STUDENT ASSISTANCE SCHEME (STAS)

Prior to 2014 the Student Assistance Scheme (STAS) applied to full-time students in non-Government schools where parents or guardians met the income test each year and had care of the student for a minimum of 50% of the time. Funding for eligible recipients was paid by the State Department of Education directly to the College.

With the introduction of Student First Funding in 2014 the method of payment of Government funding has changed. STAS has been incorporated into the overall funding paid to the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission for distribution to Catholic schools. It is no longer paid separately by the Department of Education to each school on application by individual families.

The Department of Education will no longer assess eligibility for STAS and forms are no longer being supplied to parents or guardians with students at Catholic schools.

All families experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the Business Manager, Jorrick Chivers, if they would like to discuss fee assistance.

ROBOCUP JR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

On the last day of Term Three, we flew to Brisbane to compete in the RoboCup Jr National Championships held at the University of Queensland. When we arrived at the University, the first thing we did was set up our work area. We then used our laptop to calibrate the robot to the light conditions and test it on one of the practice tracks.

The first day of competition was for the primary school students. We spent the day watching Ben’s brother, Alex, compete as well as testing out our robot on the practice track.

The next day was our day to compete. We woke up nice and early, excited about the day ahead. When we arrived at the University we set up all our gear again and started to check and recheck our calibrations to make sure they were right.

After we had done that and tested the robot several times we sat and waited for the first round to begin. Our first round was perfect! The robot was able to make it through the whole course, find the can and place it on the block.

This was followed by a round where the robot had problems picking up the can. In the third round the robot would not place the can on the block but continued to look for it and in the end it did place it on the block. In the fourth round the robot knocked the can out of the green area, then would not pick it up and we ran out of time. In the final round, after a long day, the robot had a lot of problems with the line following and we did not finish this round. Overall we finished 10th out of 25 teams, just missing out on the finals. We were really happy with our results and look forward to continuing with Robotics at Mackillop next year.

Liam Brooks and Ben Kershaw (Year 8)

WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A HAPPY AND SAFE CHRISTMAS

Principal

REFLECTION

Way back in your history of film watching, you probably experienced a situation such as this: “A railway bridge had collapsed during the night. A train and its unsuspecting passengers are approaching at full speed. A railway worker stands on the track and waves a lantern to signal the danger. Unfortunately, the distracted train driver does not see him and so the train plunges into the river.” This might well be used as an image to describe recent events in our society, such as the collapse of our financial systems and the plunge of the stock market.

However, for Christians it is rather an image of Christmas when the Christmas Story has been derailed by all things commercial and the Advent preparation overwhelmed by the commercial trappings that began as soon as Fathers’ Day was out of the way. Nevertheless, we all have a choice as to how we react and, drawing on the spiritual resources of our faith, as we look back on all the events of the past year, we can see how much we are like the people watching that train coming down the track.

Perhaps the iceberg from each film can be used as an image of Advent. We can pretend not to see the iceberg like the people on the Titanic who were focussed on enjoying themselves; or we can make ourselves ready and climb on board the iceberg and be taken to Bethlehem and the celebration of Christmas. Our spiritual direction in Advent should be to take notice of our tendency to be distracted from the purpose of God’s coming, namely to bring hope to all people especially those who do not share the good things of life.

When John the Baptist was preparing his followers for the coming of Christ, he said, “In your midst there is one whom you do not know” Luke 3:16. Bono, the lead singer of U2, puts meaning to these words for us in an address he gave: “God is in the slums, in the cardboard boxes where the poor play house. God is in the silence of a mother; who has infected her child with a virus that will end both their lives. God is in the cries heard under the rubble of war. God is in the debris of wasted opportunity and lives, and God is with us, if we are with them.”

So, when the “iceberg” of Advent looms up in our lives we can ignore it and divert our attention to the commercial distractions, or we can regard it as an invitation to reflect on what we truly need and long for in life. Advent invites us into a reorientation of life that means knowing God in a new way.

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Up to as we wait? A final thought from the theologian, poet and Benedictine Monk, Sebastian Moore, “Christ is present to us in so far as we are present to one another.”

OFFICE CLOSED

Please be aware that the College Office will be closed on Friday, December 19. It will re-open on Tuesday, January 27.

YEAR 10 GRADUATION

Last week we farewelled our Year 10, 2014 class. We celebrated their time at Mackillop with a leaving ceremony on the Thursday evening and an assembly the following day. I would like to thank all the students and staff involved in the organisation and preparation of the events, including Mrs Sue Howard, Mr Ben Shaw, Mr Seb Milford, Mrs Linda Pollard, Mr Nick Lahey and Mr Steven Burdon. I would also like to acknowledge the following major award recipients:

Lions Club of Clarence Award

Austin Spencer

Albert Cuthbertson Memorial Building and Construction Award

Nathan Green

Long Tan Leadership Award

Nathan Wallace

The Guilford Young Bursary Award

Isabella Johnston

Mackillop Sports Achiever

Jack Callan

Caltex Best All Rounder Award

Dana Mazengarb

Pierre de Coubertin Award

Ashley Steele

Principal’s Service Award

Briana Green

Principal’s Service Award

Gemma Vasalay

Dux of the College

Emily Steele

Edmund Rice Award

Meg Garnsey

Mackillop Scholar

Jeremy Ford

STAFF NEWS

This time of year is when we farewells staff and the departure of staff generates something of a mixed response. Certainly there is happiness for staff that are embarking on new and exciting paths of their careers and lives but sadness as these members of staff
This year as we prepare to welcome the Christ child into our homes, we thank those who have helped us this year. In the context of our College, it may be the Home Room and subject teacher, the person in the canteen who always has that extra smile for you, or even the person you sit next to who keeps you on track and focussed. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes for the Christmas season. May God bless you and your families for the coming holidays and the year ahead.

