

College

Newsletter



MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra



Volume 6 2020

22 MAY

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Coming

Up

FRI 22 MAY

- Enrolment Period for Year 7 2021 concludes

MON 01 JUN

- Reconciliation Day Public Holiday

MON 08 JUN

- Queen's Birthday Public Holiday

WED 10 JUN

- Year 10 Exams begin

FRI 12 JUN

- Last day of classes for Years 11 & 12

MON 15 JUN

- Senior Exams begin

WED 24 JUN

- Year 9 into Year 10 Transition Day

Contact Us

Contact Details



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Socials



www.facebook.com/
mackillop.act



www.twitter.com/
mackillop_act



www.instagram.com/
mackillop_act



www.youtube.com/
stmarymackillop

Principal's Letter



Dear Parents, Teachers and Students,

BACK TO SCHOOL

The College has enjoyed record attendance rates each day this week, which is a powerful indication that face-to-face teaching was, is, and always will be the preferred mode of learning. Certainly, I have enjoyed welcoming our students back and leading a school of energy, humour, and where healthy, respectful relationships are exhibited – always.

The College from the outset has focused heavily on hygiene and has endeavoured to provide opportunities for social distancing, restricted access for school visitors, and delaying assemblies and year meetings. COVID-19 has not disappeared into thin air and vigilance around hygiene is strongly encouraged at this school.

WELCOME BACK

Welcome back to Mr Dan Ryall, who left the College two years ago to work in the AFL industry. Mr Ryall has returned to Canberra with his wife and is providing further impetus to the Learning Commons on the Padua Campus. Year 9 students from Holy Family Primary School will particularly remember Mr Ryall.

We also welcomed back Mrs Jane Cunneen, who was on leave during Term 1.

THANK YOU

The earlier than expected return to school has provided some challenges for families around transportation and uniform. I'd like to express my appreciation to families for working so cooperatively with the College and express my regrets that some items of uniform have not been as easily accessible as was hoped.

Yours in St Mary of the Cross MacKillop,

MICHAEL LEE
COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

"Face-to-face teaching was, is, and always will be the preferred mode of learning."

PRINCIPAL'S PRAYER

Lord,

We pray for those members of our community and around the country who are affected by COVID-19, particularly those who are first responders and who work in hospitals and care centres.

Amen



We're back to face-to-face learning

This week saw the return of students to face-to-face teaching and learning as some restrictions have eased around the COVID-19 pandemic. All year groups had high attendance rates, with most students excited to be back to school to see their friends and teachers. Feedback from parents suggests that they were excited for the return to school as well!

Supporting students as they return to face-to-face learning

With the return of students for face-to-face learning this week, students from Years 7 to 12 participated in a Student Mentoring lesson on Wednesday morning. The objectives of the lesson were to assist students in:

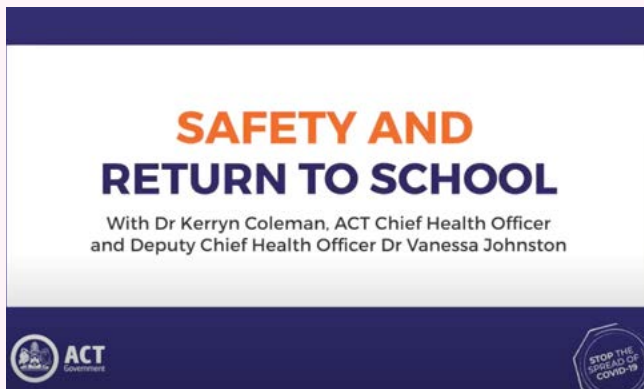
- Reflecting on their progress across all subjects, identifying what needs to be prioritised in their learning and any follow up required with teachers
- Identifying how to ensure the expectations of home study can be met
- Reviewing their goals set earlier in the year to set up the remaining weeks of Semester 1 for success

Students met with PC Teachers to discuss their academic progress after the period of remote learning and to seek any necessary guidance. Students were also asked to submit their work on Canvas, enabling parents to access their reflections.

