It is good to welcome our students to the 2015 learning program. So far classes are settling down well for Term 1 with Year 9 and 10 students acclimatizing appropriately to their sections of the new Kirby block. Feedback so far on the new physical environment is very positive from both teachers and students and it is a pleasure to walk through the corridors and see students so actively engaged in learning.

Year 9 and 10 student electives classes are very dynamic at the moment as students still have the remainder of the first cycle (two weeks) to initiate a change of subject. After that, whilst a change of elective subject is still feasible based on wellbeing issues, it is much harder to initiate a change, as learning groups will have formed and we attempt to limit the disruption that new arrivals into the groups can occasion.

For the parents of students studying VET courses this year – Construction and Hospitality – Thursday, March 5, is an important date to mark in your calendar. This is the GYC VET Parent Information Evening (7:30 pm – 9:00 pm) held at the Glenorchy campus of Guilford Young College.

If parents are involved and become committed to school decisions, student achievement should improve and student behaviour will be cooperative; this will lead to the enjoyment of high quality education. Teachers are professionals with training and experience and their conduct is guided by professional codes of conduct. Parents know their children better than anyone and, when shared, this knowledge can be an invaluable resource in the progress of children’s education.

It is important that parents and teachers have good communication opportunities. Productive communication is about speaking and listening actively and respectfully and about not making assumptions or having minds made up before conversation has commenced. Conversation is not simply an exchange of words but about listening and hearing. If problems arise, they do not have to be stumbling blocks; they can be opportunities to work together to find positive and creative solutions – solutions that will benefit children.

We hope that throughout the year, our community will come together to participate in and volunteer at a variety of school functions, activities and events, including celebrations of our Christian faith. In this way relationships are formed and positive attitudes developed that give positive input to our children. It is said that a child’s life is like a piece of paper, on which every person leaves a mark. Hopefully, all marks left during the year will be indicative of respect, care and encouragement.

Central to the very existence of our school is the integration of faith and culture transmitted in the various subjects that comprise the curriculum. In this way we hope that our students will learn how to follow Christ within national culture. We invite all parents to feel welcome, comfortable and free to contribute to the cultural context of our school community.

Here are a couple of thoughts followed by a question: “Parents are the bones on which children cut their teeth.” Peter Ustinov. “Teenagers are people who act like babies, if they are not treated like adults.” Mad Magazine. “Raising children is part joy and part guerrilla warfare.” Ed Anser.

Question: “Do any of these comments ring true to you at the end of the holiday period?”

Well, whatever your answer, put it all behind you and welcome to our school community for this year, where coming together is a beginning and working together will bring success. We hope that we can all work together to create an open and caring environment, where parents and staff are of one mind to encourage all students to practise positive school habits.

On Ash Wednesday our foreheads are marked with ashes to humble our hearts to remind us that life passes away on Earth. Ashes are a symbol of penance made sacramental by the blessing of the Church, and they help us develop a spirit of humility and sacrifice.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Season of Lent. Lent is a season of penance, reflection, fasting and sharing with those in need, especially the poor.

Please read the Sacramental Program in the Bellerive – Lindisfarne Parish, or who attend Mass there, will be prepared in the parish for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Preparation for First Reconciliation, Information will commence soon. Parental support during the classes and in home exercises will be an important part of the program. Please contact Fr Peter O’Loughlin, our Parish Priest, on 6245 0501, if you wish to enrol your child.

FUNDRAISING WITHIN THE COLLEGE

I would like to remind parents, students and the wider community of the Addendum to the College Charities Policy. You can read the Charities Policy on the College Website which clearly explains the nature and limitation of fundraising permitted at MacKillop Catholic College. A reminder that there is a blanket ban on students selling fundraiser boxes of chocolates at the College, both for College-based and externally-based teams/clubs/trips. I would ask all parents and members of our community not to take on fundraiser chocolates with the intention of having your son or daughter bring them on the bus or to school for any reason or cause. All questions regarding this policy from parents and community should be directed to me. I can be contacted at lpollard@mackillop.tas.edu.au or through the College Office (Monday–Thursday) on 6245 0099.

