Today is the International Friendship Day (as declared by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2011) promoting the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities. Listening to the news at night on TV demonstrates that more than ever, we need to strengthen the ties that bind us as one human family. Let us appreciate and give thanks for friendship...at whatever level.

Let us remember our friends all around the world.

Like Australia, Ukraine is a place of extensive wheat farming. However, Ukraine now has grown a different grain. There lies a broken harvest; the bodies of 293 people, slowly being returned to their respective homes, the wreckage of a plane and a conflict over ‘rights’. Family members of those killed on the Air Algerie flight that crashed in Mali were taken to the wreckage to grieve on Saturday as French President Francois Hollande announced three days of mourning...

We listen with tears, in shock and ask....Comfort us here, O Lord.

For the pain and terror known by those on these flights, we ask...Comfort them now in your dwelling place, O Lord.

For the families and loved ones of these broken ones, we ask...Comfort them and hold them tightly in your heart, O Lord.

May the peace and joy of God, the words of Jesus Christ our saving friend, and the wisdom and patience of the Holy Spirit be with all peoples. Amen

We are very excited to announce that Mrs Caroline Blyton has accepted the position of Canteen Manager at St Patrick’s, starting next week. She brings a wealth of experience and great enthusiasm for healthy nutritious eating. We believe that she will be a wonderful addition to the St Patrick’s staff.

The P&F held a meeting last Thursday evening and it was a very useful forum to discuss matters relevant to our school. I hope that parents always feel welcome to use this opportunity to ask questions and contribute to discussions. Although we have not actively spent any money raised by the P&F since Term 1, we are holding funds until we are notified whether or not we have a building grant for the new Visual Arts and Technology building. We need to have money set aside for the fit-out, which potentially could be very expensive, given the new regulations for Workplace, Health and Safety (WHS). Every little bit of money counts as we plan for the future. We are also raising money by selling second hand uniform items. There are currently some good quality black coats that could easily be used by some students. Please contact the Office or Ruby Curtis if you are interested in purchasing (or donating) second hand clothing.

Please spare a thought for those who are ‘roughing it’ every night or who live with the uncertainty of knowing where they will sleep each night. Year 10 students want to support the St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal with their Big SleepOut here at school on Friday night. If you wish to sponsor this event, you can either sponsor a student of your choosing...OR... you could sponsor the staff supervising. That would be Mr Van Ommen or me!

I sent home a letter last week inviting our community to attend the Memorial Service for Ms Sabina Kovats at Jindabyne on Friday at 5pm. Please consider joining us.

Yours in peace

Frances Robertson
Principal
From the AP’s Desk

As a parent, nothing is more important than your child's safety and well-being. At St Patrick’s Parish School, that's our priority, too. We’re committed to providing a healthy, supportive learning and working environment for our students and staff. We know that students achieve their best when they feel safe, nurtured, welcomed, engaged, respected and included.

If we say that we are a school of learning, safety and belonging, then ensuring the safety of the school property for everyone is a significant part of this.

We have undertaken an audit on Workplace, Health and Safety (WHS) late last term and currently we are making plans to improve the safety in the Technology (Timber), Visual Arts and Food Technology areas. This will be quite an expensive operation, but we are committed to it.

In order to be safe, it also needs to be hygienic. Chewing gum stuck to walls, floors and desks is anything but hygienic. Consequently, we will be quite firm in our response to students who choose to bring chewing gum to school. This may include a detention or a cleaning duty.

We are pleased with the way in which most students are taking care of school property. There are, however, some students who continue to deliberately damage computers. This is wilful vandalism. Again, the response to this will be quite clear. Damage will be repaired and the bill will be the responsibility of the student’s family. This applies to any other vandalism.

You will have noticed the announcement of the changeover in the management of the Canteen this week. Whilst the roster is out for Term 3, it is very important that we keep building the roster list. Everyone is welcome to come and join us in this simple and easy way to support the school. If your name is on list for this term and you are unable to come on that particular day, please give Caroline a call and let her know. It is easy to swap things around with a little notice.

The other significant change is that we will open the Canteen from Tuesday to Friday only. After looking at the data based on the orders taken, it seems that Monday is often a very quiet day. We will trial this for Term 3 and then re-evaluate.

