St Mary MacKillop Primary School PENRITH SOUTH

PARENT HANDBOOK

together we grow

Welcome To St Mary MacKillop Primary Penrith South

Who Are We

St Mary MacKillop Primary is a Catholic school for girls and boys from Kindergarten to Year 6. We are part of the Catholic Education System in the Parramatta Diocese. Our philosophy of education is based on Christian and specifically Catholic doctrine.

Our Vision:

That St Mary MacKillop Primary be a Christ centered community that challenges students to develop their unique gifts and talents through a supportive partnership of school, parents and parish.

School Motto

The school motto is "Together We Grow" and this Motto is given life through the school's vision to realise an alive and growth-promoting community which reflects the values of the Gospel. The keynote of discipline is that of a lived respect for each person in the school community.

Over the years a strong and vibrant school community has been built wherein the variety of personal gifts are celebrated. In this community the uniqueness of each person is affirmed, initiatives are encouraged and a positive self-esteem both communally and individually is evident.

Our Learning Platform

We believe that teaching and learning should be an engaging experience for both students and teachers. This engagement is characterised by the setting of high expectations, explicit teaching, quality relationships and a belief in life long learning.

This is best achieved within the positive and supportive environment of the school community with the Catholic tradition.

Pastoral Care Policy

BELIEF STATEMENT

At St Mary MacKillop Primary School we believe Pastoral Care refers to the total care of the students. It is a term used to describe both an attitude and a process and is based upon a belief in the dignity of the person. In short, it is expressed through:

♦ development of quality relationships

♦ provision of satisfying learning experiences

♦ establishment of an effective care network

♦ provision of experiences and structures that provide for the integrated spiritual and human growth of students

(Policy – Parramatta Diocese)

We believe that the structures and relationships within our school foster an inner conviction which will help our students become thoughtful and self directed people. Central to the St Mary MacKillop school climate are the relationships that connect the various members of the school community e.g. parents, children, staff and parish clergy.

There is support where needed for the poor, marginalised and in need e.g. fee relief, uniform support and community connectedness

All staff are providers of Pastoral Care for our students

(Policy – St Mary MacKillop Primary)

Our Policy is also based on the principles of Procedural Fairness

"Procedural Fairness" is a basic right of all when dealing with authorities. Procedural fairness refers to what are sometimes described as the 'hearing rule' and the 'right to an unbiased decision.'

The 'hearing rule' includes the right of the person against whom an allegation has been made to:

♦ Know the allegation related to a specific matter and any other

information which will be taken into account in considering the matter.

♦ Know the process by which the allegation will be considered.

♦ Respond to the allegations

♦ Know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to

the allegations.

(Registration Systems and Member Non-Government Schools Manual 2004, page 51)

At MacKillop we strive to build healthy relationships and repair harm by following fair process and agreeing to be:

- Safe
- Respectful
- Learners

Where those harmed have an opportunity to be heard and the offender has the opportunity to repair the relationship.

(Procedural Fairness)

Restorative Practice

St Mary MacKillop Primary is a Restorative school committed to the implementation of the Restorative Practice framework.

The MacKillop Model of Restorative Practice is one which includes students, staff and parents who are all trained to use the framework.

This framework focuses on building and maintaining healthy relationships by focusing on repairing the harm that is caused. The school is committed to the philosophy of separating the act from the actor, or as Scripture states,

'hate the sin while loving the sinner.'

The principles of the framework are based on the elements of:

1. Fair Process
2. Restorative Questions
3. The Relational Window
4. Behavioural research
5. Explicit Practice
6. Circle Time

All stakeholders are trained to listen to each other, promote fairness and to know that all wrong doing will be repaired.

We work on the basis that individuals are most likely to trust and cooperate with others, whether they themselves win or lose, when the process is fair.

The classroom is a community of learners where those who fail to follow agreements know they will be helped to find the right way; through think time, circle time, and challenging questions. Following these strategies they will be reintegrated into the community of learners. The playground provides an opportunity for the implementation of social, team and interactive skills. The children at school are learners, mistakes are often made, however, Restorative Practice provides a process where these occasions are seen as opportunities for learning.