Lachlan McNicol • Assistant Principal Pastoral Care



Video message from the ACT Chief Medical Officer



The ACT Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerryn Coleman and Deputy Health Officer, Dr Vanessa Johnston have recorded a video containing information for parents and carers about safety and returning to school. The video can be accessed online here: [Safety and Return to School](#)

House Charities

During Term 2 and 3 each year MacKillop's charity fundraising supports four charitable organisations, each selected by the Student Representative Council for each House. This year those charities are:

Mindygari	Beyond Blue
Gurabang	Rise Above
Meup Meup	Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
Ngadyung	Indigo Foundation



Praise for Canberra's youth

Teenagers can at times be negatively stereotyped in the media. The editorial below taken from the Canberra times (Friday 15 May) praises the efforts Canberra's teenagers during the period of remote learning and other social restrictions.

EDITORIAL

Canberra's youth have done us proud

WHILE much has been made of the efforts of medical workers, police, teachers, supermarket staff and others during the crisis, one group that has been overlooked are our young people.

Given how hard 2020 has been on grown-ups; what with its fires, pestilential smoke haze, hail storm, and then the existential threat posed by COVID-19, it's worth taking time out to reflect on how difficult it has been for children.

All they have known since the start of the year has been day-after-day of bad news reports. These all heralded cancelled or disrupted holidays, weeks living under a horrible red sky, an apocalyptic hail storm that wrought havoc on homes, and, finally, the two-month long coronavirus lockdown.

This has been a nightmare year which has repeatedly challenged the ability of parents to reassure their children.

That challenge reached its peak when schools were closed at a time when the number of virus cases was increasing exponentially on a daily basis.

As a result the lives of tens of thousands of children and young adults were instantly turned upside down. Everything they knew, and expected, changed in the blink of an eye.

The move to home schooling, handled

The Canberra Times

TO SERVE THE NATIONAL CITY
AND THROUGH IT THE NATION

These children are the future. That future is in good hands.

quite well under the circumstances by teachers and education department officials who ensured access to technology and prepared course materials, coincided with major upheavals in ACT homes.

Over half the mums and dads suddenly found themselves either out of work, or forced to work from home.

They were expected, on top of the disruption to their working lives, to be responsible

for structured home schooling as well.

Everybody who lived through that particular experience, whether they be a parent or a child, will have their own stories to tell.

While resilience is, next to unprecedented, almost certainly the most overused word of the coronavirus crisis response, it is the best, and most accurate, adjective to describe the ACT's young people.

Despite all the turmoil, the loss of daily physical contact with close friends, the termination of organised sports and other group activities, and the cancellation of long anticipated school excursions across Australia and around the world, they have done their bit.

Students have striven diligently to make the most of the online learning programs.

They have also, contrary to the predictions of some highly placed cynics in the Federal

government, avoided congregating in unruly groups in parks and shopping centres.

Their efforts, when you consider how fraught teenage years can be, and how central school, social and sporting activities are to life at this age, are nothing short of stoic.

While there will have been no shortage of temper tantrums, tests of will, and sharp exchanges at kitchen tables across the city, the fact is that these are part and parcel of family life.

Our youngsters have been remarkably patient given that, if pressed, the average 15-year-old would not be able to imagine a worse fate than being locked down at home with mum and dad, and their siblings, for weeks on end.

It's fair to say that parents and children across the territory will be thanking their deities of choice that school is returning this term. To have extended the closures further would have been close to unbearable.

That said, on the form they have shown, it is fair to say that if that had happened Canberra's young people would have continued to do the city proud.

These young people are the future. If the character they have shown in the last two months is anything to go by then that future is in very good hands.

