

Keeping In Touch



6 February 2025



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News from Scott

Dear Parents and Carers

***Our school constantly strives to be:
A Christ centered community which challenges students to develop their unique gifts and talents through a supportive partnership of school, parents and parish.***

Welcome back to our Year 1 - 6 families and a warm welcome to those joining our community for the first time including our Kindergarten families.

It has been such a wonderful start to 2025. A big thank you to our P & F and in particular Kirrily for organizing the big sign on the grass at the front of the school. It was a really nice way for our families to enter the school.

This year all schools in our diocese will have nine Staff Development Days instead of the usual five that occur. This is a decision made by the NSW government and is in response to recent changes to all of the syllabus documents that teachers have to follow in planning and provisioning lessons. Essentially our teachers have to re-write all of their lessons, curriculum plans etc... to make sure they follow these syllabus documents. It is a big undertaking and therefore they are being provided time to do this well. The dates etc... have all been set from outside the school and we will follow the plan that has been given to us. Ultimately it will create a better learning environment for our children.

Have you ever wondered what our school does during these Staff Development Days? Last Friday, our teachers and staff started with a CPR course to update their certification for First Aid. They then spent three hours in learning about an explicit reading strategy called 'Shared Reading' and also planning how this will be done in their class based on the student learning data collected and analysed at the end of last year.

On Monday, the teachers spent five hours planning, re-writing their lesson plans and organizing new resources to set up the teaching across the seven subject areas for this term. There is more work to be done in this area but it was a very good start to ensure we commence quality learning from the first day.

We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated and professional team of teachers at our school and they take great pride in the planning and delivery of excellent learning for each student every day.

Staffing News

We had some wonderful news just before school commenced this year. Ms Izzard and Mr Martin have welcomed a beautiful baby girl into their family. Penelope is now at home with her mum and dad as they settle into their new family routine. Mr Martin will take leave for the first couple of weeks to support his family and then will begin his teaching role with Year 3.

We send our communities love and congratulations to Grant, Lauren and Penelope.



News from Scott - Continued

Communicating with your child's teacher and our office

At St Mary MacKillop, we value our strong relationships with families and welcome opportunities to communicate with parents and carers. We also recognise that phone calls and emails can be a fast and convenient way to contact your child's teacher or other school staff. Although staff will respond to these communications at various times throughout the school day, they are generally not expected to respond to communications outside of their normal working hours.

Please remember that in the case of an emergency or urgent matter, you can contact the school office directly by phone on **47243200** or by emailing marymackillop@parra.catholic.edu.au and we will respond as soon as possible.

Otherwise, if you wish to contact a staff member, please continue to send your emails to marymackillop@parra.catholic.edu.au which will then be directed to your child's teacher or another staff member where relevant. This helps us to have confidence that we are aware of any matters needing our attention as a team, and that you are connected to the person who can best help.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Together We Grow

Scott Buchan

Principal

Religious Education News

Welcome to the 2025 school year and all the learning and growth it holds! I offer the following prayer as we begin the 2025 school year together:

Almighty God,

We give you our school. We give you all the teachers and staff who work here.

We give you all the children who learn here.

We give you all the parents and families who work in partnership with us.

We pray our school will be a place of great discovery, adventure and creativity.

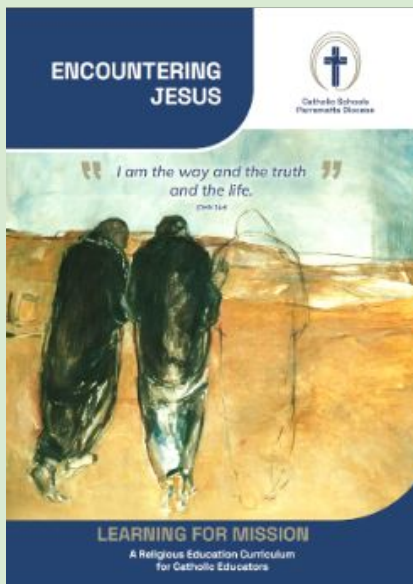
May it be a place where we love to learn and where we learn to love.

A place where everyone is respected and all are deeply valued.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

New Religious Education Curriculum: "Encountering Jesus"



2025 is an exciting year in Religious Education for the Parramatta Diocese as we have a new Religious Education Curriculum called "***Encountering Jesus***". This curriculum has been developed by Religious Education leaders in the Diocese of Parramatta and endorsed by leading Catholic theologians, Catholic Scripture scholars and experts in Catholic Religious Education. It has been developed in response to a range of feedback from these experts and from school communities, families and the wider community.

It offers a framework for our teachers of Religious Education to be clear on the Catholic teachings and traditions that are taught from Kindergarten to Year 10 in an age-appropriate manner.

The new Religious Education Curriculum reflects the intention for all of our students to know and love Jesus Christ. For our students from Catholic families, this will serve to nurture and enrich their Catholic faith in support of their families as their first educators of faith. For students from other religious perspectives this curriculum will help them grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic tradition, which is based on faith, hope and love.