Thank you to the many Secondary parents who took up the opportunity to have a conference with the teachers in order to set goals on Tuesday evening at the Ex-Services Club. Some discussion afterwards, with students who attended, indicated that they were, indeed, beginning to think about their learning responsibilities and the benefits of setting goals.

We look forward to undertaking the same process with the parents of the students in Infants and Primary on August 5 (for Infants, Yr 3 and Yr 6 at the Ex-services Club) and August 7 (for Yr 4 and 5 in the Primary Library).

and coming events....

Thursday 31 July
Southern Region Interschools Alpine
Yr 3-6 Snowsports
Yr 10 Careers Expo

Friday 1 August
Southern Region Interschools Alpine
Yr 10 Winter Sleep out for Vinnies

Saturday 2 August
Southern Region Interschools Alpine

Monday 4 August
Yr 3-6 Snowsports
MHS Parent Information Evening

Tuesday 5 August
Yr 7-10 Snowsports
Yr 3-6 Snowsports
K-6 parent Student Teacher Conferences

Wednesday 6 August
Oliver rehearsal

Thursday 7 August
Australian Maths competition
Yr 3-10 Archdiocesan Athletics
School Board meeting

Friday 8 August
Oliver full cast rehearsal
Yr K-2 Snowsports
Brrrr……It’s crazy, but we are planning to undertake the challenge of sleeping out on a Cooma winter’s night… and we are doing it so others don’t have to.

Would you like to support our attempts at raising funds for the Vinnies Winter Appeal?

You can help by sponsoring a member of the Year 10 team. We will be ‘roughing it’ for about 9 hours (with breakfast at 5am!). So you can make a donation for the whole project or sponsor the student per hour.

Who? Year 10 students
When? Friday 1st August, starting at 9pm and finishing at 6am
Where? At St Patrick’s, where we will discover if there really are ghosts in the building!

Students in each Primary class and each Secondary Homeroom are also being challenged to contribute to buy a good quality blanket. If everyone donates a little, the blankets can be bought and then donated to those who need them most. Parents are also welcome to contribute.

If you have a blanket that you don’t need, there will be a drop off box in the school foyer. We would love to fill it! All blankets will go to St Vinnies.

**Homelessness** is not just the result of too few houses. Its causes are many and varied. Domestic violence, a shortage of affordable housing, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdown and drug and alcohol abuse all contribute to the level of homelessness in Australia (FaHCSIA, 2008). Homelessness is not a choice. Homelessness is one of the most potent examples of disadvantage in the community, and one of the most important markers of social exclusion (Department of Human Services, 2002).

There are currently 105,237 people in Australia who are homeless.
Parenting teenagers

“The world is passing through troublous times. The young people of today think of nothing but themselves. They have no reverence for parents or old age. They are impatient of all restraint. They talk as if they knew everything, and what passes for wisdom with us is foolishness with them. As for the girls, they are forward, immodest and unladylike in speech, behaviour and dress.”

I often find consolation in the above quote, attributed to Peter the Hermit in AD 1274, along with a similar one attributed to Socrates. After all, if we’re honest, things haven’t really changed much in 750 years! Most of us parents weren’t saints as teenagers, much as we would like to whitewash our past from our teens. If I’m honest, I was certainly guilty of much of the above.

It can be tempting as parents and teachers to be despondent about our young people but, as a colleague pointed out to me recently, sometimes this is because we are too well aware of the pitfalls surrounding our children, having been through many of their dilemmas ourselves. “In our day” many young people were also disrespectful and they did drink excessively, smoke, and make poor choices in cars and with relationships. The young people I teach, like those I’m attempting to grow at home, frequently demonstrate honesty, compassion and leadership. As our school’s Welfare teacher, I am often approached by students exhibiting leadership in different ways – they may be concerned for their friends’ welfare, they may be alerting me to boys smoking in the loos (not uncommon from both genders even in my parents’ era!), or simply making suggestions to improve certain outcomes for themselves and others.

