

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the 2024 school year. On Wednesday, we welcomed our 260 new Year 7 students and students new to Iona in other year levels. This was followed by our returning students (Years. 8 - 11) today. Whilst every year brings about significant change at Iona, we are particularly excited to fully immerse our Senior Year students into VCE, Vocational Major and VET subjects. Four VCE subjects will be completed by some of our students at Unit 3 and 4 level as enhancement opportunities this year.



Along with our new students who are commencing at Iona this year, we also welcome 50 new staff members to our community. Over future editions of this newsletter, we look forward to progressively introducing our new staff to you. In welcoming all our new staff members, I would like to officially welcome our new Deputy Principal – Learning, Melissa Gould, to Iona. Melissa joins the College Leadership Team after 5 years as Principal of Rochester Secondary College. Both Kylie and I are thrilled that Melissa has joined us at Iona, and we are excited to further enhance quality learning opportunities at our school. To learn more about Melissa, please see her ‘Meet the Team’ profile later in the newsletter.



At the commencement of each year, it is important that we acknowledge not just the new students and staff who are joining us, but also the new families that become part of our community for the first time. We very much look forward to working in partnership with you in the years ahead. Rest assured that the care of your daughters, sons and young people is our focus as we know that happily settled students will more likely achieve better educational outcomes. Should you have any concerns about the start of the school year I would encourage you in the first instance to contact your daughter/son/young person's Community Group Teacher. Each year we look to further our progress in the establishment of relationships between school and home. Ensuring that there are open communication channels is an important part of this development. With this in mind, we have decided that we will host official Parent/Carer Community Group Welcome Evenings for all Year levels – please find further information relating to these evenings later in the newsletter.

A weekly emailed newsletter will be distributed on a Thursday in 2024. This is a departure from the traditional Friday publication over the last four years. The newsletter is a very important source of information for families and will provide updates regarding dates and activities at the College. Throughout the summer break, significant alterations were made to the College car park to more suitably cater for the increased need for staff parking and the enhanced management of the arrivals and departures of students on our bus network. In 2024, we will have 22 buses servicing Iona and we have designed the new car park/bus to cater for the increased traffic flow. With regard to parent parking and pedestrian access please refer to an email distributed on Tuesday 30 January that outlined parking access and arrangements.

Culture and Identity News

As we begin this new school year, we feel excited and challenged by what lies ahead. We welcome six Graduate teachers and many other new Teaching and Non-Teaching staff. As our staff have busily prepared for the year ahead, we have encouraged some time for personal reflection on their calling as educators within a Catholic school.

A recently published piece 'Welcome to School' by Michael McGirr in Eureka Street, a Jesuit publication focused on Jesuit spirituality and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, speaks of relationships as being central to students as they work out what it means to be a human, to be alive. He suggests, "the core business of school is to enable young people to discover their compassion." This happens in three ways:

1. By talking to kids and showing them that they matter, and it matters that they learn.
2. By students learning that they are not the centre of the world. They need to encounter the needs of the planet and the whole of the human family to be more fully formed, young people.
3. Through passionate teaching, which connects the "complex narratives" that criss-cross the world and helps students to feel comfortable as they navigate living in such a colourful world.

We look forward to this new year; to its new and developing relationships, to watching our students take steps in their learning journey and to being together in community. Welcome to 2024!



Wednesday was a wonderful day of welcome for our new students and staff. We gathered for a celebration in our Yarning Circle so that we could pay respects to the Wadawurrung people as the Custodians of the land where Iona stands. For thousands of years, First Nations people have used smoke to cleanse places and people of bad spirits and to promote the protection and well-being of visitors. By our newcomers placing a gum leaf into the firepit and walking through the smoke, we honoured First Nations traditions of cleansing for a new beginning and offering protection for those on their journey at Iona. The sharing of story and the celebration in our sacred space brings life to us as a community of faith who have a profound respect for First Nations Culture, Country and people.

