

24 April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

As a community, grounded in faith, we are deeply saddened by the passing of Pope Francis, Patron of our Francis House. As a new school, all our patrons were modern people, however, Francis was our only living house patron. As such, we feel his loss most deeply.



As a school, Francis House will exist for generations. It will be a lasting reminder of his courageous legacy. Pope Francis was born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in 1936 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He came from humble beginnings, having worked many jobs, including as a janitor and a bouncer, before he joined the priesthood. He was the Pope of many firsts: The first modern Pope from outside of Europe, the first Pope to take the name of St Francis of Assisi. The Pope chose this name because St Francis was famous for caring for the poor and his connection to nature and animals and was the first Jesuit Pope.

During his Papacy, he was always an advocate for the vulnerable, the poor and the people on the periphery. He said, "The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies".

Pope Francis cared passionately for the earth, the environment and our common home. In his famous encyclical, *Laudato Si*, he says "I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be 'protectors' of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment."

Francis wanted the church to be welcoming and accepting of all people:

“I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle... the church heals, it cures. . . The mission of the church is to heal wounds of the heart, to open doors, to free people, to say that God is good, God forgives all, God is the Father.”

As Christians, we are called to live the message of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve others. Pope Francis was a man who served rather than was served and chose to live modestly, preferring to have simpler clothing, cars and accommodation rather than extravagant things.

Pope Francis opened our eyes, our minds and our hearts to people and places that for far too long have been denied dignity. He was a fierce advocate for the love and word of God- courageous, unwavering and deeply compassionate.

Through Francis, we saw what it means to walk humbly, to serve selflessly and to love unconditionally. Let us be comforted by his own words, from his Easter Sunday Homily:

“When the thought of death lies heavy on our hearts . . . when we feel the wounds of selfishness or violence . . . let us not lose heart,” he wrote. “The light quietly shines forth, even though we are in darkness . . . and a new beginning, however impossible it might seem, can take us by surprise.”

Loving God,
May Francis' soul rest in the eternal embrace of your love,
May we always remember and honour the legacy he has left us:
Courage, compassion, mercy, faith and above all, Love.”
Amen.

ANZAC Day Assembly and Commemoration of Pope Francis

Today, during our ANZAC Day assembly, we paid tribute to both the passing of Pope Francis and ANZAC Day. It was a deeply moving ceremony where we honoured the legacy of Pope Francis while also acknowledging the immense contributions of those who have served our nation in times of peace and war. This ANZAC Day marks 110 years since the Gallipoli campaign — a time for us to reflect on and honour the courage and sacrifice of the ANZACS. During the service, we recited the Ode:

*They shall grow not old,
as we who are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning
We will remember them.*

As part of the ceremony, we also held our Lone Pine Ceremony. In 2022, during our ANZAC Day service, we planted a Lone Pine tree — a descendant of the original Lone Pine from the Gallipoli Peninsula. This tree stands as a powerful symbol of the ANZAC legend of courage, mateship, and sacrifice. Today, students from both our youngest and oldest year levels helped water the tree as part of the commemoration.

We extend our thanks to our wonderful Student Leaders who led the service so beautifully.



Welcome back to Term 2

On Tuesday, we were pleased to welcome back our staff and students for the commencement of Term 2. There are many activities and opportunities ahead, and at today's assembly, I reinforced the importance of being courageous — our College theme for Term 2 — in all that we do. Whether that means standing up for what is right and just, advocating for those who are marginalized, or showing courage by persisting with our studies even when things become challenging, we are called to act with bravery.

Pope Francis has often emphasised the importance of courage, particularly in the face of hardship and in speaking the truth. He encourages us to move beyond fear and embrace faith, hope, and love — using our talents with courage. This is something we hope our students pursue not only this term, but throughout their years to come.