SCHOOL BUS TIME TABLE FOR 2015
At present, we are working with all of the bus companies to provide the best possible service for our students in 2015. Before the end of the year, we hope to upload onto our website bus arrangements for next year.

EASTLANDS/SHORELINE/CITY
I remind parents in the hectic lead up to Christmas that all students must have an Eastlands, Shoreline or City pass if going to EASTLANDS, Shoreline or the City without a parent or guardian. Whist the majority of our students do the right thing, unfortunately some draw attention to themselves in a manner that lets all members of our community down. As stated in our College Planner, if students need to go to Eastlands, the Shoreline or the City after school they need a pass unaccompanied by a parent or guardian. A signed note in the Planner or a phone call to the Office from a parent or guardian is required.

ACTIVITY DAYS 7 TO 9
The final day for Year 7-9 students (December 18) will be an opportunity for each year group to have an afternoon together away from the College. Parents have received a letter from their son/daughter’s Year Level Co-ordinator outlining the details of arrangements for this day.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND IN MOVING INTO 2015
• Students must retain their locker padlock to use next year;
• The College has a strict policy in regard to facial piercing. No student can have visible piercings other than one in the lobe of each ear;
• All students should have black lace-up school shoes that provide support for the student’s feet and ankles;
• The Term 1 and 2, 2015 Calendar will be sent home with reports next week

Wishing you and your family a happy and safe Christmas.

Mr Nicholas Laheny
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT WELLBEING

PEER SUPPORT 2014
This year we have had an excellent response from many Year 9 students to take part in the 2015 Peer Support Program. The accepted candidates will undertake a training workshop next Tuesday in order to prepare them for their important role in the College. One of the first commitments for our Peer Support Leaders will be to attend the ‘Year 7s on Orientation Day on Thursday, February 5, then facilitating a series of small group-based workshops to assist the Year 7s make the transition from primary school to high school throughout Terms 1 and 2.

SPORTS HOUSE CAPTAINS
Next Tuesday, Year 9 candidates will present their election speeches to their House members during Personal Development Time. Students and staff in each House will cast their vote to determine the successful House Captains for 2015. House Captains will be announced during the final week of school.

SUMMER SAFETY
The Daniel Morecombe Foundation is in frequent contact with educators around Australia who are responsible for delivering wellbeing programs in schools. I am keen to pass on their message about our young people enjoying the summer holiday period responsibly and safely. Whether children are spending time online, enjoying the outdoors or staying over at a friend’s house, children should consider:

1. Acting quickly to make a situation safer, especially if they get a “gut feeling” that something isn’t right;
2. It’s okay to say “No” or “I’m not comfortable with this…”;
3. Tell a trusted adult if something has happened.

CHRISTMAS WISHES
I wish all students and their families a happy Christmas and a safe and restful break – essential for everyone’s healthy wellbeing!

Mr Jane Barling
DIRECTOR OF MINISTRY

Advent Prayer
Come, Emmanuel - God with us!
You are a light in the darkness of the world.
Be with us during this Advent Season. Awaken us to hear the cries of those who are disadvantaged, isolated and marginalised. Help us to respond with generosity to the needs of our time. May we draw strength from the God who became one of us.

Mrs Kieran Thomas
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT WELLBEING

I would like to thank every student, staff member and family who has taken up the invitation to contribute to the catholcity of our community this year. It has been a year of celebrating the ancient cycle of the seasons in prayer, action, advocacy and outreach, and giving thanks (the ordinary and the extraordinary). Thank you, as always, to Fr Peter, for his guidance and for leading our significant Liturgies and Masses.

YEAR 10 THANKSGIVING MASS
It is always a special moment when we bless our Year 10 students for the last time as they prepare to leave Mackillop Catholic College. It is a fitting beginning to their final formal school ceremonies, to gather, as one body, before God, and ask for His blessing. As we take the sacrament of the Eucharist, we are reminded who it is we worship, and the source of all our hope and courage to live a Christian life. It was fitting to give thanks, as staff and students, for the journey of our four years together. Thank you to Fr Peter for leading a beautiful Thanksgiving Mass for our Year 10 students last Tuesday. Thanks also to Mr Steven Burdon for his work with our musicians, and to Mr Ben Shaw, who catered for the morning tea which followed Mass.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL
Two weeks ago, we began our annual St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal. Each Home Room has been given the opportunity to put together a hamper for a family in our local community who often struggle at Christmas time. I would like to take this chance to thank in advance all families who help out with this appeal in 2014.

Mr Steve Vesperman, Deputy Commissioner of Taxation