Training sessions in Restorative Practice are held annually for parents and new staff members.

Liturgical Life

The Catholic tradition of our school is expressed and highlighted through Eucharistic liturgies and other prayer services. Liturgies are celebrated by grades in the Multi-Purpose Centre. As a school we also celebrate the Eucharist at the beginning of each school year. The Priest from St Nicholas Parish enables our children to participate in meaningful liturgies within our school setting. The children express liturgy in song, drama and movement. This artistic expression adds colour and life to the celebration and helps the children to deepen and appreciate their faith/life experiences. Parents are always welcome to attend the children's liturgies. At 12:00 noon the whole school will pray the Angelus prayer each day, and every Friday afternoon at 2:00pm each class participates in Whole School prayer.

STAFF PRAYER

Every Friday morning at 8:25am the school staff gather to pray. We value this time together because it gives us an important focus each week for the continued building of our Christian community.

Please note - the office will open at 8:40am on Fridays.

School Celebrations

Parents, families and friends are invited to attend school celebrations throughout the year. The school celebrates and follows the liturgical calendar. In addition the school also celebrates Anzac Day, Education Week, Book Week, Mary MacKillop Feast Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparents' Day. Other events in the year are the school swimming, athletics and cross country carnivals. Parents are also invited to attend class assemblies and liturgies that are held during the year.

General Information

Hours Of Attendence

Monday to Friday 8:42am (First Bell - Warning)

8:45am (Second Bell - Commencement of Class)

Lunch 10:45am - 11:30am

Recess 1:30pm - 2:00pm

Dismissal 3:00pm

All children are dismissed at 3:00pm. The teachers supervise the children to the buses and the walkers are taken across the Fragar Road crossing, by the 'Crossing Supervisor', and can be collected there.

Supervision

Supervision of children commences at 8:15am. There is no supervision provided for children before that time unless they attend Ambrose Before and After School Care. No responsibility is taken for children arriving at school before 8:15am

Children are dismissed at 3:00pm and supervision is provided only until 3:20 pm

If, due to **extraordinary** circumstances, e.g. when a parent is detained please notify the school and your child will be informed that you are delayed. After school staff will supervise children waiting for school buses, crossing the street, riding bikes and going to cars.

Parents are reminded that all care will be given to the children, but there is no formal supervision after 3:30 pm when the last bus leaves the school.

Regular Attendance And Absences

Please send your child on time each day. Regular attendance at school is essential for progress. If your child is unavoidably late, a parent must take them to the office for a late note. If your child is going to be away from school for more than two days please contact the school office. A note is required explaining all absences. It is necessary to notify the Principal by letter if a child has to miss school for any length of time e.g. holidays, transfers, sickness. If a child is absent for one day please send a note to the child's teacher on the child's return.

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. These forms are to be completed prior to your holiday. If you are taking your child on leave for more than 5 days a copy of your travel itinerary is required with the application. The school principal can only approve up to 50 school days leave. Longer periods require the approval of the Director of Schools and the Catholic Education Commission.

Collecting Children From School

If parents wish to collect their children from school early, the permission of the Principal is necessary. Please **send a note** to the Principal/teacher. If there is a doctor's/dentist's appointment or some other very important reason why your child needs to leave the school at lunch (10:45 – 11:30 am) or break time (1:30 – 2:00 pm), we would ask you to take your child either before or after lunch or the break, **not during the break**.

School-Home Communication

A school newsletter K.I.T. (Keeping in Touch) is produced every second week, on Thursdays.

The newsletter is available via subscribing on the schools website www.mackilloppenrith.catholic.edu.au select News & Events>Newsletter and click on Subscribe to our online newsletter, complete the form, you will then receive the newsletter each fortnight via email. You can also view the newsletter on the website under 'community'.

The daily happenings of our school are given here, so parents can share as fully as possible in all that concerns their children. K.I.T. provides relevant dates, curriculum news, sport reports, details of class activities, school celebrations, recognition of achievements and Parents and Friends' functions.