Encountering Jesus invites all students to consider how the teachings of Jesus Christ can apply to their lives. It includes opportunities for reflection and prayer, drawing on the wisdom of Mary, the Holy Mother of Jesus, our Catholic saints and spiritual traditions. It also includes a call to faith in action, encouraging students to know and love the teachings of Christ and then live them in their families and communities, to make a difference in our world, and to help build the kingdom of God.

We will continue to partner with our parish and leading Catholic charities, such as Caritas, Catholic Mission and St Vincent de Paul, to support us in offering opportunities to bring the curriculum to life.

Religious Education News

For a copy of *Encountering Jesus*, please go to:

<https://www.parra.catholic.edu.au/learning/specialised-learning/religious-education>

Opening School Liturgy and Year Six Leadership Ceremony - 9:15am Thursday 27th February

Please join us for our Opening School Liturgy on Thursday 27th February at 9:15am. At our liturgy we will gather as a school community to pray for God's blessing on the school year and welcome Kindergarten and the new students across the grades to St Mary MacKillop Primary School. We will also induct the Year 6 students into their 2025 leadership roles.

We look forward to seeing you as we celebrate our Catholic Faith together.

2025 Sacramental Program - Confirmation

Enrolments for the Sacrament of Confirmation will open on the stnicholasofmyra.org.au website on **Wednesday 19th February 2025** and will close on **Wednesday 5th March 2025**. The website contains the requirements and commitments for parents and children. To be eligible for Confirmation, **children must be in Year 5 or above, must be baptised, have made their First Reconciliation, and received First Holy Communion**. The Parent Information Session will be Tuesday 11th March at 7pm in the church. At least one parent/carer must attend.

Please see below for more information from the parish:

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM	
CONFIRMATION 2025	
Online Enrolments	Open: Wednesday 19 February Close: Wednesday 5 March
Parent Information Session	Tuesday 11 March 7.00pm in Church
Commitment Masses	Saturday 15 March 6.00pm Sunday 16 March 8.30am, 10.00am, 6.00pm
Family Sessions	Saturday 22 March, 29 March, 5 April 4.30pm Sunday 23 March, 30 March, 6 April 8.30am
2nd Rite of Reconciliation	Thursday 1 May 7.00pm
Practice	Tuesday 6 May 5.00 – 6.30pm
Confirmation Masses	Thursday 8 May 5.00pm and 7.30pm

All enquiries to Rodney Howard (Sacramental Coordinator) at St Nicholas Parish House 47212509.
Email: sacramental@stnicholasofmyra.org.au

Mrs Gillard
Religious Education Coordinator

P & F NEWS

Happy new year to all our families from the P&F!

We hope everyone had a great school holidays, we wish all the students a great start to the school year. We also welcome all the new Kindergarten families and any other new families to the school community. I may be a little biased but I really think we have such an awesome community here at St Mary MacKillop!

The team have been busy in the school holidays preparing some great ideas for the year. In the meantime we want to remind everyone if you haven't already please give our Facebook page a follow, it's a great way of staying up to date with all things P&F as well as a handy reminder for our school events: <https://www.facebook.com/share/15hSRHjHyk/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

If you are not on Facebook don't fret we've got you covered with our P&F website: <https://sites.google.com/view/smmpdf/home>

There you'll also find links to volunteer and additional information.

If you have suggestions for the P&F you can always email us at smmpdf@gmail.com

We are nothing without the help of our community so we thank you all as always.

Chanelle Vella
P&F President.

Hats, Drink Bottles and Sunscreen

Students must come to school with a **hat**, as well as a **drink bottle**, on their scheduled PE days. UV exposure during childhood has a big impact on skin cancer risk – but it's almost entirely preventable with good UV protection. Wearing a hat, and applying sunscreen which best suits their skin type as part of their morning routine is also highly recommended. For more information visit www.sunsmart.com.au



COLLECTING CHILDREN AFTER SCHOOL

Children are dismissed at 3:00pm and supervision is provided only until 3:30pm. A classroom teacher will escort students to 'walkers' and supervise students crossing the street, riding bikes and going to cars as part of afternoon dismissal.

After school, staff will supervise children waiting for school buses or on 'waiters.' **(Waiters are to be collected after 3:10pm)** up on our playground.

If, due to extraordinary circumstances, eg: when a parent is detained, please notify the school and your child will be informed that you are delayed. Parents are reminded that all care will be given to the children but there is no formal supervision after 3:30pm when the last bus leaves the school.

COLLECTING CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL

If parents wish their children to be collected from school early, please send a note to the teacher. If there is a doctor's/dentist appointment or some other very important reason why your child needs to leave the school at lunch (10:45 am - 11:30 am) or break time (1:30pm- 2:00 pm), we would ask you to take your child either before or after lunch or break, not during the break, as bags are kept inside the classrooms and classrooms are locked during break times.