Next Tuesday, the 6th of February, our school community will gather in our Stadium for our Beginning of the Year Mass. Fr Jim Clarke, Parish Priest of St Mary's Geelong and member of the College Advisory Council, will preside over this mass which brings us together to be nourished by the prayer and ritual of our faith tradition. It is always a special occasion when we gather as a Catholic community, and we invite families to participate through the livestream link that will be provided on the morning of mass. As this is a significant College occasion, students are to wear formal uniforms including their blazers.

Sunday Mass at Iona

Our College is located in Nazareth Catholic Parish which supports faith life in the areas of Torquay, Anglesea and Grovedale. Currently, masses in our parish are held at St Therese Torquay, St Christopher's Anglesea and Nazareth Grovedale (Mass times can be viewed here <https://tagparish.com.au/>).

An additional Nazareth Parish Mass, for the growing local community, will commence on Sunday 18th February here at Iona College. Mass will begin at 9 am in the Resource Centre and will be held on the third Sunday of each month. We would love to see some of our families join us for this regular mass. This Mass is provided by the Parish for all families who live in the Armstrong Creek and the surrounding area and for those who find this a more suitable time for their needs.

Mrs Carmen Ahearn
Head of Culture and Identity

Subject Changes

Please note that all subject changes will be finalised by Monday (5th of February). Forms for subject changes are available in Ms McLaren and Mr Parker's office. This form must be signed by both students and parents.

Music News – 2024



I am very excited to begin another year working with our musicians. It looks like another busy year for all our students and staff. Some small “housekeeping” issues to be aware of for the start of the year.

Private Lessons

All students enrolled in music lessons should hear from their teacher by Sunday evening this week. The teacher will send the day and time of the first lesson. After this initial email, it is up to students to look at the timetables that go up on Friday in the Music area OR they will see their lesson time on SIMON.

Choir

Choir rehearsals begin next week.

Monday 5th Feb 12:50 pm – this is mainly for those who cannot make the Thursday afternoon rehearsal (all welcome though and it would really help them learn the material quickly).

Thursday 8th Feb 3:10 - 4:10 pm – parents need to pick their young people up as there are no buses at this time.

Concert Band and Strings

These ensembles will begin on Tuesday 13th Feb 3:10 - 4:15 pm.

If you learn an instrument that is suited to these ensembles, you are welcome to join.

Contemporary Ensembles

There are a large number of students who want to be involved in these ensembles. We are currently working out the availability of the Music room, staffing/cost and students involved. Please check the notices on SIMON for when these will be starting. Students involved will be contacted via email.

Music Technology Club

This group will start on Friday this week in B20 at lunchtime. All you need is you is enthusiasm and your computer – no previous knowledge needed.

Questions

New members are welcome to all of these ensembles. Students are encouraged to come and discuss options with me. Notices for Music activities are placed on SIMON – both students and parents can see these. I would encourage you to check these regularly.

We hope that by next week we will be able to give you a list of all the concerts for 2024 and other opportunities.

Ms Jodie Townsend
Head of Performing Arts

Maths @ Iona College

The Maths team are excited to start 2024 with your children in our classrooms! This year we have mathematics classes from Year 7 all the way up to our Year 11 accelerated class completing Year 12!

As a staff, we like to ensure that Mathematics at Iona...

...LOOKS LIKE engaged students, collaborative learning, active participation, facing and overcoming struggles, teachers meeting students at their point of need

...SOUNDS LIKE teacher/student interactions, peer motivation, questioning, a hum of productivity, selective silences

...FEELS LIKE a supportive, inclusive and safe environment, somewhere you can strive for YOUR best, a place for positive challenges and somewhere to enjoy yourself and have fun!

Over the coming week, teachers will be in touch with parents and guardians with some information relevant to Term 1. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to email me at louise.keating@iona.vic.edu.au

Mathematics Enrichment Opportunity

As part of their Outreach program the University of Melbourne conducts sessions for secondary school students. One of these upcoming programs for Term 1 is "Micro Mathematicians".

