

17 November 2023

Dear Parents and carers,

The year has passed quickly and it is time to start preparing for Christmas. As families busy themselves with gift-giving and making plans, we will again support MacKillop Family Services by requesting donations of gift cards to be distributed to teenagers in Out of Home Care. The donations of previous years have been gratefully received and have spread smiles across the faces of young people who find great joy in shopping for a Christmas gift for themselves.

We have an added incentive to participate this year because every gift card donated equals one entry in the draw to win a 2023 signed Geelong Cats Guernsey! Gift cards (just like those that would excite your young person) of any value can be taken to Community Group between now and Wednesday 6th December. We are really excited about the prize draw on the final day of school when one lucky Iona student or staff member will collect this awesome prize. Please give generously to this final fundraising effort for 2023.



The poster features a teal background with white snowflake patterns. In the top left corner is the MacKillop Family Services logo. In the top right is a circular photo of two young women wearing Santa hats and smiling. In the center, the Iona College Geelong logo is above the text 'Christmas Giving Appeal' in large red font. Below this, a white circle contains the text 'Thanks for donating a gift card which will bring joy to a teen living in foster care in the Geelong region'. In the bottom left, a striped Geelong Cats guernsey is shown. In the bottom right, the text 'YOU CAN WIN TOO!' is followed by 'Each gift card = one entry in the draw to win a signed 2023 Geelong Cats guernsey!'.

 MacKillop Family Services

 IONA COLLEGE GEE LONG

Christmas Giving Appeal

Thanks for donating a gift card which will bring joy to a teen living in foster care in the Geelong region

YOU CAN WIN TOO!
Each gift card = one entry in the draw to win a signed 2023 Geelong Cats guernsey!

Combined Boards and Councils Dinner

This week we had the privilege of welcoming the Board and Council members from Sacred Heart College, Clonard College, St Ignatius College, St Joseph's College and MacKillop Education Services to Iona for the end-of-year dinner of gratitude. We are very fortunate to have many members of our local community who are willing to volunteer their time to ensure the progression of Catholic Education in our local community. I would like to especially thank Mrs Julie Cole and the College Administration team for their efforts in the planning and organisation of the dinner. For many Council and Board members, it was the first time that they had visited Iona, and it was wonderful to share a little bit of our school with them.

Year 9 and 10 examinations

Next week, exams commence for our 10 students, with Year 9 English, Mathematics and Science exams running the week after. Exams are designed to give students an experience of how to navigate and complete revision of coursework from the semester and to respond to questions within time limitations. These are all experiences that assist students in their transition to their senior years at Iona. We wish our students well as they undertake these exams next week.

In regard to next week's Year 10 examinations, please take note of the following important reminders:

- All Year 10 students are required to attend the full school day for the English/Literacy and Maths/Numeracy exams/assessments occurring on Wednesday the 22nd of November. Students must also attend a supervised study session in between these two exams on this day, which will be occurring in their usual timetabled classrooms.
- Any Year 10 student who does not have an exam on Thursday 23rd November or Friday the 24th of November because they are not studying a Science or a Year 11 Unit 1 & 2 subject is not required to attend school on these days, but these students are welcome to if desired.
- Year 10 students who do have an exam on Thursday or Friday are welcome to attend the College only at the times their exams are scheduled, however parental permission for students to arrive late to school or to leave early is required, and these students must sign in and out of Student Reception when they arrive and depart. Any absences must be advised by parents/carers via PAM or normal absence procedures.
- Any student who is at school on the Thursday and Friday but does not have an exam to sit will be expected to attend supervised private study held in Iona's Resource Centre.

From the Wellbeing Team

The 5 x P Approach - Prior Preparation Promotes Perfect Performance

Earlier this week I spoke with students about the 5 x P approach, a spin on a more negative 5 x P approach (prior preparation prevents poor performance) that I've heard previously. This was to remind students about the importance of preparing for their upcoming assessment tasks, including exams.

Creating and following a strategically created daily and weekly homework plan is critical during this busy time of term. We also know looming deadlines impact student wellbeing, so should your young person/people require support in this area regarding a) their planning and/or execution of the plan and b) how they are feeling, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Multiple Students Being in Individual Toilets/Toilet Cubicles

As you are aware, we are lucky enough at Iona to have clean, private toilets for our students to utilise throughout the school day. We have unfortunately had occasions across the course of the year where multiple students have been found in or coming out of one toilet or a toilet cubicle, and of course, as a school, this is not something we want or will accept from our young people. Reasons for this include the fact that this is highly unhygienic and the possibility of poor behaviour taking place in this space, such as vaping, among others, that negatively impact child safety.