We also have an official Facebook page St Mary MacKillop Primary, Penrith South.

Our school is using the Compass App, you can install the app on your phone or tablet device. Please contact the school office for instructions on setting up the Compass App.

Appointments

APPOINTMENTS

If parents have matters of concern, questions or difficulties, staff are available to assist. The first point of contact is the child's class teacher, followed by the Stage Co-ordinator.

To ensure availability please phone the office to make an appointment. If you wish to speak to your child's teacher regarding his/her progress it is necessary to make an appointment before or after school. Appointments with class teachers can only be made outside of school hours. Parents are asked not to disturb classes - if there is an emergency please go to the office.

PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

Information evenings for parents are held at various stages throughout the school year. These are held to provide information concerning educational programs and class organisation, to familiarise parents with some aspects of school curriculum, and to provide opportunities for on- going adult formation.

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.

Parent Involvement - School Learning Programs

In preparing the learning programs for each grade, the needs of each individual child are carefully considered. Most times these needs can be met through class instruction and experience, but there are times when group instruction or individual attention is needed. To help meet such a variety of needs, we appreciate parent assistance and co-operation. Some of the areas that require assistance are: reading groups, sport and library work.

If you wish to volunteer to be a parent helper at St Mary MacKillop, you first need to complete the Building Child Safe Communities Form:

BUILDING CHILD SAFE COMMUNITIES – FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS

'Building Child Safe Communities' is a new initiative developed by Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese that enhances our commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students in our care. It is now a requirement that all volunteers and contractors complete an online undertaking form that confirms expectations in relation to behaviour whilst volunteering at schools. This undertaking form also seeks to determine the suitability of volunteers by requiring them to declare that they do not have a criminal history involving children.

Volunteers – please click on 'Building Child Safe Communities – Undertaking for Volunteers' https://goo.gl/forms/eAzB7UVs8tLPRWTJ2

You will receive a confirmation email once the form has been submitted. Your details are maintained confidentiality in a central database and a copy of your confirmation is emailed to the location where you are volunteering.

Excursions

During the year teachers plan to take classes on excursions. These excursions will be planned to fit in with a particular unit of work in progress and form an important part of the child's education. Thus it is necessary that all children attend the excursions. Teachers keep the cost of these excursions to a minimum. On occasions the excursion is the performance of cultural artists who visit the school. These too are educationally enriching. The upfront payment you make for excursions, funds these educational expenses. From time to time the Parents & Friends also fund visiting speakers or the school supplements the excursion budget. On occasion, parent helpers may be required on excursions. Camps for Years 5 & 6 and participation in various sporting gala days/ representative sports are additional to the excursion fee.

Staff Development Days

Professional Learning Six times a year the school will have a pupil-free day. The days are used by the staff to plan and develop various areas of curriculum. Parents are notified via the school newsletter no later than six weeks prior to one of these days. Reminders will be posted on the School Facebook Page and through the Skoolbag App.

Children's Belongings

While every effort is made to see that each child's property is respected, we cannot accept any responsibility of children's belongings. Please ensure ALL of your children's belongings are labelled with their first and last name. This includes shoes as well as jackets, lunch boxes, drink bottles, school bags and anything else that can be mislaid. Children are asked not to bring expensive toys to school as they may be damaged or broken during play time.

Lost Property

Containers are placed outside the student foyer daily. Articles of clothing, etc. not claimed will form part of the school's emergency stock, or are donated to the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Bus Transportation

All students now need to use OPAL cards to access school buses. These can be arranged through Transport NSW. The website is www.transportnsw.info/schools-students or you can ask for a brochure from the office.

Library Bags & Borrowing

Students are asked to bring a library bag to school to protect books borrowed from the library. Library bags are available from the school office for $9.00. The loan period is 14 days, however this can be extended if requested. Borrowing will occur during class time, usually during the literacy block. If a book is lost or damaged, please let the Teacher Librarian know via the office, it would be appreciated if a replacement of another book could be made wherever possible. Students will be advised which day they will borrow.

