

**11 August 2023**

Dear Parents and carers,

Early this week we celebrated the feast of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, the patron of one of our College Houses who represents our pillar of 'Leadership'. St Mary of the Cross was a woman truly ahead of her time who looked to assist those who were most vulnerable. She fully believed in God's love and felt that God had trusted her to use her life and gifts in the service of the poor. She never faulted in her giving to others, even when money was tight, as her feeling was "God will take care of us all!" This encouraged her family and sisters of the Congregation to continue with their works of service despite financial hardship. We are inspired to follow the path of Saint Mary MacKillop who led with compassion and courage.



God, through the intercession of Mary MacKillop,  
we pray that the fire of your compassion will ignite many hearts.

May Mary's attentiveness to your dream inspire us.

May her energy to overcome injustice empower us.

May we, like her, seek peace in our troubled world.

We pray that the beacon of her holiness shines as a blessing for the universal Church and our world.

We make this prayer in Jesus' name.

Amen

### A Message from the Acting Principal

It has been another busy week for our staff and students. Term 3 creates many wonderful opportunities for our students to follow their passions and participate in engaging learning activities. The Year 7 and 8s are starting to gain momentum with their passion projects. We have creative projects, research projects, community awareness campaigns and mini businesses all being developed. During class time teachers will guide, model, and hopefully inspire our young people to find joy in wrangling with a challenge whilst giving them the freedom to self-manage and create something unique to their interests. To encourage innovative thinking, we will be assessing students on their completed product, their organisation and application to the task, their weekly reflections and their final presentation (Passion Project Expo). We will keep parents updated on their progress.

Teachers also need time to learn and develop their skills. This week our college hosted *The Accidental Counsellor* a full-day workshop led by Rocky Biasi from Human Connections. It was a workshop I did many years ago when I first started as a Year Level Coordinator, and I still remember it today. Our teachers often have difficult conversations to navigate and that sometimes means responding to students' pain and suffering. Teachers in these caring roles need time to develop their skills, network with other caring professionals and be aware of the importance of really listening to our young people in distress.

Many of our new Year Level Wellbeing assistants for 2024 attended and found the workshop really beneficial.



On a personal note, a huge heartfelt thank you to the staff and community of Iona who have supported me as I said goodbye to my beloved Dad this week. We had a wonderful send-off in East Gippsland on Monday. It was so nice to be able to be fully present, knowing the College was in good hands back home.

Finally, I highly encourage students to attend the upcoming Student Progress meetings with their parents. The meetings connect parents, teachers and students and this partnership is vital to enhance learning outcomes for all.

Kylie Power  
*Acting Principal*

From the Wellbeing Team

### Reminding students to focus on controlling what they can control

In our video reminder to students last week, we spoke to students about the idea of narrowing their focus to the things that they can directly control. We call these things ‘the controllables’ – things that help students to be at their best and reduce stress. In doing so we addressed a number of matters young people can often struggle with:

- Getting to class on time – ensure that students have an organised locker, that they move to their locker when music commences signalling the end of break time, and that they get to their classroom before the bell to ensure they don’t incur penalties for being late to class (i.e. breach 1 – non-flag, breach 2 – flag).
- Using the toilet during break time - this is the time for our students to go to the toilet; in order to significantly reduce the chance of needing to do so during class time.
- Uniform – ensuring that piercings are in line with our school policy, correct shoes are being worn with formal uniforms, Iona socks only with our PE uniform, etc.
- Completion of homework – ensuring that their school bag is packed, they take their bag home, open it, take out equipment, sit in a chair and do the work; simple in theory, more complicated in practice! Students need to keep working on establishing routines and a mindset that ensures homework is a non-negotiable each night, even if it is the revision of what has been covered in class earlier that day.
- Seeking support – students should always let someone know, preferably a trusted adult, that they are struggling; we reminded students that we are here to support them should they ever need it.

We encourage you to have similar conversations with your young person at home using the same scaffold and language regarding ‘controlling the controllables’ as a way of promoting positive mental health and outcomes. Please do reach out if you would like to have a conversation with us about this approach.