Term 2 after school sport

The after school sports program that has been conducted in previous years at MacKillop will commence next Thursday, 28 May, continuing on each Thursday afternoon from 3.30pm until 4.30pm for the rest of Term 2. The sports activity for Term 2 will be Basketball. Year 12 students will be coordinating the activities with a staff member present to supervise.

With community sport unable to commence at present, all boys and girls are invited to participate including those who may play Basketball competitively as well as those who may have limited experience in organised sports.

The after school sports program provides an opportunity for students to involve themselves in the school community, enjoy a social sporting environment and build friendships. Students who have attained Bronze or Silver Status can count the hours that they attend towards their application for the next level of Status, as Community Involvement time.

Student responsibilities for hygiene and social distancing practices that have been developed and communicated to all students will continue to apply during each session, as will the hygiene practices adopted by the PE Department to ensure the safety of all students.

Consent forms for students interested are available from Pastoral Care Coordinators, the PE Staffroom or they can also be downloaded from Canvas



Return to teaching and learning

It is wonderful to have our students back at school. The feedback from students, parents and carers, and teachers reflects an overwhelming happiness at being back at school. Our remote learning experience provided the opportunity to continue learning and for most students this worked well. We are grateful to our students, families and teachers who made this transition quickly and obligingly.

Teachers are now working with their classes to assess where our students are up to in their learning and making accommodations as required. For students who have experienced issues completing work, the Learning Commons is available on both campuses to assist them.

Over the period of remote learning, we came to appreciate the benefits that routine provides for our students. Our teachers are now working hard to return to these routines at school so that learning can be maximised. Returning to the regular structure provided by unit outlines, classwork and assessment is essential. These structures are well known by students and direct purposeful learning.

Assessment will continue as planned and senior and Year 10 examinations will run as scheduled. The College will proceed with its regular reporting schedule and all students will be provided with a comprehensive semester report.

I would like to extend a genuine thanks to all parents and students who provided us with feedback, and who participated in our remote learning.

Maria O'Donnell • Assistant Principal Academic Care

What's been happening in the teaching and learning space?



Year 7 Band

It has been great to welcome the Year 7s back playing their instruments. Many have put in a lot of work at home and have made great progress. We look forward to sharing a performance with you at the end of the semester via video.

Veronica Boulton
Director of Music & Performance



Year 7 Technology

During remote learning, Year 7 technology students were asked to complete a design project where they had to design, create and evaluate a re-purposed household item or a piece of cardboard furniture.

Amanda Knott
STEAM & I-Hum

Engineering is Elementary program

Last year, I was one of two Australian Navy Cadets selected by Defence Force Recruitment to develop an educational audio-visual aid for school students to roll out the 'Engineering is Elementary' program across Australia. The program is focused on inspiring young high school and primary school students to develop enthusiasm for STEM subjects.

I was given the opportunity to work with specialised teams from Questacon and Defence to participate in a video that explores the concept of how an object can be retrieved underwater through the use of hydraulics.

I got involved as my future plan is to become a medical practitioner as a Naval Officer, which requires me to study STEM as core subjects. While I was shooting this video, I felt a real sense of contentment as I was part of a program that enables students to develop critical thinking, problem solving and increased confidence toward reaching their potential in future STEM careers such as engineers, doctors or teachers.

I am so grateful for this rewarding experience.

Archisha Meeson • Year 11



[Check out Archisha's video here.](#)

Notices & Information

Student access to drinking water

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all drinking fountains around the school have been turned off.

However, students are able to access water to drink at the water bottle refilling stations around the school.

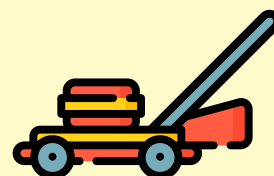
It is recommended that each student bring a personal water bottle to school to access drinking water during the school day.

Paul O'Callaghan & Sandra Darley
Campus Heads

More lawn mowers needed

The Technology Faculty is hoping to seek out more old lawn mowers so that Year 10 students can work on them. Contact John on 6209 0164 if you are able and would like to donate.