If parents/carers would like to assist with covering or shelving books in the library, please contact the school office. Please encourage your child to borrow and return their books regularly.

School Fees

School fees are paid in Terms 1, 2 and 3. A reduction is given for the second and third child attending Catholic Schools and no charge is made for the fourth child.

The Diocesan School Building Levy will be set at the rate for the first child attending a systemic school with the same collection conditions applying as Diocesan School Fees where families have genuine economic difficulties. There are facilities to pay these fees by instalments. Please contact the Principal if you wish to pay your fees by instalments or if you want further information about any aspect of school fees.

Office Procedures Concerning - The Collection Of Money

ST MARY MACKILLOP IS A 'CASHLESS' SCHOOL

Payment for Gala Days/Fundraising etc can be made via the QKR App. School fees are payable either online or via eftpos at the school office. Please DO NOT send cash to school with your child.

Parking

Parking in the Staff Car Park is restricted to teaching and ancillary staff. Since the parking area is not large, children must not be dropped off or picked up from the staff car park before or after school. When parking in Fragar Road and Samuel Foster Drive it is important to obey the rules of the road to ensure the safety of our children.

Complaint Handling Policy

These guidelines apply to parents/guardians, students, visitors, volunteers, community members, employees and contractors of the Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese, except where issues are dealt in accordance with:

• Suspension, Transfer, Expulsion, Exclusion Procedures 2012

• Child Protection – Risk of Harm and Significant Harm and /or Allegations

•Relevant CEO discipline procedures for employees (for serious complaints involving allegations of misconduct/unsatisfactory performance by employees)

• Enterprise Agreements/Awards

• Anti-Bullying Policy for Students 2005

• Criminal Jurisdiction

Generally student complaints will be processed through school based procedures relating to pastoral care or student management. The Catholic Education Office Complaint Handling Procedures may be used in matters assessed as more serious in nature and involving an adult as one of the parties (e.g. a complaint by a student against a teacher, teacher against a student, or by a parent on behalf of their child).

Complaints relating to the areas of discrimination, harassment and bullying are dealt with according to these guidelines with reference to the Countering Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy (2010).

The principles of natural justice applies to all complaints. Natural justice is also known as procedural fairness and applies in situations where a decision could potentially have a detrimental effect on the rights, interests or legitimate expectations of a person.

Procedural fairness requires that:

1. The respondent is heard

2. The decision is not biased

3. The decision is based on relevant and reliable evidence

It is also important that complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and parties advised of the reason for any delays. Where an anonymous complaint is lodged, no action will be taken unless the allegation is reportable conduct and action must be taken in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman's Act.

To maintain confidentiality in so far that is reasonable all participants in the process, particularly the Complaint Handler, should restrict the information about the complaint to those who need to know.

All participants in the process also need to be informed of the importance of confidentiality and also that unfair repercussions or victimisation in any form is unacceptable and if evident could result in disciplinary action.

Community Awareness And Social Justice

In order to develop social awareness of the needs of others presently experiencing difficulty, children will be encouraged to support organisations outside the school. These could include: helping the St. Vincent de Paul Society with money, and Christmas hampers for needy families.

The children also assist with fundraising for other children with additional needs. This fundraising follows two models; school initiatives and students initiatives. Sometimes the focus is on raising awareness and sharing knowledge about Social Justice. It may or may not be linked to the unit of work the children are learning about in religion.

Out Of School Care Hours

The following centres provide before and after school care that drop off and pick up to and from St Mary MacKillop Primary School.

Tandara - 02 4732 4162

Kidz Klub - 02 4732 4405

Mrs P's - 02 4733 1921

Kids Academy Regentville - 02 4737 9863

Little Triumps - 02 4722 5560

Homework Policy

Rationale

Home assignment/Homework is an out of school learning activity which helps children develop long term habits of learning and time management techniques which will support them in lifelong learning.

