Dear Parents,

Thank you for coming along this afternoon. The following points will hopefully explain some important information you will need for our class in 2017.

Welcome to Year ... We are thoroughly looking forward to working with you and your child this year. 😊

SCHOOL VALUES

We would be grateful if you would reinforce the following school rules at home:

- RESPECT OURSELVES AND OTHERS
- RESPECT OUR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
- RESPECT EVERYONE’S RIGHT TO LEARN

INFORMATION A TO Z:

ABSENT NOTES

By law we require an absent note on a separate piece of paper detailing name, reason for absence and date, for the purpose of marking the roll. Partial absences, including leaving early or arriving late, require you to sign in at the office. A verbal explanation is not sufficient. If your child is absent from school on short notice, for any reason, you are able to ring the College Office on 4392 9399 before 9.30am to inform the staff about your child’s absence. This is an important safety procedure for your child and your cooperation is essential. Parents are still legally required to send a note to the class teacher regarding the absences and these will be kept with the child’s file.

Please Note: If you are going on an extended break during the school term, please contact your child’s class teacher in writing. All variations to school attendance (other than sick leave) must be approved by the Primary Principal.

ANAPHYLAXIS

An important reminder about the peanut allergy situation at MacKillop College - Parents are asked to consider sandwich fillings other than peanut butter or products containing nut products if possible. We have children with peanut allergies, children who have severe, life threatening reactions as well as other children who suffer reactions. If your children are not prone to reactions they can still enjoy peanut butter and related products at home and on weekends. Thank you for your understanding and support.

APPOINTMENTS/ COMMUNICATION

If you have any concerns regarding your child’s education or if there are any problems or concerns with your child or changes in circumstances at home that you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to make an appointment with your classroom teacher. We would be pleased to hear from you to arrange a time to discuss any concerns. This is possible in many formats – in person setting up a suitable time for both parties; by phone before or after school at reasonable and suitable times; by sending in a note to the teacher; or by the use of technology such as emails or apps. This year, if teachers and parents wish to send emails to each other, we have asked teachers to use the app called ‘Class Dojo’. Many parents are already familiar with this process and it is a
useful tool for making contact with individuals, groups or the whole class. Teachers are able to post information, samples of children’s work, and photos etc from excursions.

As teachers are quite often at meetings before and after school, or preparing for class, it is vital that meetings be arranged via an appointment rather than trying to catch up with them for a brief minute on the playground. For working parents a phone interview can also be arranged if necessary. When you have any questions or concerns regarding your child, your classroom teacher is always the first port of call. Often questions come to members of the Executive in the first instance who are often not aware of the day to day occurrences within a classroom and are unable to respond in an informed manner. You will be referred back to the class teacher if this is the case.

If, however, you have spoken with the class teacher who, for a variety of reasons, is unable to provide the answers to your questions, then you are asked to contact the Pastoral Coordinators for the various grades. This year, those Coordinators are: Kindergarten to Year 3, Mrs Ann Jackson, and Years 4 to 6, Mrs Kylie Huggins.

**ARRIVING AND DEPARTING**

Supervision does not start until 8.25am each day. Parents must realise the risks involved in leaving their children unattended, so we request that you DO NOT arrive earlier than this time. Upon arrival the students will place their bags outside their classrooms and then move off to the Shade sail area until 8.45am.

The first morning bell sounds at 8:45am and children should be ready to start classes at this time. Class teachers are required to complete a class roll for children’s attendance. This includes entering late arrival times. As this is a legal document and can be subpoenaed for court proceedings, it is important that children arrive at school ready to start the school day on time. As classes commence at 8:50am, children arriving after that time will be noted as being late. If they arrive after 9:00am, children will need to lodge their arrival at the Front Office area and take a late slip before going to their classroom. Regularly arriving late, at say 9:00am, with no clear reason, is not appropriate, and this will be followed up with parents. It is important to teach your child good habits from an early age and clear routines will help in the morning rush period getting ready for school. Please do not drop children at the front gate by themselves if they are late for school. It is important to park the car, walk your child in to the school grounds, complete the late information and walk them to their classroom.

In the afternoons, children move to designated areas for walking home, kiss and drop or buses. Parents are able to meet their children in the various assembly areas – the Creek, the main Shade Sail area of the Courtyard area. Please DO NOT wait outside the classrooms or along the path leading to the classrooms. If you need to collect your child earlier than 3:05pm, please notify their class teacher and sign your child out from the office, prior to collecting them. If there is a change to your child’s routine, including if they are to go home with a friend or relative, please notify the class teacher. No child will be allowed to wait for older siblings to pick them up in any area of the school except the COLA. This is a duty of care and safety issue.

**BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

During 2016, we were very pleased to have our MacKillop Before and After School Care Facility (OOSCH) open. This is a wonderful support for our families and I urge families to engage with it where needed. If you need to have your child arrive at school before 8.15am, they must be booked in to the OOSCH on a casual or regular basis. Supervision does not commence until 8.25am and, for safety reasons, we are unable to have children unsupervised in the playground. Parents of children who regularly arrive before this time will be contacted to discuss this situation.

Please do not park in the Primary Staff Carpark when you drop your child to the centre. As you saw in the list of staff above, we have many primary staff to fit in that carpark area. Parents park at the bottom of the main carpark and walk across to the centre from there.

You are able to contact Catholic Care, our service providers, on 0418384678.

**BIRTHDAYS**

If you wish to send a cake to school for your child’s birthday please ensure the cake is cut into the correct number of segments for all the children in the class, and that serviettes are provided. Individual cupcakes are a welcome alternative!
**BUS TRAVEL**

Children catching buses must line up in the COLA area. The teacher on duty will call the bus line to move to the bus when it arrives. Conduct of children on buses to and from school is the combined responsibility of the parents, the bus company and the school. There is a limit to what any one of these three can do independently. The bus company is within its rights to prohibit children from bus travel should their conduct be inappropriate. Please assist the school and the bus company by ensuring that children know the appropriate conduct on public transport, ie:

- Remain seated, where possible;
- Don’t eat on the bus or in bus lines;
- Never throw anything from a window;
- Be courteous; sit quietly and talk with a friend;
- Don’t swear or scream out;
- Don’t swing on the bus rails;
- Never distract the driver while the bus is in progress.

Children in the infants’ classes are entitled to free bus travel irrespective of where they live. Primary children must live a distance of 2.3 km from the school before they are eligible for a free bus pass. Please see the Front Office if your child requires a bus pass form.

**CANTEEN**

Our College Canteen is in the hands of an external company. Lunch can be ordered daily. Please, when ordering lunch with a paper bag, please write halfway down the bag (name, class, food/drink ordered with prices beside, total at the bottom and money enclosed), as the top gets curled over. The canteen is also open for purchases at recess and lunch.

Students can go to the canteen once the 1.30pm bell rings indicating the conclusion of eating time. No frozen items are to be sold at recess. Emergency lunch order slips are for children who do not have lunch, and the class teacher or the teacher on duty will sign one prior to the child going to the canteen. Students are not to purchase items from the canteen after school. Appropriate breakfast items only may be purchased before school. Primary students are not permitted to use the vending machines located in the Canteen area. Ordering of lunches can also now be carried out through the website “Munch Monitor”.

Setting up an online account is easy!

1. Go to [www.munchmonitor.com](http://www.munchmonitor.com)
2. Click LOGIN
3. Click REGISTER
4. Enter school ID: smccw
5. Password: munch2259
6. Click SUBMIT
7. Enter your email address
8. Review and tick the Terms of Use
9. Click CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT
10. Click on the ACTIVATION LINK in the email sent to you
11. Follow the steps to create your Parent Profile
12. Add Students to your account
13. Click on Account Top-up to transfer money into your account
14. You are now ready to order online.

Quick Information

- You can place orders online up to 4 weeks in advance
- Top-up your account online using VISA/Mastercard
- List allergies to alert canteen staff
- It only costs $3.00 per school term for the family account
- You can order a prepaid card
- Call 1300796190 for further information
CLASSROOM HELPERS
Classroom teachers value the support given to them through your help in the classroom. Each teacher has their own plan as to how best use this support and you will need to be guided by them as to the times they require help and the type of assistance that they require. Any parent wishing to assist in the classroom will need to have a Working With Children Check which is available through the Office of the Children’s Guardian website http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children/working-with-children-check. A Working With Children Check is a prerequisite for anyone in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and review of findings of workplace misconduct. The result of a Working With Children Check is either a clearance to work with children for five years, or a bar against working with children. There is no fee involved for this for volunteer workers. A copy of this should be forwarded to Mrs Jackson for our files.

