Dear Parents and Caregivers,

**Reflections of 2012 School Year**

Here we are at the end of a superb 2012 School year at St Mary MacKillop Primary School. Many educational achievements have been realised and we have much to acknowledge, give thanks to the Lord for and celebrate. I would like to thank the parents, staff and children for a superb year. A few highlights of 2012 were:

- Joint Eucharistic liturgies with St Nicholas
- 2012 Swimming Carnival
- School and Diocesan Ensemble
- Grade Liturgies and class assemblies.
- Grade excursions to Canberra, Teen Ranch, Penrith Lakes, National Park and Mary MacKillop Place
- Very successful School Fete
- Athletics Carnival and Cross Country
- Stations of the Cross
- EMU Mathematics Phase 2 focus
- School name change to St Mary MacKillop
- Restorative Justice Professional Learning for staff, parents and children.
- Peer Support Program
- Positive NAPLAN, ICAS and RE assessment results.
- We farewelled Father Chris & Father John and welcomed Father Matthew & Father Jose.
- 2012 Talent Quest and Numerous Sports Gala Days

**THE HISTORY OF THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS.**

There is one Christmas Carol that has always perplexed me. What do leaping lords, french hens, swimming swans and especially the partridge that won’t come out of the pear tree, have to do with Christmas?

From 1558 until 1829, Catholics in England were not permitted to practise their faith openly. The song has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning, plus the hidden meaning, known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality, which children could remember:

- The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
- Two turtledoves were the Old and New Testament.
- Three French hens stood for faith, hope and charity.
- Four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- Five golden rings recalled the torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
- Six geese a laying stood for the six days of creation.
- Seven swans a swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: Prophesy Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership and Mercy.
- Eight maids a milking were the eight Beatitudes.
- Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self control.
- Ten lords a leaping were the Ten Commandments.
- Eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
- Twelve drummers drumming symbolised the twelve points of belief in the Apostles Creed.

So there is your history lesson for today. This knowledge was shared with me and I found it interesting and enlightening. So I now share it with you. Now we know how that strange song became a Christmas Carol. May God grant you peace and happiness throughout this Advent Season.
Let us Pray during Advent:

Let us pray….

God of power and mercy,
fling wide the doors of our hearts
in welcome to the Lord,
our Emmanuel.

Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy,
so that we may share his wisdom
and become one with him
when he comes in glory
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Farewell and Best Wishes

As we come to the end of 2012 I would like to farewell and thank:

• Mr Scott Carroll, who will take up the position of Acting REC at Mary Immaculate at Quakers Hill for 2013. We welcome Mrs Leesa Gillard to the position of Acting REC at St Mary MacKillop during 2013.

• Ms Maura Murnane, who is retiring from permanent teaching after many years of devoted service to Catholic Education.

• Miss Amanda Jeffrey and Miss Joanne Carbone, who have taken up temporary teaching roles at St Mary MacKillop this year.

• I would also like to inform the community that Mrs Charmain Floody has accepted a Learning Support Teaching role at St Patrick’s Blacktown commencing in 2013. We are in the process of advertising for a teacher for Year 3. We wish Mrs Floody all the best in her new school.

Reminders:

I would like to draw your attention to a number of upcoming events:

• Friday 14 December - 8.45am Assembly. Stuart Ayres visiting St Mary MacKillop Primary - 6.30pm Year 6 farewell disco.

• Monday 17 December - 7:00pm Year 6 Graduation Mass at St Nicholas Church

• Tuesday 18 December - 10:00am Year Graduation Ceremony
  Children will meet their 2013 teachers.

Thought for the Week

I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full.

John 10.10

Best wishes to you all for a Holy Christmas, happy holiday, lots of sunshine, family and friends, and much as you review this year and then begin the new year of 2013.

Michael Siciliano
PRINCIPAL

THERE WILL BE NO STUDENT BANKING ON MONDAY 17 DECEMBER 2012.

STUDENTS WILL BE ADVISED NEXT YEAR WHEN BANKING WILL COMMENCE

Thank you for your support during the year.
Recently you would have received a note requesting that you book a math’s assessment interview time with your child’s 2013 teacher on Tuesday 29 January 2013 between the hours of 11:30am and 3:30pm. This is the day that the staff return to work next year and it is a designated Staff Development Day, and therefore the teachers would like to complete as many interviews as possible in the designated timeslots.

Thank you to the parents who have responded. You will receive confirmation of the exact time that you are required to bring your child next Tuesday 18 December.

As previously stated, all children at St Mary MacKillop Primary will complete the Maths Assessment Interview (MAI) by the end of Week 3. Having your child assessed on the Tuesday, the day before the Year 1-6 children begin, gives the opportunity for your child’s teacher to gather vital information about your child’s mathematical thinking as early as possible.

Further timeslots were offered on the afternoons of Wednesday 30 January, 6 February and 13 February between 3:15 – 4:30pm. Currently there are still many timeslots available on Tuesday 29 January for children entering Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 in 2013. There are also still limited timeslots available in Year 3, 4 and 5 for 2013. If you are able to bring your child up on Tuesday 29 January and have not returned an appointment form, they can be downloaded from the school website or ask at the office. The interviews are scheduled to take approximately 30 minutes.