"Micro Mathematicians" is an enrichment program aimed at advanced Year 7&8, as well as Year 9&10 students who have an interest in maths beyond the classroom. The program offers a range of free virtual and in-person workshops throughout the year and new workshops are continually being added.

If you love mathematics and are interested in challenging yourself further, [please see the following flyer](#) for the QR code to apply for this fantastic program!

If you have questions about this please email ms-outreach@unimelb.edu.au or you can be in touch with me at louise.keating@iona.vic.edu.au.

Happy first week of school!

Ms Lou Keating
Learning Area Leader (Maths & Numeracy)

Swimming Carnival

Our annual College Swimming Carnival will take place at Kardinia Aquatic Centre on Wednesday, 28th February. All students who catch a bus to school will be taken directly to the pool via their normal bus, whilst students who make their own way to school will be transported to and from the College via bus. Carnival activities will include traditional 50m events, diving, and relays as well as pool and land-based novelties. Students will have the opportunity to sign up for events in the coming weeks.

Please note the following;

- This day will be compulsory for all students in Years 7 – 9.
- Students in Years 10 & 11 students will have the option to attend this day if they wish. Students who attend the swimming sports must compete in at least two official races on the day. Those who don't wish to participate will be required to attend their normal timetabled classes at the college.

Please note that students who attend the day will be required to remain at the pool for the duration of the carnival. We welcome families to this event as we are looking forward to a great day of fun for all students. More specific information will be sent out through SIMON in the coming weeks.

Mr Mitch Herbison
Head of Sport

College Nurse News



I wanted to take a moment to say a big thank you to all the parents/carers for taking the time to fill out the documentation regarding your young person's medical condition for 2024. (I know it's a lot)

In Term 1, I will be reaching out to parents/carers of young people with medical needs. This communication will provide us with an opportunity to discuss any concerns, address questions and ensure that I have a comprehensive understanding of your young person's health requirements which will allow me to provide support while at school. Depending on your preference, this communication can occur via phone or in person.

Please remember that I am here as a resource for your young person's health and wellbeing . If your young person has any health concerns, allergies, medications, or recent injuries (even if they occurred outside of school), do not hesitate to reach out to me at medical@iona.vic.edu.au. Your communication is vital in ensuring the best care for your student. Please contact me if you are experiencing any difficulties uploading any information.

COVID Requirements

As we are all aware there are still some cases of covid popping up in our community. Iona follows the Department of Health recommendations that staff and students who test positive for COVID-19 isolate for a minimum of 5 days and do not attend school until their symptoms resolve.

Medication Administration

Any medications to be administered during school hours including Panadol require a Medication Authority Form. This must be completed in consultation with a medical practitioner or pharmacist and uploaded to PAM. (Any medications that appear on the action plan for example Ventolin do not need a form.) Please find the form on PAM under Parents Links > Medication Authority Form 2024.

Student Injuries – Outside College Hours

If your young person has experienced any injuries outside school and you think it may impact school – for example, moon boot or plaster, could you please complete the Student Injury Notification form. This form can be found on PAM under parents links > Student Injury Notification Form 2024. The form does not need to be signed by a doctor and if easier can be simply emailed to myself. This awareness will assist me in monitoring the injury and is an easy way to communicate any modifications that may need to happen at school etc. or administer any necessary medications.

Canteen Volunteers Wanted



We are looking for volunteers to assist in our popular canteen. If you are willing to give some time to volunteer in our canteen, [complete this online form](#). Once you have completed the form, you will receive more information on how to become a volunteer. If you have already completed the form, no need to complete it again, please check your emails, including junk mail for further instructions from compliance@iona.vic.edu.au. A current Working With Children Check (Volunteer) is required. A big thanks to those who are already volunteering.

Resource Centre News

Our library collection has grown again while you have all been on holiday with more items and resources arriving all the time and our IT team has been working hard to have systems and devices ready for you all. The Resource Centre is open to students for IT assistance and Library services at various times throughout the school day:



Could all students please return the books that they borrowed over the break to the Returns box in the Resource Centre as soon as they can and swap them over for something new. New students are welcome to come in and see us and borrow resources during our open times. The loan period is 4 weeks and the collection can be searched via our Library web page [here](#). Students can log in to their Iona library account using their Iona username and password to reserve books, create lists and write reviews of books they have read. See Ms Sharon in the Resource Centre for any questions about this.