It is important to note that any student found to be in a toilet or toilet cubicle with another student will be issued a one-day suspension. We are putting this significant consequence in place to signal to our student body that this behaviour is unacceptable and is something we want to put a stop to immediately. We have communicated this to our student body on multiple occasions and again this week to help ensure clarity. We thank you for your support in this matter.

Podcast Recommendations – 'Huberman Lab' with Dr. Andrew Huberman

Regularly ranked as the #1 health podcast in the world, Dr. Andrew Huberman discusses science and science-based tools for everyday life. [This is episode 2 of a 4-part special series](#) on mental health with Dr. Paul Conti, M.D., a Stanford and Harvard-trained psychiatrist.

Dr. Conti explains specific tools for how to overcome life's challenges using a framework of self-inquiry that explores all the key elements of self, including defence mechanisms, behaviours, self-awareness and attention. They also discuss our internal driving forces, how to align them and ultimately, how to cultivate a powerful "generative drive" of positive, aspirational pursuits. Dr. Conti also explains how to adjust your internal narratives, reduce self-limiting concepts, overcome intrusive thoughts, and how certain defence mechanisms, such as "acting out" or narcissism, show up in ourselves and others. If you enjoy this one, consider exploring the other 3 episodes in this deep dive on mental health, or the stack of other interesting podcasts Dr. Huberman produces focusing on ways to optimise health and wellbeing.

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

Ashley Mills (Head of Student Wellbeing) on behalf of myself and the Student Wellbeing Leaders –Justine Fitzpatrick, Greg Mellor, Nathan Pisani, Belinda Dezdjek, Craig Durran, Andy Walscott, Lauren Flint, Luke Reynolds

Wheelchair Basketball Incursion

This week we welcomed a team of people from Parallel Sports to work with one of our Year 8 Community Groups, as well as the Year 10 Active and Able class as a way to help support our learning about Para Sports and in particular Wheelchair basketball. Kaye Colman the founder of Parallel Sports, brought out a trailer load of wheelchairs for our students to use and we were lucky to have Chris Henderson (Hendo) and Mitchell Streeton join us to teach our students what wheelchair basketball is all about. Inspired by Hamish in Year 8, we set up 2 sessions of Wheelchair Basketball for our students. The Year 8 Community group loved participating in their wellbeing activity in which Hamish was able to share his talents and skills with his classmates. Hamish and his dad Paul stayed on to help work with our Year 10 Active and Able students.

It was great to hear about the sports that Hamish is involved in and to have him help teach skills to his peers and those students years above him. It was inspiring to listen to Hendo and Mitch's stories and hear the pathways that have led them to great success in their sporting careers. Both have recently competed in the 2023 Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Championships as part of the VIC Country team. They also play Wheelchair basketball. This experience provides our students the opportunity to overcome challenges and helps build a culture of inclusivity and opportunity for all. I wish to extend our gratitude to our guests- Kaye, Paul, Hamish, Hendo and Mitch, along with all the people who helped make this incursion possible. Thank you!



Gina Oliver
Teacher

Music News



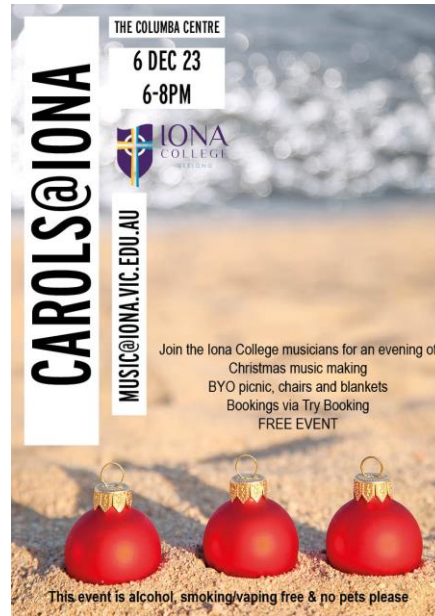
Good luck to Kirby and Lucinda for their upcoming AMEB Violin exams. Preparing for any AMEB exam takes time and continued commitment. Keep practising and we wish you all the best.

Summer Soiree

With more sunshine comes more music. Some of our music students are getting ready for the “Summer Soiree” that will be held on the 23rd of November. This concert will be individual performers, duos, Concert Band and our String Group. Please [book tickets online](#) so we know how many chairs to set up.