A few words of thanks
As 2012 draws to an end I find myself preparing for a new adventure at Mary Immaculate Primary, Quaker’s Hill in 2013. My ten years at St Mary MacKillop Primary have been the best start to a career that a teacher could hope for. Professionally, the opportunities at this school have been to numerous to comprehend. I have been able to share all of my interests and passions with more than 600 students through my time as a Year 3 and 6 teacher and through my other roles in religious education, technology and the creative arts. Personally, I’ve also been able to celebrate major events in my life such as my wedding and the birth of my children with the community. St Mary MacKillop is a truly special community and, regardless of what the future holds for me professionally, I look forward to remaining connected to the community through my children. Thank you to the staff, students and families past and present for all your support during my ten years here. Wishing you the peace of the Christmas season,
With the deepest gratitude and affection,
Scott Carroll

A reminder to all parents that if your child is absent from school for any period of time due to family holidays or ‘leave’ purposes, then you will need to collect and complete the necessary paperwork requesting approval from the school principal on behalf of the minister. This absence is then recorded in teacher roll books as a code ‘M’. If a child however, is absent from school due to family holidays or other ‘leave’ reasons without the approval from the principal, then teachers will record this as a code ‘L’. Students are legally not permitted to have more than 15 absences with a code ‘L’ within one calendar year.

2013 Math Assessment Interviews
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Students Absent from School
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Christmas Pageant:
Congratulations to all performers on a wonderful Christmas Pageant last week. It was a wonderful celebration of the birth of Jesus. A more detailed thank you list can be found on the website in the news items under the heading “Gloria in excelsis Deo”. Photos and videos from the event are viewable on both our school website and Facebook pages.

MacKillop Strings Roadshow:
Thank you to all members of the St Mary MacKillop Primary String Ensemble who performed brilliantly on Monday at Djalaringi Preschool and Newmarch House Retirement Village. The two audiences were very appreciative that you took the time to share your talents with them.

Year Six Graduation:
Thank you to the Year Six teachers for preparing their students for the most significant mass of their primary schooling. We look forward to being part of this event as a community next Monday at St Nicholas of Myra Church. All welcome to attend. Special thanks to our musicians and singers and their parents who are sharing their time and talents on Monday night.
### Dates for Your Diary Term 4 - 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>14 December</td>
<td>6:30pm-9:30pm</td>
<td>Year 6 Farewell Disco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>17 December</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Year 6 Graduation Mass - St Nicholas of Myra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>18 December</td>
<td>10:00am</td>
<td>Year 6 Graduation Ceremony</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>19 December</td>
<td>10:00am</td>
<td>Year 6 Fun Day</td>
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<td>Thursday &amp; Friday</td>
<td>20 December - 21 December</td>
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<td>Staff Development Days - Pupil Free Days</td>
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**ICE BLOCKS**
The P & F will be selling iceblocks, 60c for full and 30c for half, on the following days in Term 4.
Friday 14/12 and Monday 17/12.

### Dates for Your Diary Term 1 - 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>29 January</td>
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<td>Staff Development Day - Staff Return</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>30 January</td>
<td>8:45am</td>
<td>Students Year 1 - 6 commence Term 1 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>31 January</td>
<td>8:45am-12:00pm</td>
<td>Kindergarten commence 2013 - ½ day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>1 February</td>
<td>8:45am-12:00pm</td>
<td>Kindergarten ½ day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>4 February</td>
<td>8:45-3:00pm</td>
<td>Kindergarten commence full days Primary Swimming Carnival Years 3 - 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>7 February</td>
<td>6:00-9:00pm</td>
<td>P &amp; F Welcome BBQ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>22 February</td>
<td>9:30am</td>
<td>Opening School Mass and Blessing of St Mary MacKillop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>26 February</td>
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<td>Zone Swimming Carnival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>1 March</td>
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<td>Diocesan Swimming Carnival-Mt Druitt</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>15 March</td>
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<td>School Cross Country</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>22 March</td>
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<td>NSWCPS Swimming Trials-Homebush</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>25 March</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>2014 Kindergarten Parent Information Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>28 March</td>
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<td>Holy Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>29 March</td>
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<td>Good Friday-Public Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>1 April</td>
<td></td>
<td>Easter Monday-Public Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>12 April</td>
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<td>Term 1 Concludes</td>
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**Executive Director’s summer reading challenge**

_Ready to win! Entry form and reading log_

The holidays are a perfect time to discover the fun and pleasure of reading, and as an added incentive, the executive director of schools, Greg Whitby, is once again running the Summer Reading Challenge for all students enrolled in a Catholic systemic school in the Parramatta diocese. We’ve raised the stakes this year, by independently reading 15 or more age-appropriate books during their summer holidays, students from each category will go in to the draw to win an iPad Mini. The student who reads the most books in each age category will also be up for an iTunes gift card. There are three age categories, based on the age the student is on Friday 8 February 2013. Students must record all the books they read on a log sheet, which is signed off by a parent or guardian. **Entries must be received by 5:00pm, Friday 8 February 2013.**

The draw will take place on Friday 15 February and the winners will be published on the Catholic Education website. ‘This is an exciting challenge and I encourage students of all ages to take part. The world of reading opens the door to exciting adventures, wonderful new friends and a host of learning opportunities.’ Greg Whitby