Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to Week 7 of Term 1, as we head in to the last month of this term. There are several important events and happenings ahead of us in these last four weeks.

Yesterday, the College held our Annual Open Day to celebrate the commencement of Catholic Schools Week. This year, the theme of Catholic Schools Week is “Educating for Today and Tomorrow”. During the Open Day we invited the community in to see the College and what we are able to offer children and families in this partnership during their 13 years of education. We enjoyed this opportunity to share our College with many visitors and this time enabled them to see many different aspects of the College – both Primary and Secondary. We also shared the opening of the Sports Foyer in the Aitken Hall. This is an area that acknowledges the students who have succeeded in many sports through the pathways of Catholic Sports. Thank you to the staff and many families who were able to provide this opportunity.

This week is also Wellbeing Week for our staff. Teaching is a very busy and exciting profession and we need to take some time to remember our staff need to take some personal space at times and that they have families who may, at times, miss their presence at home due to the requirements of the teaching load. This week I ask that parents not seek appointments so as to give staff this time which will enable them to get away in the afternoon on time by not seeking appointments. Our Parent / Teacher interviews are ahead in Week 9 where you will be able to catch up with the teachers. Details on these appointments will be sent home in a separate letter.

Key Dates Ahead
- Monday 9th – Friday 13th March – Catholic Schools Week
- Friday 13th March – Harmony Day
- Sunday 15th March – Yr 4 Parish Mass @ 10am
- Tuesday 17th March – Kinder and Year 7 2016 Information Evening for Parents/Carers
- Wednesday 18th March – Parent Workshop – 2 sessions – 9am and 6.30pm
- Monday 23rd – Friday 25th March – Parent / teacher Interview Week
- Wednesday 25th March – K-6 Athletics Carnival
- Thursday 26th March – Year 6 Cluster Mass
- Sunday 29th March – Palm Sunday
- Monday 30th March – Thursday 2nd April – Easter Liturgies
- Thursday 2nd April – Last day Term 1
- Monday 20th April – Day 1 Term 2

Catholic Schools Week – 2015 “Educating For Today and Tomorrow”

Primary Update

MacKillop Catholic College

Week 7, Term 1, 9th March
Harmony Day

Harmony Day (officially 21 March) celebrates Australia’s cultural diversity. It’s about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.

This year we will celebrate Harmony Day on Friday 13th March. The day will begin with the Primary School joining the Parish for Mass at 9:15am. This will be followed by an amazing array of cultural groups joining us and working with the children through a variety of activities. After lunch, families will be able to join the children in their classrooms for an Open Class Time, where you will be able to see some of the work they have undertaken this term.

Families are warmly invited to join us for this day. Children who celebrate their cultural backgrounds are asked to dress in traditional costume if they are able and all children are asked to wear something orange for the day, as this is the colour representing Harmony Day.

We will ask the children to donate a gold coin on this day to support Project Compassion and make a donation to the various cultural groups working with us for the day.

Staffing Update:

We are experiencing some changes in staffing in Primary at this time. In a larger school such as ours, events and situations change in people’s lives and we need to celebrate, work with and support the staff involved. We have a few joys and surprises and changes in our group at the moment.

- Miss Jackson will be on leave for the next 3 weeks as she begins an exciting phase of her life when she is married next Saturday. She will return to us in the last week of term and will be the new Mrs Merrotsy. We wish her and her fiancé, Trent, all the very best for their future ahead. Our thanks go to Mrs Lee for looking after Yr 3B during this time.

- Mrs London will be taking a week long service leave in the last week of this term from Friday 27th March to Thursday 2nd April. Mrs Smith will be working with Yr 4 B during this time.

We are in the process of finalizing 3 other positions for the remainder of this year.......

- Mrs Coulter has been on leave for the past few weeks and unfortunately will not be returning to MacKillop. Mrs Coulter has only been with our community a short time, and had settled in well with her class and the staff in those weeks. Her leaving is unfortunate, but necessary for Mrs Coulter, and we send our warmest wishes to her for the future. Our thanks go to Mrs Smith for stepping in during this time to look after the children in Yr 3G. This will mean that there is an impact on this class for parent/teacher interviews and reports in Term 2. I am working on the best possible solution for the class at this stage and will continue to inform the parents as I am able to do so.

