

1 December 2023

Dear Parents and carers,

The school year will conclude next Thursday with Fr Jim Clarke celebrating our End of Year Mass. Students are required to wear formal uniform for this occasion. A wonderful group of young people from across all year levels are preparing to participate in Mass as readers and in other roles. We are so proud of the students who lead in this space as it brings students to the heart of our celebrations and enriches the faith life of Iona. While some lead, other students and staff participate through their respectful presence, by saying responses, by singing and by receiving Communion or a blessing. As Pope Francis says, young people are the future of the Church and at Iona, we respond to this by inviting students to contribute and grow in confidence to experience the rituals and beliefs of the Catholic tradition. We invite parents, carers and family members to join us for mass via the livestream link that will be sent out closer to the day. We look forward to this wonderful celebration to close the 2023 academic year.

The final days of giving gift cards to our Christmas Appeal are here. We urge you to consider donating a gift card which will support young people in Out Of Home Care. The recipients benefit from our generosity and our Iona students who donate cards before Thursday will get a ticket in the draw to win the 2023 Geelong Cats signed guernsey. The gift cards will be delivered to Mackillop Family Services next Friday so that they can be prepared for distribution before Christmas. We thank all families who have already donated to this Appeal.



The poster features a teal background with white snowflake patterns. At the top left 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 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'. At the bottom left is a photo of a signed Geelong Cats guernsey. At the bottom right, the text reads: 'YOU CAN WIN TOO! Each gift card = one entry in the draw to win a signed 2023 Geelong Cats guernsey!'.

Carmen Ahearn
Head of Culture and Identity

Year 9 and 10 Exams

As we rapidly approach the conclusion of our academic year, it is with gride pride in our Year 9 and 10 students that we share news of the successful completion of this year's school exams.

Students completed these exams observing the rules of conduct expected of Year 12 students in the examinations conducted by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

First and foremost, we congratulate our hardworking students for their dedication and commitment throughout the examination period. The completion of exams marks a significant milestone in their academic journey, setting them up for senior exam success and strengthening their resilience in the face of challenges.

Steve Parker
Head of Learning and Innovation

Celebration of Achievement Evening

Last night we gathered for our Celebration of Achievement Evening where we had the chance to recognise the musical, sporting, endeavour, academic and special achievements of our 2023 student cohort. Congratulations to all students who received an award. We look forward to further acknowledgement of your efforts at the final school assembly to be held next Thursday. Thank you to Mr Parker and the Learning Leaders Team for planning the evening and to all staff who assisted in various ways on the night.

Congratulations also to our Columba Award winners. This significant award is presented to two students in each year level who embody the spirit of the College in their approach to their studies and cocurricular activities. They demonstrate academic diligence, a love of learning, a genuine respect for others and fulfil the four aspirational values of Iona: compassion, leadership, excellence and courage. In 2023, our very worthy Columba Award winners are:

Year 7: Felicity Guye, Zack Waterson
Year 8: Evie McNamara, Harrison Aisbett
Year 9: Kirby Reynolds, Maurice Guye
Year 10: Stella Rose, Thomas Goerke

Prior to the ceremony, parents, carers and students had the opportunity to view our Art exhibition as well as some of the Passion Projects that were completed this year. It was wonderful to see the many talents of our College Community on display.

While not all students received awards at the Celebration of Achievement evening last night, we are enormously proud of the efforts of each individual who is part of the Iona community and we are grateful for the confidence and support of parents and the care that our staff provide.

The prayer for the evening was read by Year 10 student, Charlie, and we share this for our families here:

*We ask for a blessing upon the young people of Iona College,
particularly those who we celebrate this evening for their efforts to do their
best and for their achievement of excellence in their studies, in sport, in music and other pursuits.*

*We recognise their hard work, dedication and perseverance, and their capacity to grow through
feedback, self-reflection and challenge.*

*We say thank you for our families who nurture their children and who show confidence in the staff
of Iona College.*

*We give thanks for the work of our staff who spend time with young people, teaching them and
caring for them, so that they may be their best intellectually, morally, and spiritually.*

*We ask for continued guidance for the students of Iona College as they gather the knowledge and
wisdom that will enable them to “change the world” through everyday actions of compassion,
courage, leadership and excellence.*

Geelong Regional Library Memberships for Iona students

Our partnership with Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) strengthens each year and we are pleased to be able to complement our growing library collection with the broad range of resources, online and physical, available through the GRLC. We recommend all students have a membership (free) and [invite sign up via this link](#).

Students who have previously signed up through Iona can get their login details from GRLC staff in branches or via our Resource Centre staff if they have forgotten their login details.

Please add (Iona) in the field with the surname and this will identify for the GRLC staff that the student is from Iona. Membership cards will be processed over the holiday break and will be delivered to Iona for distribution. While awaiting the card, students will have access to the library resources with instructions coming via a GRLC email following the processing of the application. GRLC staff will visit Iona early in the new school year to speak with students about their services and we also anticipate visits throughout the year to have some fun with activities and learning.

If students already have a membership, please have them record their member number in their school diary and know the pin so that they can access the GRLC while at school.

Canteen Update

The College canteen will not be taking lunch orders on Tuesday 5th December. Counter service will be available for all students during break 1 and lunch. Lunch orders will be honoured for students who placed an order before we closed online orders for Tuesday 5th.