Year 12 Retreat

This week marks another milestone in Iona College's history, our first Year 12 retreat. Students and staff are taking two days out of the busy Year 12 schedule to spend time reflecting on their faith journey, the lessons they have learned at Iona, and the legacy they want to leave behind. The retreat is located at Rutherford Park, in the idyllic surrounds of Blampied, just outside of Daylesford. It is a wonderful opportunity to reset and recharge, ready for the opportunities and challenges that are part of their final year of secondary school. We look forward to hearing about their time away when they return.

Year 12 Group Photo

Arthur Reed Photos will be on-site on Friday, 2 May, to take the Year 12 group photo.

The photo will be taken first thing in the morning, so students are asked to arrive on time and in formal uniform. Students who are usually off-site on Fridays for trade school will be driven by Iona staff after the photo has been taken. Please ensure you communicate with your employer that you will arrive later than usual.

Cultura Community Connections Holiday Program

During the holidays, Stella, Audrey, Amelia, Cass, Lena, Ms Flynn and Ms Gillet spent a day at Clonard College as part of the Cultura Community Connections Holiday Program. On this day, student volunteers from all the Catholic Secondary Colleges in Geelong put on a day of fun activities for newly arrived children from a refugee background. Many connections were made, and fun was had by all.



Horseshoe Bend Road Closure

The College has been notified that Horseshoe Bend Road, to the north of our main entrance via Walter Street, will be closed from Monday, 28 April, for approximately six weeks.

- Pedestrian access will remain open at all times as shown in the diagram below.
- We do not anticipate any delays or disruptions to our bus services. Temporary changes to the afternoon pick-up locations for Buses 1 and 2 will be communicated directly to students.
- There will be no vehicle access from the north while the road is closed. Families who usually travel this route will need to detour via Boundary Road, accessible from either Barwon Heads Road or Surfcoast Highway.

If you require further clarification, please contact College Reception.

We understand this may cause some disruption and appreciate your continued patience and support. We hope this will be the final major interruption for some time.



Tasty Treats for Timor Leste

Please consider buying some tasty treats from Routley's to support a great cause!
25% of your order placed through the website below will go directly back to Geelong Viqueque Friendship School's Scholarship Program!

Just order and pay through the online portal, select 'Iona College' from the dropdown menu at checkout, and your young person can collect your delicious goods at Iona on Wednesday, May 28th.

<https://fundraising.routleysbakery.com.au/>

No cooking AND supporting an amazing cause = Win, Win!



Upcoming GAT Preparation Session for Year 12 Students and Year 10 + 11 Students studying a Year 12 subject in 2025.

We would like to inform parents of all students currently studying a Unit 3/4 subject in 2025 that a GAT Preparation Session will be held on Tuesday, 29th April, in the Iona College Resource Centre during Period 5 or Period 6. This valuable session will be facilitated by an experienced GAT assessor and is designed to help students understand the purpose of the General Achievement Test (GAT), how it is used to statistically moderate Year 12 subject scores by the VCAA, and provide practical tips and tricks to assist with preparation. All students have been emailed the specific time for their session.

Later in the term, on Monday, the 19th of May, a Practice GAT will be held at the College. Please note that this is a Student Free Professional Development for all other students. It is an expectation that all Year 12 students and those Year 10 and 11 students who are studying a Year 12 subject this year are in attendance for this opportunity. An email with more detailed information was sent to all relevant parents and carers late last term. Please reach out to me via email kate.mclaren@iona.vic.edu.au if you have any questions or did not receive this email.

Elevate Education Incursions – Years 10, 11 and 12

We are also pleased to announce a series of Elevate Education incursions taking place throughout Term 2 and 3 for students in Years 10, 11 and 12. These sessions will focus on essential skills such as study strategies, time management and exam preparation techniques, providing students with the tools they need to thrive in their academic journey.

In addition, Elevate Education is offering all Iona parents access to four online webinars designed to support you in guiding your child through senior school. Details of these webinars are available in the [following brochure](#).

We encourage all families to take advantage of these opportunities to support student success both in and out of the classroom.