Home Assignment/Homework should also provide opportunities for children to share their learning with their parents/caregivers. Home assignment/homework also provides the opportunity for students to initiate work or study of their own choice which relates to their own specific needs and interests.

St Mary MacKillop Primary School students are encouraged through sound Homework practice to:

- develop the practice of independent study
- develop sound study habits
- consolidate the skills learned in the classroom
- develop new areas of study and to make use of sources of information (eg:Local Library, Internet)
- involve parents/caregivers in children's learning
- involve students in constructive activities of educational benefit

Home Assignment/Homework Activities

All children will receive homework activities from their teacher. As a general statement, homework will be the consolidation of class work from any of the seven Key Learning Areas. Any questions regarding homework should be addressed initially to the child's class teacher.

If there are concerns, questions or difficulties, the usual procedure to manage these matters is firstly your child's class teacher, then the Stage Co-ordinator.

If there are more serious concerns please contact the Assistant Principal or the Principal.

Teacher/Student Initiated Tasks may include:

- reading for pleasure
- research, contract work
- learning tasks, assignment work
- writing reports, stories, poems
- collecting information, newspapers, media , radio, TV etc.
- vocabulary, word study and spelling. Whilst spelling is usually presented in lists, it's purpose is to enable children to transfer those words into daily writing
- Maths activities which consolidate and encourage problem solving

Children may receive an outline of a research task to take home but the majority of each task will be completed at school.

Parent/Caregiver Assistance is Essential: Reading, whether for pleasure or for research or literature studies, is an invaluable learning activity. Parent/caregiver involvement in the reading process enriches the learning experience for the child and must be encouraged.

This involvement could encompass:

- listening to the child read each night
- reading a story to the child and sharing the story through discussion
- discussing homework with the child and providing a sounding board where the child can share ideas.

Possible Parent/Caregiver Initiated Student Tasks/Experiences:

- family conversations (Relating experiences aids the child in expressing ideas)
- shared bedtime stories and storytelling, including retelling of stories and allowing time for discussion
- family games, activities, outings and pursuit of personal interests
- involvement with community activities
- visits to the local library
- Maths activities related to real life situations eg: shopping, cooking etc.
- supervised work on the home computer

Time Allocation for Homework

To cater for the individual skills and competence of children as well as their commitments to other outside school activities, an average amount of time spent per week on homework is suggested.

The approximate time spent should be:

- Kinder: 30 minutes
- Year 2: 1 hour
- Year 4: 2 hours
- Year 6: 2 1/2 hours

If the child is unable to complete the set work in this time allocation parents/ caregivers are asked to communicate with the class teacher to discuss any problems and possible solutions. If the Home Assignment is finished in less than the suggested time the child should be encouraged to read for pleasure. Children in all year levels are encouraged to read for pleasure on a daily basis for at least 10 minutes.

Parents/caregivers will be informed of the Home Assignment/Homework requirements and expectations at the beginning of each year. Teachers will communicate with parents/caregivers if the child is consistently not completing Home Assignment/Homework.

- Year 1: 45 minutes
- Year 3: 1 1/2 hours
- Year 5: 2 1/2 hours

Correction of Homework Homework is primarily for the children to practice known skills and to share their learning with parents. It is not a teaching tool. Teachers will not mark homework but will record and acknowledge its completion in some way. This will most often be through a shared talking and listening workshop style of homework review.

Teachers may depart from these guidelines if they believe different arrangements are in the best interest of the child. Wherever necessary, homework is to be adjusted for students with specific learning needs.

Assessment Policy

Parents/Carers with children in Year 1 to Year 6 will be provided with a report that indicates their child's overall level of achievement in each Key Learning Area (KLA) and will be provided with statistics that indicate their child's achievement relative to the rest of the year group.

The example given below demonstrates the number of students achieving at various levels and would vary from KLA to KLA, from year group to year group and from semester to semester.

Student achievement in Key Learning Areas Your child's achievement for the strands for each of the Key Learning Areas is reported using a five point scale.