The job of a helper is to assist the teacher and encourage the children during the activity. Confidentiality within the classroom of each child’s behaviour and academic development is very important. For those who are unable to commit to a regular time feel free to see us about the many little jobs that we need assistance with e.g. sharpening pencils, cleaning, resource making, craft construction etc. Your class teacher, should they require classroom helpers, will send a note home to this effect within the first few weeks of term.

On Friday 10th February at 9:00am there will be a short information session for all parents who wish to assist in the classroom and parents will need to attend this session in order to be eligible to do so.

CLASS PARENTS
Each grade will have a group of class parents who support the teacher by assisting with the care of the class’ welfare. This support may take the form of sending a sympathy card, etc. to a class family who has suffered a loss, and generally establishing a link between the classroom teacher and parents of the students. Our Family Liaison officer, Mrs Natalie Tunstead, will work with, and organize meetings of, the Class Parents and establish a College recognized Facebook Page for each grade.

COMMUNITY TIME ASSEMBLIES
For 2017, Community Time will take place each week for all K-6 children on Monday afternoons at 2pm in the College Hall for the last hour of the day. In an effort to limit our times out of class, we will not hold the Monday morning assemblies, as this is a key learning time for the children as they begin their week. Families are most welcome to join us on Monday afternoons. There will be a format to follow and we will be working with our Yr 6 Leaders to lead this time and the children will sit in House Teams. The last Community Time of each term will be the Principals Awards assembly. At times, the Hall is needed for Secondary exams and we will move our Assembly to the Church on these weeks.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION
If we are not able to contact parents in the case of an emergency of illness of a child, it is important for the school to have the name and phone number of an emergency contact person. This person could be either a relative or family friend that the child is comfortable with. The parental home and work phone numbers are not suitable as emergency contact numbers as we already have these on file. Please ensure that your personal contact details and those of the emergency contacts are up to date.

EXCURSIONS
Class teachers regularly plan excursions. These are relevant to the Curriculum areas under study in classrooms. When children are to go on a school excursion or to a sports carnival, a permission note is sent home. These are to be signed and returned to school. Due to our safety policies, if a permission note is not received, the child will not be allowed to leave the school grounds. Phone permission is not acceptable. Teachers will plan their excursions around their class budget, which are part of your School Fee Payment.
EXPENSIVE TOYS, TRADING CARDS, ELECTRONIC GAMES
We ask that parents do not allow children to bring these items to school. Sadly in past years, we have had items broken or stolen and disagreements between children have occurred over ownership issues with items such as trading cards and toy figures. Please keep them to share with friends on weekends and holidays.

FIRST AID / MEDICATION
Any medical history, which is relevant to your child’s school life, should be discussed with the Primary Principal and class teacher. If your child needs to take regular medication at school for medical conditions, it is essential that the school’s appropriate medication forms be completed, for our records. Please see the Front Office staff to discuss this. If your child is on antibiotics for short-term illnesses, please contact the Front Office and complete the Short Term Medication Slip. Mrs Felicity Banfield is our designated Primary Medical Officer and she is available to discuss any situations with families and the class teacher.

FRUIT BREAK
Students will have fruit break at approximately 10am. Please send your child with a fruit or vegetable snack (not processed or messy) that they can enjoy at this time.

HEAD LICE
Parents/Carers are encouraged to check their children on a regular basis for head lice. Head lice are, unfortunately, a problem in most schools at different times through the year. If you see evidence of lice or eggs, please treat your child’s hair before they return to school. If there is a problem found at school, parents will be phoned to inform them, as this problem spreads extremely easily. If your child does have head lice, please treat the condition appropriately and inform the class teacher to enable a general note to be sent home to families that will assist in containing the problem.

HOME READING
Home Reading is a vital component of the daily routine. Without well-developed reading skills, your child is likely to experience difficulties in all areas of the curriculum. Research has proven that children who come from a home environment where reading takes place regularly have greater success, with not only English activities at school, but also activities right across all learning areas.
For younger children, home readers will be available changed regularly and should be brought to school each day in their Polly Wallys. Please note, reading is taught at school at an instructional level for each child. Your home reader is a book that your child should be able to read with confidence and is therefore at an easier level. Children who are independent readers may read the home readers, but may also read texts of their own interests. These texts could take the form of books, magazines, comics, newspapers, game manuals, etc. If your child chooses to read a text from either the school library or from home, can you please make time to hear them read that book too, ensuring that it is an appropriate level for their reading skills. Equally important as reading with your child is talking with them about what they read. This greatly assists with comprehension development. (How and why questions are brilliant for this.)
As children become more confident with their reading, they also need some time to read independently, for leisure without being tested. Home reading is ideal (at this level) when interspersed with instructional guidance and reading for enjoyment independently.
To encourage children to develop a love of books at an early age we encourage you to read to your child each evening this year. In this way you are modelling reading with expression and are able to discuss books read to increase your child’s comprehension of texts.