Geelong Regional Library Service Partnership and Memberships:

Our partnership with Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) strengthens each year. We are pleased to be able to complement our growing library collection and resources with the broad range of resources, available through the GRLC.

We recommend all students have a membership (free) and invite [sign up via this link](#)

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 soon 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.

Happy reading to all of our Iona students and families!

Year 7 2025 Enrolments



The banner features a background image of students in school uniforms. A large white and yellow text overlay reads 'ENROL NOW FOR YEAR 7 2025'. Below this, a white box contains the text 'Open Tour Dates:' followed by a bulleted list of dates and times. At the bottom, a yellow box contains the text 'BOOK A TOUR ONLINE NOW' and the website 'IONA.VIC.EDU.AU'. The Iona College Geelong logo is in the top right corner.

**ENROL NOW
FOR YEAR 7 2025**

Open Tour Dates:

- MONDAY 18 MARCH 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM
- TUESDAY 19 MARCH 11.00 AM – 12.30 PM
- WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 11.00 AM – 12.30 PM
- THURSDAY 21 MARCH 9.00 AM – 10.30 AM
- THURSDAY 21 MARCH 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM

BOOK A TOUR ONLINE NOW
IONA.VIC.EDU.AU

You will have noticed that enrolments for Year 7 2025 are now open. [These enrolments can be completed online.](#)

Bookings for our Tour and Information are open. [Bookings are limited and can be made online.](#)



**IONA MEET
THE TEAM**

MELISSA GOULD

Deputy Principal - Learning

"In a world where you can
be anything - Be Kind! "



Meet Melissa Gould, our wonderful new Deputy Principal - Learning – we are absolutely delighted to have Melissa join the Iona Team! Melissa is passionate about education and learning and loves challenges – everything we could want in a Deputy Principal of Learning!

Why Iona? Melissa was drawn to the unique opportunity at a new school, where she could support the first cohort of students through VCE, building a culture of success and personal bests.

What does she love most about her job? Building positive relationships with students and staff. Empowering others to grow into the best versions of themselves is very important to her. She loves being part of a student's journey and supporting them through secondary education into meaningful pathways. The diversity of her position keeps things interesting and Melissa is grateful to work with dedicated educators and support staff.

What will be the focus of the Deputy Principal – Learning? Melissa will oversee the academic and learning side of Iona. Her focus will be on building a strong culture of learning innovation to prepare the Iona community to be change-ready and offer contemporary learning in these changing times (exciting!).

This role supports the development, implementation and evaluation of teaching and learning practice, curriculum development and is responsible for leading the learning team. She will work closely alongside Ms. Kylie Power, our Deputy Principal -Wellbeing, to support the development of all students and staff. This year Melissa will also teach Year 7 Learning to Learn and Year 8 Pathways to Success. Lucky students! Her family includes three amazing daughters—Kelly, a Doctor in Bendigo; Jess, an Engineer in Melbourne; and Charlotte, who is about to start university in Melbourne this month.

On the footy front, Melissa barracks for Essendon and is crossing her fingers for a better year. In music, she enjoys various genres and is currently listening to Xavier Rudd and the Foo Fighters. Her favourite series include Brooklyn 99 and Schitt's Creek.

In her spare time, Melissa finds joy in walking and discovering new places. Her love for travel extends both across Australia and overseas.

For our student body, Melissa shares this wisdom: "In a world where you can be anything - Be Kind!". Melissa, we are so excited to have you as part of the Iona Leadership team and know that you will have a huge impact on life at Iona!