### **Behaviour on the Bus**

Earlier this week I boarded a school bus to remind our students that travelling on our school buses is a privilege and not a right. At a minimum, students are expected to ensure they do no harm to others, be that physically or emotionally, and help to ensure a safe environment for all. 99% of our students comply with these expectations without concern, and to them, we are grateful for their approach. For the minority who are failing to uphold these standards, we will be proactive in having conversations with them and their families and removing them from the bus for a period of time as a consequence. Should any parent or guardian have a concern regarding safety on the bus, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will address the matter promptly.

### **Podcast Recommendations**

'The Howie Games' often features interviews with inspirational people with excellent transferrable messages for our young people, and indeed us as adults. This two-part interview with Kurt Fearnley is a personal favourite. Fearnley, a Paralympic legend who was defined by his iron will and absolute refusal to give up. Kurt had the ability to physically push himself into areas where few people go. His explanation of the mental attitudes required to do this is pretty special. But more than that, Kurt is a man who seeks out adventure, in a world where adventures are often a distant dream. If you're looking for some inspiration, these two episodes are wonderful.

[Episode 88: Kurt Fearnley \(Part A\)](#)

[Episode 88: Kurt Fearnley \(Part B\)](#)

We thank you all for your ongoing support and the privilege of working with your young person/people.

Sincerely,

Mr. Ashley Mills (Head of Student Wellbeing/Acting Deputy Principal) on behalf of myself and the Student Wellbeing Leaders –Mrs. Justine Fitzpatrick, Mr. Greg Mellor, Mr. Nathan Pisani, Mrs. Belinda Dezdjek, Mr. Craig Durran, Mr. Andy Walsgott, Mrs. Lauren Flint, Mr. Luke Reynolds

### The Lume Excursion

Our First Nations and FIRE Carrier students visited The Lume - Connection at the Melbourne Convention Centre this week. This is a multi-sensory journey through Australia from the perspective of First Nations People through the lenses of Land, Water and Sky Country. The digital art projections and accompanying sound creates a truly immersive experience and we'd highly recommend families visit if they can. Internationally celebrated Aboriginal artist, Wayne Quilliam reflects on The Lume saying, "To promote our culture we need to bring the young ones in" and this supports our approach at Iona. By sharing cultural experiences with our students, we see them grow in their connection to First Nations culture and increase their connection with each other.