John Solari • Technology Faculty





Humanities and Social Sciences

I was recently reading a *New York Times* article on remote learning. It consisted of a series of interviews with both teachers and students on their experiences in the change to online instruction. Two observations particularly resonated with me in light of the current environment in Australia and our College. The first was from a high school history teacher:

"They may not be learning as much history as my former students, ... but they are LIVING history right now."

The second was from a high school student, and posed a very real question for many of our own:

"Why do I wish that I was back in school?"

The Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Department is in the unique position of being able to address both observations. HASS is the study of human behaviour and interaction in cultural, economic, and political contexts. It is ideally suited to examine the way in which our current 'history' occurs.

Classes moved to an online model, exploring new ways of learning and technologies to enhance our teaching. And whilst the manner of learning may have changed, engagement continued. Excursions may be on hold, but students across HASS are still competing in National Competitions, having Canvas discussions, "breaking out", working on research tasks, and exploring their own inquiry questions on COVID-19's impact on the everyday in Australia.

These all provided a new environment and language for teaching. But no matter whether the Class Conference is in Civics and Citizenship, Global Studies, Economics and Business, Geography, Philosophy, Behavioural Studies, Geo-Politics or History, the focus on learning continued.

In studying Humanities and Social Sciences, students are developing the ability to think critically, make decisions based on evidence, develop proposals for action and communicate effectively. Responding to challenges in society requires an understanding of the key historical, political, legal, economic, and cultural factors involved, and how these different factors interrelate. Understanding these elements has never been more relevant. Current remote learning urges us to focus on the history occurring now, consider opportunities and challenges for the future, and drives students to consider their own role in a 'new normal'.

With this in mind, we can also address the second observation from the *New York Times*: you wish to be back at school to share the human connection. The schooling experience is to share in the struggle, the learning and the success of students. It is to work with young learners to achieve their best, no matter what situations we find ourselves in. This is the driver of all in the HASS Department.

Michael Batten & Sandhya Tulpule • HASS Coordinators

INSPIRE 2020

Art competition

PRIZES

Eckersley's and
Officeworks gift cards;
overall winner receives a
year's membership at the
National Gallery of
Australia