Dates to Remember in 2024

| Date | Event |
|-----------------------|---|
| Wednesday 31 January | Year 7 and New Year 8-11 Students Commence |
| Wednesday 31 January | Year 7 & New Year 8-11 Students Smoking Ceremony - No Formal Uniform Required |
| Thursday 1 February | Year 8-11 Students Start |
| Thursday 1 February | Whole School Assembly - No Formal Uniform Required |
| Tuesday 6 February | Beginning of School Mass - Formal Uniform |
| Thursday 8 February | School Photo Day - Formal Uniform |
| Tuesday 13 February | School Photo Catch Up Day |
| Wednesday 14 February | Ash Wednesday Whole School Assembly - Formal Uniform |
| Wednesday 14 February | Year 8, 9 & 10 'In-Person' Parent Community Group Welcome Evening - 6-7 pm |
| Thursday 15 February | Year 7 & 11 'In-Person' Parent Community Group Welcome Evening - 6-7 pm |
| Wednesday 28 February | Swimming Carnival - Kardinia Aquatic Centre |
| Monday 4 March | Year 7 -11 'In-Person' Parent Session - Man Box with Drew Hanger, Resource Centre 6 - 7:30 pm |
| Monday 11 March | Labour Day Public Holiday |
| Wednesday 20 March | Student Progress Meetings |
| Friday 22 March | Student Free Day - Professional Development |
| Tuesday 26 March | Student Progress Meetings |
| Wednesday 27 March | Athletics Carnival - Landy Field |
| Thursday 28 March | Last Day of Term - 2:05 pm |
| Tuesday 16 April | Term 2 Begins |

Parent/Carer Community Group Welcome Evenings



LONA
COLLEGE
GEE LONG

PARENT/CARER COMMUNITY GROUP WELCOME EVENINGS

1) YEAR 8, 9, 10 PARENTS CARER COMMUNITY GROUP
WELCOME EVENING - WEDNESDAY 14TH OF FEBRUARY

2) YEAR 7 & 11 PARENTS CARER COMMUNITY GROUP
WELCOME EVENING- THURSDAY 15TH OF FEBRUARY

TIME: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
VENUE: IONA COLLEGE

PLEASE RSVP ONLINE

Mark your calendars for our upcoming 'in-person' Parent/Carer Welcome Evenings:

1. Year 8, 9, 10 Parents/Carer Community Group Welcome Evening

Date: Wednesday, 14th of February

Time: 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Venue: Year 8 in the Stadium, Year 9 in the Resource Centre and Year 10 in the Theatre

2. Year 7 & 11 Parents/Carer Community Group Welcome Evening

Date: Thursday, 15th of February

Time: 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Venue: Year 7 in the Stadium & Year 11 in the Resource Centre

Join us for a brief as a Year level in the various venues listed above, followed by the chance to meet your young person's community group teachers in their Community Group classroom. Please note these evenings are intended for parents/carers only.

Please could you take a minute to [RSVP via the following online form.](#)

RSVP NOW



Uniform Matters

As we commence another year, we have many families accessing uniform through PSW. We have had a strong partnership with PSW over the past four years and they have been flexible in accommodating our changing needs over time. Recently we became aware of some discussion via social media regarding the College school bag. We have been unaware of any perceived issues over the past number of years however we will be happy to liaise with PSW regarding the item. I would ask that if you believe that you have purchased a faulty bag please reach out to the uniform store or us at Iona with your concern principal@iona.vic.edu.au We are committed to maintaining a positive relationship with PSW that will lead to positive outcomes. Publishing views via social media can sometimes create angst and we ask for your consideration before commenting. PSW is currently investigating through its quality control procedures any issues with the school bag quality.

Farewell

This week we say farewell to two staff members. Mark Boxer has been part of our maintenance team over the past four years. Mark has made an immense contribution to our school, especially with a focus on our grounds and ensuring the survival of the many plants that we have. Mark should be justifiably proud of what has been achieved. We wish Mark well as he takes up a new position at Holy Spirit School in Manifold Heights.

Hamish King has been our IT trainee for the past two years. Hamish has been the friendly face of the IT help desk and ensured that our students have been well supported as they seek IT support. We wish Hamish well as he embarks on the next stage of his career.

Thanks for your support,

Damian, Kylie and Melissa