E Elementary Achievement
D Basic Achievement
C Sound Achievement
B High Achievement
A Excellent Achievement

Kindergarten use an alternative report system, which is:

ED Experiencing Difficulty
WT Working Towards
A Achieved
WB Working Beyond
Overall
E D C B A

Uniform

We encourage the children to take pride in their school uniform, and we maintain a high standard in this area. Lowes store is the provider of school uniforms for St Mary MacKillop Primary. If your child is not wearing the correct uniform a reminder will be sent to parents.

Girls' Summer Uniform

- Green check dress with St. Clementine green on collar, tab and sleeve cuffs
- White ankle length socks
- Black shoes

Girls' Winter Uniform

- School tunic or bottle green slacks
- Lemon long sleeve blouse with Peter Pan collar
- Green elastic-held tie
- Bottle green zip up jacket or sweater with school emblem
- Bottle green jumpers or cardigans may be worn under the jacket
- Black knee high socks or black tights
- Black shoes

Girls Sports Uniform

- Lemon T-shirt with school emblem
- Green netball skirt or school shorts
- Green sport briefs
- White socks - worn above the ankle
- Joggers - basically white - suitable for playing sport (ie: Laces)
- Green tracksuit in winter

Boys Summer Uniform

- Grey school shorts
- Pale lemon short sleeve shirt - open neck
- Grey ankle length socks
- Black shoes - NOT BOOTS OR JOGGERS

Boys' Winter Uniform

- Grey school trousers
- Long sleeve pale lemon shirt
- Bottle green tie
- Bottle green zip up jacket or sweater with school emblem
- Bottle green jumpers may be worn under the jacket
- Grey socks

- Black shoes - NOT BOOTS OR JOGGERS

Boys' Sport Uniform

- Lemon T-shirt with school emblem
- Green shorts (NOT NYLON OR CHECKED) available from Lowes
- White socks - worn above the ankle
- Joggers - basically white - suitable for playing sport (ie: Laces)
- Green tracksuit in winter.

Hats

- Bottle green hats for boys and girls. Children are to wear the school hat in the playground at all times
- NO HAT, NO PLAY.

Caps

- Years 5 & 6 children may wear bottle green caps with school emblem. Available from Lowes.

Jewellery

- No jewellery is to be worn with the exception of one set of gold or silver studs/sleepers may be worn in pierced ears.

Hair

- 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. Hair cuts are to be suitable for school for both boys and girls.
- No hair extensions (NO MULLETS, NO. 1, ZIG ZAGS or RAZORING)

Health & Medication

Children Who Are Sick

While we do our best to care for sick children at school, it is very difficult for children to be at school when they are not feeling well. If your child is sick in the morning, it is best to keep him/her at home.

Infectious Diseases

It is important that parents seek medical advice if an infectious disease, including diarrhoea and vomiting, is suspected. Many of these diseases require that the patient (and sometimes contacts at home) be excluded from school for varying lengths of time. Please check with your doctor before your child returns to school.

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.

We will not administer Panadol or aspirin, any eye medication or ear drops/nose drops. If a child needs to be on a Nebuliser, we ask a parent or a nominated person by the parent, to come to school to administer this medication. It is essential that we have up-to-date emergency contact phone numbers should we need you urgently. Please ensure your contact numbers are always up to date.

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction. It can occur when a susceptible person is exposed to an allergen (such as a food or an insect sting). Reactions usually begin within minutes of exposure and can progress rapidly over a period of up to two hours or more. Anaphylaxis is potentially life threatening and always requires an emergency response.

Providing support to students at risk of Anaphylaxis: It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school that their child is at risk of an anaphylactic reaction. This notification should occur either at the time of enrolment, or if the student is already enrolled, as soon after diagnosis as possible.

It is the role of the parent to:

- Provide the school with an action plan for anaphylaxis.
- Provide the school with an epipen which will be kept in the school's first aid room.
- Update the 'action plan' on an annual basis and communicate this plan to your child's teacher.
- Provide the school with written requests to administer prescribed Medication.
- Replace the epipen when it has expired.