Like us, our young people like to be heard and valued. They need to be sure that they have a role in our lives and have ownership over aspects of it. Spending time with our teens whenever we are able to, especially at their invitation, fosters our relationship and sends a strong positive message that we love them. Personally, shopping is my major bonding experience with my girls and various sport-related activities seem to be where I spend time with my boys. Sometimes this is commending a good mark in footy or commiserating a dropped catch. In regional areas, the extra time spent travelling to get anywhere is an excellent opportunity for a chat.

This is the case within our church, too. If we encourage young people to participate in ministries such as reading, music, children’s liturgy and communion distribution at Mass, we are ensuring that they recognise that the Church is also theirs. Many great Saints were very close to God in their teens – my namesake, St Catherine of Sienna ran off to become a hermit at the age of 14, for example – whilst others, such as St Augustine lived a life their parent/s despaired of until they suddenly changed to become inspirations to us all.

The key is that we can’t lose faith in our young people. You and I have turned out okay, despite some early hiccups! By keeping faith in and with them, they will have love modelled for them in such a way that they’ll understand the concept of the unconditional love that God has for all of us.

This article was posted by Felicity de Fombelle on the website http://myfamilymyfaith.org.au
There are lots of other thoughtful articles there on topics on parenting and education. This site is sponsored by ACU and the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn.
NAIDOC Mass

It was a real privilege to be with the Indigenous students at the NAIDOC Mass at St Christopher’s Cathedral in Canberra last Friday. Thank you to Mrs Knott for organising our group. Thank you to Sarah, Jacob and Dominic for representing the school.

Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences

Thank you to the parents who have made their online bookings for the Infants/Primary (5-8-14) P/T/S Conferences. These are from 4pm until 7pm in the Ex-Services Club.

Year 4 and 5 will be on Thursday 7-8-14 in the Primary Library.

Following the detailed reports that arrived home at the end of the last term, the purpose of these conferences is primarily to set goals for the coming term, as our focus is on continual improvement in learning. Therefore, five minutes has been allocated for each appointment. This ensures that everyone has the chance to meet the teacher. (Where there is a class of 30 students, this means a total of at least 150 minutes—two and a half hours—quite a long time of talking after teaching all day.)

If parents feel that they have other matters that they wish to discuss, a separate time that is mutually agreeable needs to be set aside. Every teacher has indicated their willingness to do this. This also allows for greater privacy and without the possibility of being interrupted by another appointment.

Being located at the Club means that it is warmer and much more secure for everyone. I have been advised that I need to ensure the security of staff (and students and parents) and being in isolated classrooms when it is dark does not meet these requirements.

If any parent is uncertain about the online booking system, the office staff will take a phone call and place the booking for you.

This is a change for some people and after we have trialled it, we will review the process.
When school is a long way from home

Private Vehicle Conveyance (PVC)
subsidy applications can now be
made online

How to help parents and guardians apply

- Give the parent or guardian a PVC subsidy flyer.
- Reassure them they can find out more about the subsidy at transport.nsw.gov.au/pvc.
- Recommend applying for the PVC online as the quickest, easiest way to apply.
- Online applications are confirmed as received immediately.
- Paper applications may take as long as 6 weeks to be confirmed as received.

How to print a paper application

If applying online is not possible, you can offer parents or guardians the alternative of a paper application form.

1. Go to transport.nsw.gov.au/content/schools.
2. Click on Private Vehicle Conveyance subsidy application form download and print. This will redirect you to the online application portal.
3. Enter your school name, or enter 'Transport for NSW school'. A code in the type ahead box and select school name from the suggested list.
4. Click the download form button to open the application as a PDF.
5. Print PDF. Please staple all pages together, including terms and conditions of the PVC subsidy, before giving to parent or guardian.

More questions?

If you have questions about the PVC subsidy for parents and guardians of children at your school, call 1600 010 123.

Happy Friendship Day
You would have read last week From the AP’s desk that three of St Mary MacKillop College senior staff visited our school last Tuesday and Wednesday. This was to disseminate information on the differences between the NSW and ACT educational systems. Then last Wednesday those students following the MacKillop pathway sat down with their parents and MacKillop senior staff to make their subject choices for 2015.