****From our parent handbook**** Read our Parent Handbook here:

<https://www.mackilloppenrith.catholic.edu.au/Enrol/Handbook>

Leaving Students

A term's notice (10 school weeks) in writing must be given to the Principal before the removal of a student or a full term's fees will be payable. The notice can be given any time during term for the next term. Where appropriate notice has been received a pro-rata credit can be calculated based on a pro-rata 40 week year. **One exception is that notice in writing will be accepted at any time during Term 4 in relation to the following years' enrolment i.e. the notice period of 10 school weeks will be waived in this circumstance.**

Planning a Holiday?

There are new Government guidelines for schools to follow when marking the school rolls. These guidelines require parents who are taking their children on holidays, during the school year, to complete a request of 'Exemption from School Attendance' form. This is required if you are taking your child on leave for **more than 5 school days**. A copy of your travel itinerary. The application form is available from the school office and are to be completed **prior** to your holiday.

Longer periods require the approval of the Director of Schools and the Catholic Education Commission.

Mobile Phones

If a child needs to bring a mobile phone to school they must be clearly labelled with the child's name, switched off and checked into the office on arrival and collected after the 3:00pm bell.

Medication

If your child takes long term medication, you must fill out the relevant form from the office. Medication will not be administered to any child unless authorised by a parent/guardian. All medication prescribed by a medical practitioner must be authorised by the doctor and all paperwork needs to be updated every year or when medication is changed. All relevant forms are available from the school office.

For short term medication, forms are also available from the school office. No child will be given medication unless it is recorded, prescribed by a doctor and in its original packaging. Many doctors will agree that medication to be given three times a day can be administered: morning, after school and before bed at night. Please check with your doctor.

Dates for your Diary

TERM 1 2025 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 14 February	2:20pm	Whole School Assembly	School Hall
Thursday 20 February	3:30pm-4:30pm 4:00pm-5:00pm	Open Classrooms P & F Welcome BBQ	
Friday 21 February	2:20pm	Whole School Assembly	School Hall
Friday 21 February	2:20pm	Whole School Assembly	School Hall
Thursday 27 February	9:15am	Opening School Mass & Year 6 Leadership Ceremony	School Hall
Friday 28 February	2:20pm	Whole School Assembly	School Hall
Monday 3 March	9:30am-10:30am	School Tour - Kindergarten 2026	
Tuesday 4 March		Year 2 Excursion to Pioneer Village	
Wednesday 5 March	9:15am 6:30pm	Ash Wednesday Liturgy Kindergarten 2026 Parent Information Session	School Hall School Hall
Friday 7 March	2:20pm	Whole School Assembly	School Hall
Wednesday 12 March		Naplan commences for Years 3-6	
Friday 14 March	2:20pm	Year 6 Encouter Day Whole School Assembly	Penrith Panthers School Hall
Friday 21 March	2:20pm	Whole School Assembly	School Hall
Friday 28 March	2:20pm	Whole School Cross Country Whole School Assembly	School Oval School Hall
Friday 4 April	2:20pm	Whole School Assembly	School Hall

St Mary MacKillop, South Penrith

150 Fragar Road, South Penrith NSW 2750

Ambrose School Age Care provides fun, engaging programs before and after school. Our programs include games, sport, art, craft, and free-time facilitated by Ambrose educators experienced in the nationally approved learning framework, My Time Our Place. Children love Ambrose as the programs are developed around their interests and ideas

They're also a great way to make friends, develop social skills, and most importantly – have fun!



Our Opening Hours

Before School Care: 6.30am – 8.45am

After School Care: 2:30pm – 6.00pm

Pupil Free Day: 6.30am – 6.00pm

Our fees Government subsidy (CCS) available depending on each family's eligibility.

Session	Time	After 85% Child Care Subsidy*	After 50% Child Care Subsidy*	Advertised Fee No Child Care Subsidy
Morning	6.30am – 8.45am	\$4.23	\$11.55	\$22 per session
Afternoon	2.30pm – 6.00pm	\$6.06	\$16.54	\$31.50 per session
Pupil Free Day - Standard Fee - Early 'Bee' Special	6.30am – 6.00pm	\$14.43 \$ 12.51	\$39.37 \$34.12	\$75 \$65

*Child Care Subsidy (CCS) can provide up to 85% of the cost of your childcare fees. External party charges for in-service workshops and excursions may apply.

All educators working directly with the children hold a valid working with children check and there is always an educator rostered who is qualified in first aid, asthma, anaphylaxis and CPR.



To enrol now - please complete the enrolment form [here](#)

Or contact the service on

Email: stmarymackillop@ambrose.org.au Phone: 0492 367 298

Learning for life

Is this safe?



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- **WASH HANDS**
AFTER SNACK AND MEAL TIMES.
- **ASK QUESTIONS** IF YOU ARE UNSURE
OF "SAFE" FOODS.
- READ **ALL** INGREDIENT LABELS.

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for helping us
provide a safe environment
for our friends with food allergies!