3. Diocesan trials are held at various venues throughout the Parramatta Diocesan schools. Diocesan trials are held in the following sports: cricket, hockey, netball, rugby league, rugby union, soccer, softball and touch football. These trials are made available only to children in Years 5 and 6 and only children who are of a representative standard within that sport. Each school is only permitted to send two children from each sport. If you think that your child would like to trial for one of the above sports and they play that sport at a representative level please come and get a ‘player profile form from Mr Cauchi. You will then be informed of the trial date and venue for that sport. Please note that softball, cricket and hockey trials are in February so please be prompt if your child wishes to trial for that sport.

Library News

Welcome to the new school year. We have some great things planned for our library in 2012.

THE NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

2012 will see a whole heap of amazing fun, reading activities taking place around Australia and online, so people of all ages, from different backgrounds, can discover and rediscover the joy of reading. Nearly half the population struggles without the literacy skills to meet the most basic demands of everyday life and work. There are 46% of Australians who can’t read newspapers; follow a recipe; make sense of timetables, or understand the instructions on a medicine bottle. Australian libraries and library associations are behind a campaign to turn 2012 into the National Year of Reading, linking together all the great things that are already happening around books, reading and literacy, and giving them an extra boost, with inspirational programs and events taking place across the country.

Libraries will be partnering with government, the media, writers, schools, publishers, booksellers, employers, child care providers, health professionals and a whole host of other organisations that share our passion for reading. At Mary Mackillop we will be promoting this initiative and encourage all families to take part in the activities available online and at Penrith Library. Let’s all make reading with and to our children a priority at home. Why not join the public library? It’s free. Check out the website at http://www.penrithcity.nsw.gov.au/index.asp?id=544

For further information, go to http://www.love2read.org.au/

Once again, the Premier’s Reading Challenge will begin next month. All students registered can logon using their previous passwords. These are available from the library or class teachers. Any enquiries about the challenge please see Mrs Eisenhuth in the library. More exciting news to follow……

Maree Eisenhuth
Teacher Librarian

Photo Permission

From time to time, photos are taken of students which may be used in a range of publications such as the school newsletter, the school and/or the Catholic Education Office publications or website and newspaper advertisements and stories. Our normal practice is not to publish names with images to protect individuals. If you do not wish your child’s photo to be used in 2012 publications please contact the office or write a letter indicating your wishes.

Co Curricular Strings Program

The response to our Co Curricular Strings Program has been overwhelming, with more than 60 students from Years 3 to 6 opting to take up small group lessons. Year 5 and 6 students in the Co Curricular program are invited to join the school string ensemble. These rehearsals are on Tuesdays from 3:00-4:00pm on even weeks (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10).

If you are interested in your child taking up these lessons this term, tomorrow (Friday 10 February 2012) is the last day to notify Mr Carroll.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>16 February</td>
<td>6:00pm-8:00pm</td>
<td>P &amp; F Welcome BBQ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>17 February</td>
<td>10:00am-2:00pm</td>
<td>Opening School Mass at St Nicholas of Myra Year 6 Leadership Ceremony</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>21 February</td>
<td>8:00am-7:30pm</td>
<td>Zone Swimming Carnival - Glenbrook Pool P &amp; F Executive Meeting</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>22 February</td>
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<td>Ash Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>23 February</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Captivate Orchestra Information Evening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>24 February</td>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td><strong>Second Hand Uniform Sale</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>2 March</td>
<td>8:00am</td>
<td>‘Clean Up Australia Day’ for schools Diocesan Swimming Carnival - Mt Druitt Pool</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>6 March</td>
<td>7:30pm</td>
<td>P &amp; F Annual General Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>9 March</td>
<td>9:15am-10:00am</td>
<td>Year 3 Grade Liturgy 2E Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>16 March</td>
<td>9:15am-11:30am</td>
<td>Year 1 Grade Liturgy 6R Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>23 March</td>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>School Cross Country K-Year 6</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>26 March</td>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>School Photos - Full School Summer Uniform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>30 March</td>
<td>9:15am-11:30am</td>
<td>Year 2 Grade Liturgy 4W Assembly Stage 3 Touch Gala Day - St Marys</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>5 April</td>
<td></td>
<td>Holy Thursday Term 1 Concludes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>6 April</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good Friday</td>
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**CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING FOR SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

As in previous years we are required to provide information about Child Protection information and procedures at our school for all Parent and Volunteer helpers. Your involvement in our school is greatly appreciated as the service you offer assists us to provide quality education for our students. It is essential that appropriate care and protection structures exist in our school to enable us to provide the safest possible environment for our students. Principals are responsible to ensure that all persons performing child-related tasks in, or for the school, complete the training module (every two years) before they undertake a task on behalf of the school. This includes volunteers for excursion, school functions, reading groups etc., The training module can now be completed online from the Catholic Education Office website which is accessed via the following address. [http://ceo-web.parra.catholic.edu.au/asp/volunteerscpmodule/index.asp](http://ceo-web.parra.catholic.edu.au/asp/volunteerscpmodule/index.asp)

**LITERACY WORKSHOP**

On Thursday, 23 February at 2:00pm in the School Library, there will be a parent helper workshop for any parent/carer interested in helping with reading at Mary MacKillop, Kindergarten to Year 6, during 2012.

I __________________________ will be attending the Parent Helper Workshop for reading at 2:00pm on Thursday 23 February 2012, in the School Library.

Signed: ________________________________

Child’s Name: ______________________ Class: __  Child’s Name: ______________________ Class: __
Child’s Name: ______________________ Class: __  Child’s Name: ______________________ Class: __
This workshop only needs to be completed once.