LABELLING
Please ensure that you regularly check your child’s name is clearly displayed on all their belongings, e.g. hat, drink bottles, lunch boxes, smaller plastic containers, jumpers, library bags, raincoats, etc.
**LIBRARY**
A few points regarding Library procedures:
- Students need to bring a strong, preferably waterproof, library bag each week so that the books are cared for and returned in good condition.
- Children can return and borrow any day not just on their Library day.
- The Library is open before school and at lunch break for borrowing, reading and quiet play.
- Lost or damaged books need to be paid for at the Finance Office.
- Contact Library staff if there is ever an issue with Library books.

**LIFE SKILLS**
Please teach your child their surname, address and phone number. If your child is yet to learn the skill of tying shoelaces, please do a double knot for school shoes and take the time to teach your child this important life skill. Please also ensure your child knows how to blow their nose! Personal hygiene, no matter what age, is important for our children.

**LONG TIME OUT**
For the safety of all the children, the school has a “safe hands” policy. If this rule is broken an automatic ‘Long Time Out’ applies. This entails students missing out on half their lunchtime play. ‘Long Time Out’ notes must be signed and returned by parents the following day.

**LOST PROPERTY**
Lost property will be placed in the storage box behind the Bumble Bee wall near 4W.

**MESSAGES**
The best routine for your child is to make them aware of their travel arrangements before they leave home in the morning. Please do not phone the school if your arrangements have been clearly made with your child. In a school of this size, these messages, when children are already aware of the arrangements, simply cause a backlog of work in the Front Office. If you need to get an important change/message to your child, we ask that parents phone the school before 2:00pm. All necessary messages will then be given to children at 2.55pm ready for the end of day. Often parents ring right on the end of day bell and office staff are then trying to get messages to children in a short space of time.

**MOBILE PHONES**
Most primary school age children do not require a mobile phone. If, however, your situation necessitates that your child requires a phone in their bag, please send a note to the class teacher explaining the reason, so the class teacher is aware of this. Mobiles phones MUST remain in the child’s bag and are their responsibility. They must not be turned on during school hours, used in classrooms or to send messages. If there are any issues with a mobile phone, they will be confiscated and parents will be called to collect the phone from school. Consequences will be in place for the children who use these inappropriately. Smart Watches for kids are an unnecessary distraction for children and we ask that these are not worn at school. Any communication with your child can take place through the office.

**MONEY**
When the children need to bring money to school for Book Club, school fees, etc. please use an envelope clearly marked with name and class, amount and what the money is for. If you are giving your child money to spend at the canteen it would be helpful if you gave them the exact amount and ensure they know what it is for.

**NAPLANT NATIONAL TESTING**
Children in years 3 and 5 will take part in the compulsory National Testing Programme, NAPLAN. This will be in Week 2, Term 2 on 9, 10,11 May.
PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS
Parent teacher interviews will be conducted in Week 8 of Term 1. We encourage all parents to attend these sessions as valuable information regarding your child’s progress will be discussed. You will be advised when the online booking system is available.

PERMISSION NOTES
Permission notes are required whenever your child leaves the school grounds with another adult e.g. going home to a friend's birthday party. Children are not able to simply decide to go home with a friend and their mum/dad. As for school events/carnivals, we require a permission note from parents if a child is going home with another adult.

PREPARATION FOR LEARNING
In previous years, the Preparation for Learning Booklet was introduced to our school as a support document for parents to assist their children with learning at home. This was in response to the increased demands of home life and the conflicts that often surround ‘homework’, the time taken away from quality teaching and learning to plan, prepare and then mark homework, the poor return rate of homework, and the increasing number of research reports that question the educational value of homework. When parents were surveyed at the end of 2014 as to their opinion on the Preparation for Learning Booklet the general consensus was that it was good thing, but that it needed some enhanced structure around it. Parents are, of course, able to draw on as many or as few of the activities in the booklet according to the needs of their own children. This booklet will be sent home to families who are new to the school however, if you have misplaced your copy from last year, please complete the form below and I will get a copy to your class teacher. As Mrs Dietrich noted above, we will review our processes in this area with your input.

REPORTS
Reports are sent home at the end of Term 2 and again at the end of Term 4.