It was extremely pleasing to see the number of parents and some of our Year 10 students present at this session. The session was introduced by Paul O'Callaghan who is head of the Senior Campus, along with Colby Cruwyz, Senior Studies Coordinator and Michelle daRoza all of whom have an immense knowledge and expertise at the senior studies level for Years 11 and 12.

We were informed that our existing St Patrick’s Parish students, currently in Year 11 at St Mary MacKillop College are doing well, in terms of performance and leadership. It was mentioned that our students from the country are extremely resilient and are prepared to have a go and get involved.

You may ask: What is the Year 12 Certificate in the ACT educational system?
A list of courses/units studied in Years 11 and 12.
A record of student achievement over two years.
There are many different types of courses that students may study.

What types of courses are there?
A Tertiary, or “T” course, prepares students for tertiary education.
An Accredited or “A” course is educationally sound and appropriate for Year 11 and 12 students.
A Year 12 Certificate is mostly “T” and “A” units.
A Higher Education unit, or “H” unit, is run by UC (University of Canberra) or ANU (Australian National University) and can contribute towards an undergraduate degree at that institute.
A Registered, or “R” unit, recognises personal development or community service.

What is a Vocational Course?
Accredited and Tertiary courses also have a vocational component attached.
Students achieve competencies on top of, or in conjunction with, completing assessment.
Students also complete a work placement. This placement can contribute a “W” unit.
Finish with a nationally recognised certificate.
As a Registered Training Organisation, MacKillop also offer “C” courses which only RTOs can offer.

What is the BSSS?
The Board of Senior Secondary Studies is an organisation responsible for the certification of senior secondary school studies in government and non-government schools in the ACT. The BSSS dictate much of how Colleges must execute Senior Studies. [http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/]

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Paul O’Callaghan, Colby Cruwyz and Michelle daRoza for coming down last week to address our parents and Year 10 students, whilst also assisting students with their senior subject choices for Year 11.

It is anticipated we will have around 40 to 50 students attending St Mary MacKillop next year for Years 11 and 12. The relationship is certainly evolving and being nurtured between our two schools.

Erika Statham
Chairperson, St Patrick’s Parish School Board
Kids Matter Parent Alert!

Did you know about the Australian Communications and Media Authority's (ACMA) Cybersmart program? It has a website that keeps us up to date with all the latest facts and tips (including danger alerts) to help our children stay safe online.

If you feel all this cybersmart stuff goes over your head then this is a good place to start. Cybersmart has developed Chatterbox, an online platform that allows parents to 'tune' in to a series of short videos and conversations by Cyber-smart experts on a wide variety of cybersafety topics and to ask questions.

Each video and conversation, released monthly, addresses the specific issues, behaviours and safety essentials to help parents make sense of what's happening in their child’s online world.


Parent /Teacher /Student Conferences

Dear Parents

Parent/Teacher/Student conferences will be held at **4.00pm – 7.00pm** on **Tuesday 29 July** for Secondary and at **4.00pm – 7.00pm on Tuesday 5 August** for Primary.

You can now book interviews at times that suit **YOUR FAMILY BEST**.

Go to [www.schoolinterviews.com.au](http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au) and follow these simple instructions.

**BOOKINGS CLOSE** **Tuesday 5 August at 12pm** for Primary.

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**Go to**

Enter the school event code.

Then follow the 3 simple steps.

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When you click **finish**, your interview timetable will be emailed to you automatically - **check your junk mail folder** if you do not receive your email immediately.

You can return to [www.schoolinterviews.com.au](http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au) at any time, and change your interviews - until bookings close.

For parents who don't have access to the internet at home, at work, at a friend's house or on their phones, the school office can be contacted on 64521721 for your child’s interviews to be placed within the online booking system.

Interviews are strictly 5 mins and spaces are limited. If you require more time, please contact your teacher directly to make alternative arrangements.

Parents can change their interview bookings, any time prior to the closing date, by re-visiting the [www.schoolinterviews.com.au](http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au) website, and using the event code. Remember to use the same name and email address, you used when you made your original booking. Parents wishing to change their interview times after the closing date, should contact the school directly on: 64521721

We would love to hear what you think about online booking. If you get time, click on the "contact us" button on the [www.schoolinterviews.com.au](http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au) website, and leave some feedback - anonymously if you wish, but please include the school’s name and suburb.