On the final week of term 4th – 7th December, the canteen will be selling food items until they are out of stock. Families may notice an unusual number of out-of-stock items when ordering through our online store. This is to minimise any food wastage that may occur once the term is completed.

Jamie Foott
Canteen Manager

Paralympian Education Program and Sport4All Presentation Opportunity

On Tuesday the 28th of November our pioneer group of Year 10 Active and Able Students were involved in a final Paralympian Education opportunity. We were fortunate to have Ella Sabljack who is the Paralympics Australia Education Manager, and a Paralympian herself, come in as a guest speaker to share her journey as a professional sports person in the sports of both Wheelchair Basketball and Wheelchair Rugby. She told her story of the challenges she faced growing up with a disability but the desire to be involved in sport and essentially the drive to be a Paralympian. Her success was not an overnight but she explained that it took more than 12 years of hard work and training to achieve the successes she has in her life. Ella was inspirational and a great role model for so many. We loved that we could then participate in Seated Volleyball and Goal Ball with Ella after her presentation.

The Deputy Mayor of Geelong, Councillor Anthony Aitken, also came to see what we are doing in this learning space at Iona. Councillor Anthony Aitken was born with a congenital hearing loss and is a passionate advocate for the community and vulnerable members of Geelong. He spoke about how important it is to be champions of change and to build a culture of inclusion and opportunity for all to be involved. We felt most privileged that Deputy Mayor Anthony Aitken took time out of his busy schedule to come and meet with us and speak with us about something he is very passionate about.

Travis Zimmer was the facilitator of our session, he is a Sport4All Inclusion Coach for the City of Greater Geelong. Travis has been working with me and the Year 10 Active and Able students to provide several opportunities to get involved and participate in Blind Sports and other Para Sports opportunities. Travis is a wealth of knowledge and has a broad range of contacts who have helped provide a variety of experiences and opportunities for our students. This has helped make what we learn in the classroom real and relevant.

Our Year 10 Active and Able students worked with Travis and the Sport4All Film crew to gain footage and contributions that will become fundamental to a promotional video that will showcase how Sport4All has been valuable to our school and can help support other school to build awareness and opportunities for their students.

What a wonderful opportunity for our Year 10s as the leaders at Iona College and the very first students to participate in Active and Able subject. We embraced the opportunity to welcome so many people to our school to showcase what we are attempting to achieve within our Iona Community.

At Iona, we aim to “Create a Culture of Inclusivity and an Opportunity for All.”

Gina Oliver
Teacher





From the Wellbeing Team

Reflections on our 'Celebration of Achievement' Evening

It was a joy to attend our 'Celebration of Achievement' evening earlier this week where we were able to meet and/or reconnect with families of our students. It was wonderful to see so many of you in attendance! Further to this, it serves as a timely reminder of the dignity of each of the students, and especially how precious each of them is to their loved ones. We are in a privileged position to be working with your young ones and we take this very seriously.

A big congratulations to all award winners and thank you for the gifts and effort you bring to our College community.

End-of-year School Mass and Assembly – Formal Uniform Required

As mentioned previously, all students are required to be in full formal school uniform for our end-of-year mass (period 1 and part of period 2) and school assembly (period 3) next Thursday 7th December. Should your young person be missing a particular item of this uniform, please rectify this prior to this date. Uniform items are available at PSW, located at 164 Malop Street, Geelong. Should you be experiencing financial difficulties or barriers to accessing the uniform, please contact one of the Year Level Wellbeing Community Leaders for your young person to discuss the matter privately. Please note that should your young person wish to get changed into their PE uniform after the conclusion of our assembly they are welcome to.

End-of-Year Clean-Up

Next week will be asking all students to contribute to cleaning our school before heading away on their summer break. This will involve the cleaning out of lockers. Last year we found several numerous textbooks and novels that could be passed on or reused were thrown away. In the interest of sustainability and community spirit, please ask your young person/people to refrain from doing this and to bring these resources home so they can be passed on to others who may use them. Similarly, we would recommend that students bring their exercise books home for safekeeping – they may be good reference points/resources for next year.

FYI our clean-up schedule:

- Tuesday 5th December – students place recyclable items into recycle bins, throw out rubbish into rubbish bins, and take home books they will not need to use for the rest of 2023
- Thursday 7th December – students empty their locker; take home all items remaining in lockers; students wipe out/down their lockers in readiness for another student to use them in 2024

Podcast Recommendations – 'How Other Dad's Dad'

In these podcasts, famous Australian comedian and media personality Hamish Blake chats with other dads he really admires about their approach to "dadding", and in the process hopefully learns a little, steal some of their hard-earned wisdom and helps us all dad/parent a tiny bit better. There are lots of good episodes but last week's episode was a summary of some of the best stuff to have come out of the last season being discussed and unpacked by Dr. Billy Garvey, a developmental paediatrician from another of our favourite podcasts 'Pop culture parenting'. [Give this one a listen – it's a gem!](#)

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 Walsgott, Lauren Flint, Luke Reynolds



Final Student Day

Next Thursday (7 December) is the final day for our students. Normal finishing time (3.05 pm) will happen on this day with buses running to a normal timetable.

Please note that the front office's official closure date is Wednesday 13 December at 4 pm. College personnel will not be accessible after this date. The College office will reopen on Monday 22 January 2024.

Our final newsletter will be distributed next Friday 8 December.

Damian and Kylie