REWARD
We are promoting the new “Bucket Fillosophy” Reward System in our school. The students recognize behaviours that help to fill their “bucket” and the “buckets” of others in our school. Children also receive tokens for their House Team as they live the values of our school mentioned above. These are tallied weekly and at the end of the term, the ‘winning’ House Team will be rewarded with a special treat.

R.F.F
R.F.F means release from face-to-face teaching. It is a time when the classroom teacher plans, evaluates, tests, makes resources, marks work, etc. During this time children will have Library and PE lessons. See the schedule outlined at the end of this information regarding the days for our class.

SAFETY TO AND FROM SCHOOL
We would like to remind parents that any child riding their bike or scooter to or from school MUST wear a helmet. For safety reasons, we do not permit children to ride skateboards or rip-sticks to school. It is just too dangerous, especially when crossing Sparks Road. We also encourage parents to only allow their child to ride, skate or walk to school, with a sibling or friend, when they are in Year 3 or above. If older children are going to come to school with a Kinder, Year 1 or Year 2 siblings or friends, we strongly encourage you to talk to them about road safety and stranger danger.

SCHOOL FEES
Accounts for School Fees are being finalised and will be sent home to parents within the next few weeks. Please ensure that you keep to these due date payments. Payment options include:
- Cheque or cash payments at the Finance Office or sent in with your child;
- B-Pay;
- EFTPOS;
- Internet Banking
It is important in this economic climate that parents keep in touch with the school if they experience financial hardship. Requests for regular time payments can be finalised with Finance Office at school. If parents are seeking financial support, you will need to make an appointment to discuss this. Parents will also need to bring documentation to verify their situation. We do not find delving into personal finances easy, but this process is necessary to keep on top of the situation from the start of the year. The school would never like to see a child’s education suffer due to financial difficulties.

**SCHOOL NEWSLETTER / COMMUNICATION**

Primary Matters is a weekly publication found on the College website that gives parents information regarding upcoming events. Parents are asked to read it, and keep it handy for reference, as it is one of the most important forms of communication between school and home.

Included with the newsletter you will receive a Term Calendar indicating the events for the term ahead. We encourage you to download the MacKillop College App where you can access the information and also receive notifications. Visit the App Store and search for MacKillop College to download. You are also able to access newsletters on the College Website: [http://www2.mccwdbb.catholic.edu.au/](http://www2.mccwdbb.catholic.edu.au/).

**SCHOOL UNIFORM**

**Uniforms**

We ask the children to maintain the current high standard of personal pride and wearing the school uniform tidily and correctly assists in this.

- Sports shoes are to be white (or predominantly white) – black and coloured sports shoes are **not** part of the uniform standards. There is a deal of issue in this area of recent years – there is no orthopaedic need for coloured shoes. Please "be strong" in this area and maintain the College standard.

- No additional jewellery or hair dyes/streaks/beading are allowed. Please keep hair in a neat, tidy style and tied back for girls with long hair. This helps reduce the incidence of head lice. Boy’s hair should be neat and above the collar – unusual hair styles are not appropriate for primary school children and if necessary, you may be asked to correct the hairstyle.

- A watch, and for those with pierced ears, a single pair of sleepers or studs **ONLY** is appropriate. Any other ear rings are safety issues for the child.

- Black school shoes, regularly polished - black joggers should not be worn.

- School Hats only should be worn every day – children are asked to stay in the shade if they do not have their hat. They will not be permitted to attend sports days if they do not have their hat.

- Please remind your child of their responsibility to look after their own clothing – lost property is a huge problem – Please clearly LABEL every item of your child’s clothing.

- School bags are part of the school uniform. Please purchase a new bag from the school rather than one from a store.

**SICK CHILDREN**

If your child is saying they are feeling sick in the morning before school, please make sure they really are well before you send them to school. Often, the child arrives at school, they tell the teachers they are sick and were sick before school, they are sent to sick bay and parents are phoned to collect them. Parents can often feel frustrated with this, but as we are not sure of what has happened at home, we need to make sure they are okay or they may really be unwell.

It also helps not to tell them ‘that if you feel sick, the school will ring mummy/daddy’, because it is guaranteed that they will feel sick very early in the morning.

Thank you for your assistance and support in these matters, as we work together to ensure the efficient flow of the day in a busy environment. The result will be a more pleasant setting for all, much easier to manage and much safer for all our children. We look forward to a very happy and successful year working with you and your children.