Carmen Ahearn  
*Head of Culture and Identity*

Thank you from Caritas Australia

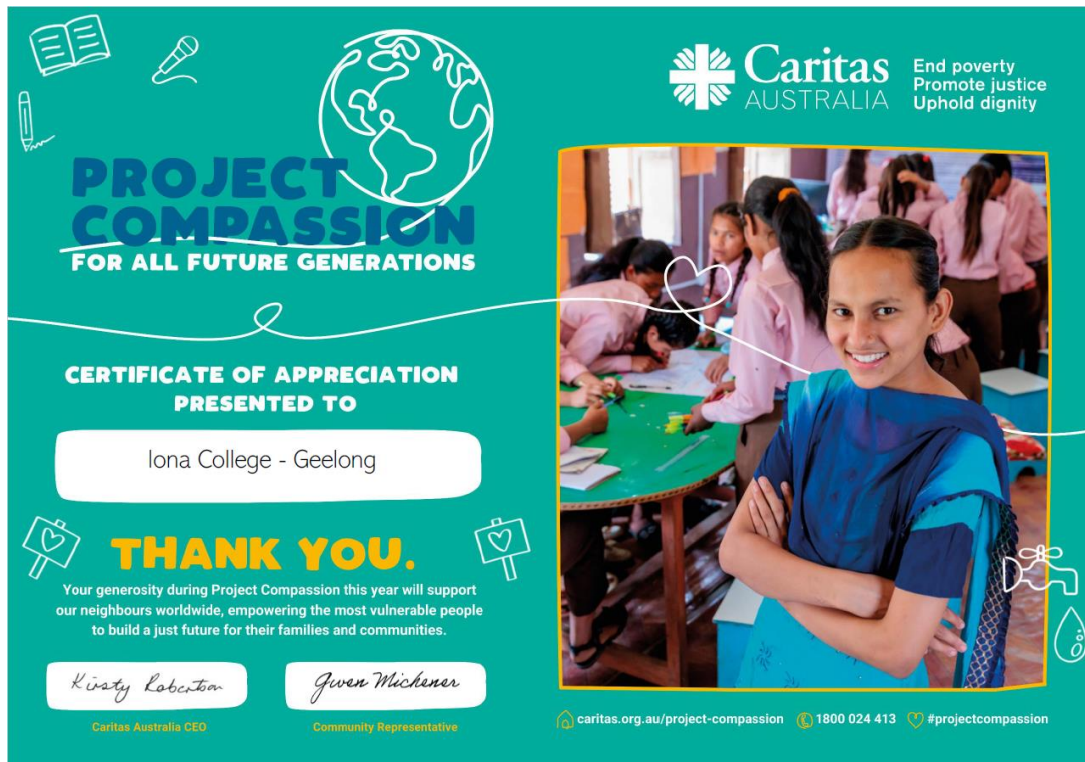
Dear Iona College – Geelong,

On behalf of Caritas Australia and the communities we support, **thank you** to your staff, students, parents and whole community, for all their support of Project Compassion in 2023!

Your compassion in action will allow real change in the lives of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters.

Your kindness and partnership will help us to stand in solidarity with communities that face the challenges of poverty and ecological injustice. It is the passion and spirit of our supporters across Australia whose generosity of heart enables us to have our hands and feet in marginalised communities across the world. Thank you so much for your support, it is very much appreciated.

Please find a certificate of appreciation below:



Gwen Michener  
Justice Educator at Caritas Australia

### Iona's First Staff Basketball



The Iona staff basketball team are edging closer to a semi-final berth in the Mens Social Competition. Come down and show Mr Byrne, McKew, Corrigan, Codd, Dawe and Frawley support on a Wednesday Night at AWA Stadium.

### Chess Club Tuesdays & Thursdays

Our Iona Chess Club is growing! We meet every Tuesday and Thursday at lunchtime in the Resource Centre for some friendly battles of strategy.

It is a great way for students across classes and year levels to connect and challenge themselves. We welcome new members at any time – with any level of experience.

See Mr Chalkley or Ms Keating with any questions.

Louise Keating  
*Teacher / Numeracy Leader*

## Winter Soiree #2



Congratulations to all our performers at the Winter Soiree #2 last night. We had some wonderful performances from a variety of students. There were those who had performed before and are continuing to refine their skills and those who were complete “first timers”. Congratulations to all those who performed and congratulations on continuing your musical journey with performance practice. Thank you to the team that helped make this possible which includes the maintenance team, the performers, the music staff, Lottie Noller, the IT department and of course our audience.

Keep your eye on the newsletter and social media for our next musical events.

Jodie Townsend  
*Teacher / Music / Innovation Leader (Pedagogy & Instruction)*

### Interim Reports

Interim reports will be available for parents/carers via PAM on **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August 4 pm**. The interim reports provide feedback about a student's learning behaviours and participation in classes and in Community Group. For more thorough feedback on progress in class tasks and assessment tasks, we encourage parents/carers to check PAM regularly throughout the term.

An email will be sent directly to parents to indicate when the interim reports have been made available.

### Student progress meetings

There will be the opportunity for parents/carers and students to meet with staff for Student Progress Meetings on **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>** and **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August** between **3:30 pm – 8:00 pm**. On the interim report, staff members will indicate if a progress meeting is 'welcome' or 'required' in each subject studied by a student. The interviews will be held virtually, using Microsoft Teams, and can be booked via PAM from **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August, 4 pm**.

*It is an **expectation** at Iona that students will attend Student Progress Meetings. Having a joint conversation between parents, students and teachers ensures all parties are on the same page regarding learning progress and recommendations and ensures that there are no misunderstandings regarding what is required.*

### Staff leave

Currently, there are a few Iona staff members who are on leave. Please know that these staff members will not provide an interim report and will not be available for student progress meetings.

Anthea Sholl

*Learning and Innovation Leader – Feedback, Assessment & Reporting*

### Year 9/10 GISSA Soccer

Yesterday the Year 9/10 girls went to Kardinia International College to compete in the 2023 GISSA Inter Girls Soccer Championships.

After a slow start against Christian College going 2-0 down in the first half, the girls found their form and fought back to draw the game 3-3. Tahlia O'Brien with a sublime hattrick to help keep us in the competition. Next was Clonard College who came up against an Iona team brimming with confidence and skill. Aisha Molloy controlled the middle of the park along with Lily Trotter who seemed to be in every corner of the field fighting for every 50-50 ball on offer. The girls were rewarded with a thoroughly deserved 2-0 win. Missing out on the grand final purely on goal difference (1 goal), saw us up against St Ignatius College in the 3<sup>rd</sup> place final. It was a very close game in which every one of our girls fought hard and left nothing in the tank, walking away 1-0 victors and placing 3<sup>rd</sup> overall. It's worth mentioning that Christian College won the tournament having failed to win just one game which was against our valiant girls.