Carols@Iona



Another reminder that Iona is hosting its inaugural Carols by Candlelight – Carols@Iona! Join us on Wednesday, December 6th from 6 - 8 pm. Our talented musicians (including staff and students) will serenade you, and yes, Santa is making a special appearance! Please book [your tickets online](#), it's a free event, but your bookings will help us ensure we have enough room for everyone.

Jodie Townsend

Teacher / Music / Innovation Leader (Pedagogy & Instruction)

2024 Bus Information

Planning with McHarry's Buslines on student bus allocations, routes and timetables for the 19 Iona College private buses that will operate in 2024 (up from 14) is expected to be completed within the next fortnight. Relevant information plus applicable Conveyance Allowance application forms will then be communicated to parents/guardians.

Those (new) students requiring travel on the (free) country/regional bus network have had their application forms forwarded to the Regional Bus Coordinator at Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College for assessment and should await notification of details from them.

Change of Address – we ask that parents/guardians notify us of any completed or upcoming change of address that may result in the need for their young person(s) either requiring a change of bus route or to utilize the Iona College private bus service for the first time. Please either call or email our Bus Coordinator, Carl Jones, with these details on (03) 5229-0004 (then Option 2) or conveyance@iona.vic.edu.au.

First Aid Update

Thunderstorm Asthma

During the spring and summer seasons, it's important to address a potential health concern that can affect our students: Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma. It is a rare weather-related phenomenon that can be a serious threat to individuals with asthma and allergies. It is a severe respiratory condition that occurs when a high pollen count combines with certain weather conditions, such as thunderstorms, to trigger severe asthma symptoms in susceptible individuals.

Identifying At-Risk Students of Thunderstorm Asthma

Known Asthma or Allergy History: If your child has a history of asthma or allergies, they may be more vulnerable to Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma. Ensure that their asthma management plan is up to date (Operoo updated) and that they have access to their prescribed medications, such as inhalers or allergy medications.

Previous Episodes: If your child has experienced Thunderstorm Asthma in the past, they are at a higher risk of experiencing it again. Discuss this with their healthcare provider to develop a comprehensive action plan and notify the college.

Preparing for Thunderstorm Asthma

1. **Stay Informed:** Keep an eye on local weather forecasts, especially during high pollen seasons. Thunderstorm Asthma events are more likely to occur on days with a high pollen count and a forecast of thunderstorms. The risk forecast is published on the Vic Emergency website/app.
2. **Know the Signs:** Make sure your child is aware of the symptoms of asthma exacerbation, which can include shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and chest tightness. Encourage them to seek help if they experience these symptoms during a thunderstorm.
3. **Asthma Action Plan:** Ensure that your child's asthma action plan is readily accessible and updated. Review it together so they know what steps to take in case of an asthma attack.
4. **Medication and Inhaler Use:** Teach your child how to use their inhaler correctly. Make sure they have their prescribed medications on hand and that they know when and how to use them.
5. **Seek Advice:** If your child experiences severe asthma symptoms during a thunderstorm, seek medical advice promptly. It's always better to be cautious and consult a healthcare professional if you have any concerns.

Please [refer to the link for further information](#)

Hay Fever Management

1. **Take medications as prescribed** including antihistamines, decongestants, nasal corticosteroids, or other allergy-specific medications.
2. **Keep medication at school.** Store a supply of your prescribed medication with a completed medication authority form. This way your student can access if symptoms worsen during the day.
3. **Avoid Triggers.** Where possible try to minimise your exposure to allergens, especially during high pollen seasons. Having good control of your hay fever can help reduce your risk of thunderstorm asthma.

For more information please visit [Better Health's information on hayfever](#).

Art Department News

Take a look at some of our VCE Art Making and Exhibiting students' work. They are busily preparing for the upcoming exhibition!





We'd also love to share a Christmas ornament designed and lasercut on our Laser Cutting machine by Serena in Year 8 during the GISSA Sport arts class:



Dates to Remember

Summer Soiree	Thursday 23 November – Iona Stadium, 6 pm
Lunchtime Concert	Monday 27 November
Carols@Iona	Wednesday 6 December – 6 pm
End of School Mass – Formal Uniform Day	Thursday 7 December
Final Day of Term 4	Thursday 7 December, 3:05 finish

Thanks for your support,

Damian and Kylie