- Mrs Ellmore will return for a few weeks in Term 2 - at this stage it is anticipated the Mrs Ellmore will be here for at least 4 – 6 weeks, but she will be expecting her twins during Term 2 and twins are never good at keeping to expected deadlines ....... So we will keep in touch with Yr 1 Banksia. We look forward to celebrating this special time with her in the future.

- Mr Cutrupi will be having a ‘tree change’ next term. While Mr Cutrupi is a Central Coast man, he and his wife worked for a few years in the Forbes area before securing his position here at MacKillop. Mr Cutrupi has been offered a permanent position in Forbes commencing in Term 2. This will be a wonderful opportunity for him and his young family although a sad time for us in losing a good staff member. We wish Mr Cutrupi and his family the very best for the future ahead.

As these appointments are finalized we will continue to update parents. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we work to clarify these. I understand parents may have some concerns but please understand that we are working on maintaining as much stability as possible in these circumstances.
Kindergarten and Year 7 2016 Parent Information Evening

* On Tuesday 17th March at 6.30pm we will hold our annual Information Evening for families seeking enrolment in Kindergarten and Year 7 in 2016. This will begin in the Church and then split in to the two groups.

* If you have a child in either of these categories or have family or friends who would be seeking enrolment for 2016, please attend the evening. It is still important for our current Yr 6 families to attend as they begin the next phase of their education.

Athletics Carnival

On Wednesday 25th March, we will hold our annual Athletics Carnival. Mrs Denneman will send home further details regarding this day and its organization. Please read this carefully and return the permission note to your child’s class teacher.

After the smooth success of the Cross Country event last Friday, we know that this will once again we well organized by Mrs Denneman and the staff and will be an enjoyable day for everyone. Parents are very welcome to join the children and staff for the day. Two points of clarification for all families ….

*The Athletics Carnival is a whole school community event. We ask all children to remain at the Carnival for the day to participate in the team spirit, rather than leave once their own events are completed.

*The day does have it’s competitive events for selection to the next level, but remember we are a primary school, not the Olympics, and our carnival should not be a time where parent tempers get frayed over things. If you have a question of staff, please ask it respectfully, as sadly we have had some unpleasant situations from parents in the past.

Uniform Reminders

*Please avoid the new radical hair designs that seem to be creeping in. The closely shaved hair on one side only of some of the boys looks harsh on them in primary school. Longer hair needs to be above the collar. In our secondary school, longer hair for boys MUST be tied back.

*We are seeing coloured sports shoes and bright laces starting to creep back in, especially for the older classes. Please ensure your children follow the school standards or predominantly WHITE shoes and laces.

* As this term draws to a close, parents often ask about when the winter uniform begins. We usually aim for Week 3 of Term 2, which will be Monday 4th May. This gives the first two weeks of that term for the change over to occur.

Holy Week

During Week 10, commencing 30th March, we celebrate the most important week of our Church… Holy Week. We begin this special time on Sunday with Palm Sunday and during the week, we will ‘walk’ the children through the events of Holy Week, with an afternoon Liturgy on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 2.30pm in the Church and finishing our term with a special Liturgy on Thursday at 2.20pm in the Church.

Holy Week
NAPLAN
For parents with children in Year 3 and 5, there is a letter included to give you information about the Naplan Assessment Program which is held in Term 2, Tuesday 12th – Thursday 14th May.

Kids Matter
Included with the newsletter today, you will find two article some the Wellbeing Team – one with some ideas for supporting children from cultural diverse backgrounds.
The second flyer refers to Family Week and gives some ideas for activities that you might be able to do with your family during the week.

Parish Mass
This Sunday, 15th March, will be our Year 4 Parish Mass at 10am. All families are encouraged to come along and share the celebration of Mass together. The Year 3 children continue their Sacramental Program for Reconciliation at this Mass.