Tahlia O'Brien finished the day with a phenomenal 5 goals and Lily Trotter with MVP for her tireless work on the field.

Congratulations girls! We can't wait to see you back out there next year.

Nick Critchell  
*Teacher / Girls Soccer Coach*

## Iona Meet the Team



The graphic features the Iona College Geelong logo in the top left corner. Below it, the text "IONA MEET THE TEAM" is displayed in white on a blue rectangular background. Underneath, "SEONNA PRIMUS" is written in white on a purple background, followed by "Specialist Assistant" in white on a yellow background. A quote in orange text reads: "Believe in yourself, you are more capable than you think, live in the moment and be kind to yourself and others." On the right side of the graphic is a circular portrait of Seonna Primus, a woman with blonde hair, smiling, wearing a dark blue top and a necklace.

Meet Seonna Primus, a cherished member of the Art Department where she works as a Specialist Assistant. Seonna's family includes her husband and three daughters, ages 13, 11 and 7, along with their beloved Golden Retriever, Sonny. In her spare time Seonna enjoys yoga, boxing, and leisurely walks. It's no surprise that she also enjoys drawing, painting, and various artistic endeavours during her spare time. Seonna loves 90's R&B.

Seonna grew up in Geelong but she did have a stint living and working in London which she loved. She spent time travelling Europe extensively but a highlight for her was a 46-day long camping tour around Europe. Her path eventually led her from a graphic design career in the fashion industry to education, driven by her desire to inspire young minds in the realms of design.

Seonna's favourite aspect of her job is forging connections with students and witnessing their enthusiasm as they explore new skills, taking pride in their creative achievements.

Seonna's decision to join the Iona Team was rooted in the school's reputation within the Geelong community. Her positive personal experience as a parent at Iona, along with her passion for making a difference in students' lives made her take the leap to Iona College (and we're so glad she did!). Seeing students flourish academically and personally within a short span has been Seonna's favourite aspect of working at Iona so far. Witnessing their growth has brought her real joy!

Her words of wisdom for our student body were " I resonate with Ben Crowe and his many words of wisdom, particularly "be a human being first, and a human doing second", being a good person will take you a long way in life."

We are so thankful to have Seonna's diverse experience, passion for creativity and dedication to our students!

### Logging Late Arrivals, Early Departures and Absences on PAM

School attendance is a high priority at Iona College. It is a college requirement to know where our students are at all times.

As such we request that parents notify the College if their young person will be arriving late, leaving early or will be absent.

Should you need assistance in logging an absence using PAM – [please view the following video](#). If you are not able to log an absence, late arrival or early departure on PAM please contact Reception.

### Student Accident Insurance and Property Insurance

#### Student Accident Insurance & Ambulance Cover Arrangements

Iona College Geelong, a school under the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd, holds Public Liability Insurance with Catholic Church Insurance. Under this policy there is cover for Student care, however, the coverage levels are quite small with low payout amounts for what can be significant injuries.

As a result, the college recommends families review their Insurance and ambulance cover needs. Families should then consider taking out additional coverage to cover injuries that may occur at school and require medical transportation and care by a medical professional as families may find there is a significant shortfall between out of pocket expenses and the payout amount from the College insurance cover. Parents and guardians of Iona College students are responsible for paying the cost of medical treatment for injured students, including the cost of ambulance transport and any other transport costs in emergency situations.

#### Valuables & Property

Personal property brought to the college by students is not insured and the college does not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage.

This can include mobile phones, and other electronic devices, and sporting equipment, including bikes and scooters etc. Please note that neither the college nor Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd hold insurance for personal property brought to schools and will generally not pay for any loss or damage to such property.

We request the support of parents and guardians in ensuring students are discouraged from bringing any unnecessary or particularly valuable items to the college and that any such items brought are looked after carefully at all times by ensuring they lock their locker.

### Reminder – Upcoming Student Free Day

Please note that Friday the 25th of August is a staff Professional Development Day and as such a student free day.

Thanks for your support,

Kylie and Ash