All entries and
winners' certificates
displayed on
MacKillop Day

A selection of the best
works will be
exhibited at the
Tuggeranong Arts
Centre

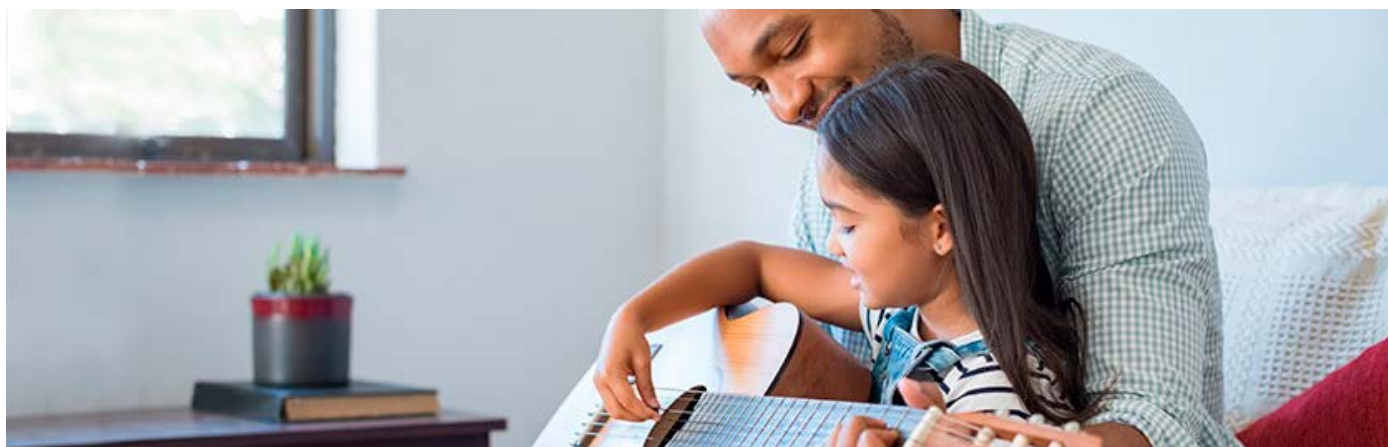
CATEGORIES

Drawing
Painting
Photography
Mixed Media
Sculpture
Digital & Media Art

ENTRIES DUE FRIDAY 28 AUGUST

INSIGHTS

Charting a new course for kids post COVID-19



While we've been denied access during the COVID-19 pandemic to activities such as playing group sport, spending time in a café or meeting with friends, there's been plenty of upside too.

Discussions with friends reveal that family life has been a big beneficiary from the physical distancing measures. Comments such as "It's so good to slow down," "I cherish the time I'm spending with my children," and "I'm discovering the joy of having real conversations with my teenager" point to the positive side of getting off the family roundabout many of us have been on.

Though the restrictions placed on society are of course challenging, the imposed period of social isolation has provided an opportunity for parents to forge new habits that have potential to bring more joy and less stress to their children's lives once the threat has subsided. Here are some ideas to consider while charting a new course for kids post COVID-19.

Significant personal hobbies

Our previous reliance on organised, adult-initiated activity to keep kids busy came at the expense of child-initiated hobbies and interests. The rise of personal digital entertainment and communication technology in recent years has also contributed to the demise of hands-on hobbies such as collecting, crafts and music.

The Scandinavians have long valued the positive impact of hobbies on a person's wellbeing and quality of life. In turn they encourage (and in Sweden's case heavily subsidise) the uptake of hobbies and personal interests from a very young age.

Personal learning centres

Experts agree that the future of work will be characterised by constant change, requiring workers to continually learn and upskill if they are to adapt. Our children will need to see themselves as continuous learners if they are to succeed in this uncertain future.

The home is a great place to plant this concept in young minds and there's no better way to do this than establishing their own personal learning centre. Start small with a bean bag, a small book shelf and build from there. It's the idea rather than the physical setting where the learning significance lays.

Mental health practices

This period in isolation has offered an opportunity to embed good mental health practices in children and young people. Three key health practices to continue include healthy eating, plenty of exercise and good sleep patterns. Add regular mindfulness practice, deep breathing and the opportunity to spend plenty of time in nature and you'll be establishing a strong mental health and wellbeing framework for life.

Mix of alone and group activities

Life in social isolation has meant family members have had to compromise. Extroverts who love to be surrounded by people have had to give parents and siblings the space they need. Introverts who prefer their own company have been sharing their time, space and company with other family members. Post COVID-19, consider encouraging kids to experience a mixture of alone time, allowing for personal reflection and family time, which promotes family connection. Both are essential for healthy wellbeing.

Deep eldership connection

Increased one-on-one time between parents and kids has been a positive side effect of life in social isolation. The opportunity for parents to connect with children and young people with greater depth and meaning is a return to eldership, practised by past generations. Eldership, where parents shared their wisdom and their vulnerabilities with young people, when combined with healthy rites of passage is a time-honoured way of preparing young people for adulthood.

This period of social isolation has provided a rare opportunity for parents to renew and refresh their children's lifestyles, and in some circumstances, reboot family lives as well. It would be a waste to climb back on the busy roundabout of life once the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, without making some positive changes to the way we live.



Michael Grose

Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's an award-winning speaker and the author of 12 books for parents including *Spoonfed Generation*, and the bestselling *Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It*. Michael is a former teacher with 15 years experience, and has 30 years experience in parenting education. He also holds a Master of Educational Studies from Monash University specialising in parenting education.