Kate McLaren
Head of Learning and Innovation

Wellbeing At Iona



Parent Partnerships - Netflix Series "Adolescence" Sparks Conversation on Protection in a Digital Age



We continue to work in partnership with our parents/carers and thought it timely to share insights on a thought-provoking new Netflix series, *Adolescence*, which is already generating wide discussion around the challenges of modern teenage life, particularly the balance between overprotection in the real world and underprotection online.

A Contemporary Exploration of Young Lives

Adolescence follows the journeys of teenagers navigating a rapidly evolving world. The series offers an honest look at how young people face pressures from all sides; many are sheltered in their offline lives, while the digital realm remains an untamed frontier. For many, the online world provides both opportunities for connection and risks that demand guidance—a reality that invites us to rethink the way we support our young people.

Balancing Real-World Boundaries and Digital Freedom

The series highlights a growing concern among educators and parents alike: while our children may experience a high level of supervision in their daily environments, they often encounter less oversight in digital spaces. This contrast can create a disconnect that sometimes leaves students vulnerable to misinformation, online bullying and excessive screen time. Iona is dedicated to nurturing the whole person, we see an opportunity here to foster conversations about holistic protection that respects the autonomy of our young people while keeping them safe.

Reflections for Our Community

We are committed to fostering responsible digital citizenship alongside strong personal virtues. *Adolescence* serves as a timely reminder that guidance must adapt to the modern landscape. We are encouraging our students to think critically about the balance of freedom and responsibility, and we invite parents to join us in this dialogue at home. Discussions about setting healthy boundaries—both offline and online—are central to ensuring that our young people thrive in every aspect of their lives.

We believe that by engaging with the themes raised in *Adolescence*, our community can work together to promote safe, nurturing, and informed practices that enable our students to grow into confident and conscientious adults. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and continuing this important conversation.

Resources

Here are some great resources for parents on protecting young people online.

1. eSafety Commissioner – [eSafety.gov.au](https://www.esafety.gov.au)

Why it's great:

Australia's national online safety authority, offering age-appropriate advice for children and teens, safety guides for popular apps/games, and free webinars for parents. It's the *go-to* resource for all things digital safety.

Top features:

- “Parent guide to popular apps”
- Webinars on online gaming, sexting and cyberbullying
- Support for managing image-based abuse

2. ThinkUKnow Australia – [thinkuknow.org.au](https://www.thinkuknow.org.au)

Why it's great:

Run by the Australian Federal Police in partnership with Microsoft and other agencies, this program educates parents and students about online child exploitation, grooming, and safe behaviours.

Top features:

- Resources for parents, carers, and schools
- Focus on real-life scenarios and how to respond
- Community education sessions (often held in schools)

3. Raising Children Network – [raisingchildren.net.au](https://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

Why it's great:

Funded by the Australian Government, this site provides practical, expert-backed information on child development, including a strong section on media and technology.

Top features:

- Managing screen time
- Cyberbullying advice
- Digital resilience tools for kids and teens

4. Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner YouTube Channel – [YouTube: eSafety Office](#)

Why it's great:

Short, digestible videos for busy parents on everything from social media settings to deepfakes and online predators. Great for visual learners or those short on time.

Top features:

- Real examples of harmful content
- Step-by-step videos on privacy settings
- Youth perspectives on what they actually experience online

5. Parentline / Kids Helpline – www.kidshelpline.com.au/parents

Why it's great:

While Kids Helpline is mainly for young people, their **Parentline** and online resources offer support for families dealing with online conflict, exposure to distressing content, and general parenting stress in the digital age.

Top features:

- 24/7 phone counselling for parents
- Advice on handling online anxiety or harassment
- Helpful if your child has already been affected by an online issue

[Here is a resource from the mental health](#) academy by Dr Amanda Giodano – it may be useful to come up with a family digital media plan.

Consent Labs Online Session – Tonight

This evening's Consent Education session builds on the themes above, offering parents and carers the opportunity to explore how we can support healthy, respectful relationships in a digital age. There's still time to join us for this evening's Consent Education session, designed for parents and carers. The session will focus on how we can support healthy, respectful relationships for our students. Please note that this session is for **adults only** and, unfortunately, will not be recorded for copyright reasons.