Mrs Linda Pollard
DIRECTOR OF MINISTRY

Tree Planting Ceremony – Celebrating 21 years

WHAT’S COMING UP .......

FEBRUARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>College Formal Photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Wednesday, Commissioning Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Thursday, Parent/Student/Teacher Goal Setting Conferences (4:00 pm - 6:00 pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Friday, Parent/Student/Teacher Goal Setting Conferences, Student Free Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>Monday–Friday, Year 7 Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Thursday, GYC VET Parent Information Evening</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Eight Hour Day - Public Holiday</td>
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Celebrating 21 years of inspiring learning
THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD SLEEP PATTERNS

Good sleep patterns are important for learning and memory but are harder to instil because electronic media has blurred the lines between sleep and entertainment. According to sleep specialist Dr Chris Seton, “One problem is the blue light emitted by laptop, tablet and mobile phones. It suppresses the brain’s production of melatonin, the hormone we need to feel sleepy”. Interactive media can keep kids hyped up at night and texting is one of the worst offenders as the young person waits in expectation of a reply. A 2010 study of US teens found that they sent an average of 34 texts between 9pm and 6am. Parents can counteract this by keeping bedrooms screen-free zones and have a rule that iPads, phones etc. remain in the kitchen at night.

COLLEGE SWIMMING CARNIVAL

Our College Swimming Carnival will be held tomorrow Thursday, February 19, at the Hobart Aquatic Centre. This is a great day on the College calendar and parents are welcome to attend. This is a whole day event and we ask that parents do not request that their son or daughter leaves early as it is important that students are present for the end of the Carnival. Please note that the canteen at the Aquatic Centre is not open to students and we ask that food is not purchased by parents, as this is an equity issue as all students do not have the same privilege.

FORMAL SCHOOL PHOTOS – FEBRUARY 23

All class and individual photos will be taken on Monday, February 23. On this day all students should be in their full formal Summer Uniform with the correct socks. If your son or daughter is scheduled to have a HPE lesson on this day they must bring their gear for this class to school. Students should have an alternative set of uniform in the event. Formal photos will be taken after lunch on this day and will be taken in formal Summer Uniform.

COLLEGE COMMISSIONING ASSEMBLY

As this is the opening of the College year for our community all students should be dressed in their full formal Summer Uniform. We ask parents for their support by not booking appointments on this day and ensuring all present students arrive on time. Students should be in school by 8.25am. If your son or daughter is scheduled to have a HPE lesson on this day they must bring their gear for this class to school but should arrive in formal uniform as the assembly is being held from the end of Home Room.

METRO TRANSFER PASSES

A Metro transfer Bus Pass can be used to transfer to or from Metro services. A transfer pass is no longer accepted as a valid ticket. This pass should only be used by students who need to transfer between two or more non-Metro services to travel to and from school.

REDLINE BUS SERVICE

Thank you for your patience with this service over the past two weeks. I have spoken with Redline about what works best for our College. Hopefully, we will no longer have two students standing and the afternoon buses will be solely for MacKillop students. Please note that the times in our bus schedule were correct at the time printing but I advise parents to ensure their son or daughter is waiting at the correct pick-up place of a morning as early as possible.

A COUPLE OF ORGANISATIONAL REMINDERS

• Medical updates and immunisation forms are due back to the College Office now.
• Students travelling by bus to and from the College are required to have a Greenpass for either discounted or free travel on Metro or non-Metro coaches. Enquires 1300 851 225 or bus passes@der tas.gov.au

I will keep you informed about plans and activities to celebrate the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence at MacKillop on Friday, March 20, 2015.

The National Day of Action is a day where school communities across Australia, Take a Stand Together against bullying and violence.

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Mr Nicholas Lahey
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT WELLBEING

Welcome back to a new school year. The completion of the building program has seen a positive change in the learning environment. From the Year 10 area with its large meeting space to the open glassed doors to the grass for our Year 9s, the learning and social environment of the College has changed. Students appear to like the open and welcoming classrooms and by having all lockers for Years 8 -10 outside of classrooms, students have greater access to their lockers between lessons.

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