

Child Safety Newsletter

Term 3 - 2024



Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College

At Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College, we believe that the social, emotional, moral, spiritual and physical wellbeing of our students is pivotal to student health, safety, learning and success.

The College acknowledges and understands that child safety is the responsibility of every person and is an integral aspect of student wellbeing. We aim to work collaboratively with parents, students and other community members to ensure a safe school environment.

During this term the College has participated in 'Bullying. No Way!' Week. 'Bullying. No Way!' Week was held between August 12 to 16, and is Australia's key bullying prevention initiative and connects schools and communities to find workable solutions to prevent bullying. The week gave the College opportunity to spread awareness throughout the week. Purple is the new hero colour representing 'Bullying. No Way!' National week of action and our commitment to standing against bullying.

The College also took part in Child Safety Week. Posters were displayed around the College and the theme that every conversation matters was explored.

Similarly, RUOK Day on September 12 also explores the need for young people to engage in conversation and dialogue.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the MMCRC Child Safety Newsletter.



John Ryan - Deputy Principal Wellbeing, Students and Staff



MEET LAURA MURANTY

Laura Muranty has been a member of the Child Safety Committee for four years as an advocate for diversity and change. She believes strongly that all students have a fundamental right to feel safe at school so that they can thrive to their full potential. Throughout her time at the college, she has been an advocate for Aboriginal, Culturally Diverse, Neuro-Divergent and LGBTQI+ students through clubs, events and education. To understand what drives Laura, you only have to delve into her past.

An extensive traveller, Laura explored Australia, Asia, South America and Europe, in great depth. Her experiences meeting people from different cultures, religions and demographics, created a love for diversity and the natural world. Her ongoing appreciation of nature is very inter-connected to her experiences living and working in four different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Australia. While teaching in the Aboriginal community, Ngukurr in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, she was adopted into the Alawa language group and given the totem crocodile. This rare and wonderful insight into Aboriginal culture and spirituality helped develop Laura's deep understanding that as a school and a country, we must recognise and embed First Nations' culture as part of our own identity.



'BULLYING. NO WAY!'

"Bullying. No Way!" Week commenced on Monday 12 August. The College put into place several initiatives to raise student awareness about how to respond to bullying. Students were encouraged to become familiar of our College's policies and processes outlined within the Anti bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy. A student version of the policy was distributed to every homeroom, to encourage calling out bullying behaviour and make our school safer.

We all know someone who has been bullied. Perhaps you have been bullied yourself, been a bystander or even been the bully. Here are some facts about bullying and violence:

- Approximately one in four Year 4 to Year 9 Australian students (27%) report being bullied every few weeks or more often (considered to be frequent) during the last term at school
- Frequent school bullying was highest among Year 5 (32%) and Year 8 (29%) students
- 83% of students who bully others online, also bully others offline
- 84% of students who were bullied online were also bullied offline
- Peers are present as onlookers in 85% of bullying interactions, and play a central role in the bullying process
- Hurtful teasing was the most prevalent of all bullying behaviours experienced by students, followed by having hurtful lies told about them
- Cyberbullying appears to be related to age (or access to technology), with older students more likely to engage in cyberbullying than younger students

(Source: Cross, D., Shaw, T., Hearn, L., Epstein, M., Monks, H., Lester, L., & Thomas, L. 2009. Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study (ACBPS). Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowan University, Perth).

If you or someone you know are being bullied, staff urge you to identify what type of bullying you are experiencing and call it out to a trusted teacher, wellbeing co-ordinator or a member of the Child Safety committee.

<https://www.mackillopleongatha.catholic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/migrated/2023/06/Anti-Bullying-and-Bullying-Prevention-Policy.pdf>

STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAY



Staff at Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association in Hastings, taking part in a Cultural Awareness tour where they upskilled themselves with their understanding and knowledge of First Nations culture, histories, and contemporary realities.

On Monday 19 August, all Mary Mackillop College teaching and non-teaching staff took part in a Cultural Professional Learning Day. The day began with a beautiful prayer and acknowledgement of country by our Cultural Liaison Leader Laura Muranty, followed by a guest speaker, Liam Doherty, who is the Religious Education Advisor from DOSCEL. He came to talk about the FIRE Carrier Project with staff and officially launch the program in our school.

FIRE (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) Carrier schools support the work of the Opening the Doors Foundation by empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to make educational choices for their children and their future. FIRE Carriers are students, staff, and community representatives who share a passion for learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history and are committed to sharing this knowledge and promoting Reconciliation within the school and into the school community.

The three core values underpin the FIRE Carrier Program and a school's covenant.

- Spirituality
- Cultural Recognition and Awareness
- Practical Reconciliation and Justice

Staff are united to take a whole school approach to embed more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history throughout our school. If any students have a passion for social justice and would like to become a FIRE CARRIER, then express your interest with Ms Muranty via email or pop down to room 40 for a yarn. We are looking for indigenous and non-indigenous students of all ages, genders, and abilities to ignite reconciliation in our school.

If you would like to learn more about First Nations culture and history, pop on down to Willum Warrain.





Staff participating in a traditional smoking ceremony, signifying a physical and spiritual cleansing.

WILLUM WARRAIN ABORIGINAL ASSOCIATION



CHILD SAFETY AROUND THE SCHOOL

Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.