Event Details:

Date: Tonight – Thursday, 24 April

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Online via Zoom

Join here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88697302957>

Meeting ID: 886 9730 2957

We hope you can make it.

Kylie Power
Deputy Principal Wellbeing



Sleep Wellbeing, Weekly Grab

At Iona, we know that good sleep is the foundation for learning, health and wellbeing. Many parents, carers and students are worried that if students aren't on social media, they may miss out on social connections with their peers. The trouble with students accessing social media at nighttime is that the later the time, the poorer their decision-making. The more tired we are, the more black-and-white our thinking gets. We are more judgmental of ourselves and others and are more likely to make comments which aren't aligned with our values. As the night gets later, incidents of bullying and other problems increase.

We can work in collaboration with our young people to help them make their own decisions and set their own goals around sleep. A helpful place to get started is the free, university-designed sleep app specially for young people, DOZE app <https://www.dozeapp.ca/>.

Helpful Apps:

[Doze App](#) for our teenagers

[Insomnia Coach](#) for adults

[Separating out sleepiness from insomnia:](#)

[Useful resources for young people](#)

Marisa Lavars

College Psychologist

Turning Into Teens – Emotionally Intelligent Parenting Sessions



Tuning into Teens

Emotionally
Intelligent Parenting

A six-session emotion
coaching parenting
program



Iona College will be running a series of Tuning into Teens programs for our parents throughout 2025. This is a highly sought after program which will be offered free of charge to Iona parents.

Spaces will be limited so please contact molly.morris@iona.vic.edu.au for more information and to express your interest.



Would you like to learn how to:

- Talk with your teen?
- Better understand your teen.
- Help your teen learn to manage their emotions?
- Help to prevent behaviour problems in your teen?
- Teach your teen to deal with conflict?



Tuning into Teens provides information on how to help your young person develop emotional intelligence. Research has shown that adolescents with greater emotional intelligence:

- are more aware, assertive and strong in situations of peer pressure
- have greater success with making friends and are more able to manage conflict with peers
- are more able to cope when upset or angry
- have fewer mental health and substance abuse difficulties
- have more stable and satisfying relationships as adults
- have greater career success – Emotional Intelligence may be a better predictor of academic and career success than IQ.



Respect, Consent & Media

St Joseph's College has invited our community to attend their upcoming Respect, Consent and Media talk, presented by Richie Hardcore.

Date: Wednesday, 30 April 2025

Time: 6:30 pm

Location: St Joseph's College Performing Arts Centre

This is a great opportunity to engage in an important discussion on these critical topics. Please register via the link or QR code below.



The poster features a dark background with a subtle geometric pattern. At the top center is the St Joseph's College (SJC) crest. Below it, the title "RESPECT, CONSENT + MEDIA" is written in large, white, hand-drawn style letters. To the left of the speaker's name is a circular portrait of Richie Hardcore. The speaker's name "Richie Hardcore" is in a red, stylized font. Below his name is a short bio: "Speaker on consent and relationships, gender norms and the impact of media on young people". The event details "Wednesday 30 April 2025 | 6.30pm" and "St Joseph's College Performing Arts Centre" are listed. Below that, it says "A free community event supported by the" followed by the SJC Parent Network logo and name. At the bottom left, it says "Register now" followed by the URL "https://www.trybooking.com/CZIEE". At the bottom right is a QR code. The entire poster is framed by a yellow border at the bottom.


**RESPECT,
CONSENT
+ MEDIA**


Richie Hardcore
Speaker on consent and relationships, gender norms and the impact of media on young people

Wednesday 30 April 2025 | 6.30pm
St Joseph's College Performing Arts Centre

A free community event supported by the
 **SJC PARENT NETWORK**

Register now <https://www.trybooking.com/CZIEE> 

School Photos – 2025



Our annual school photos have been taken and are now ready to order. Arthur Reed Photos uses an online ordering system where you can view your photos prior to ordering.

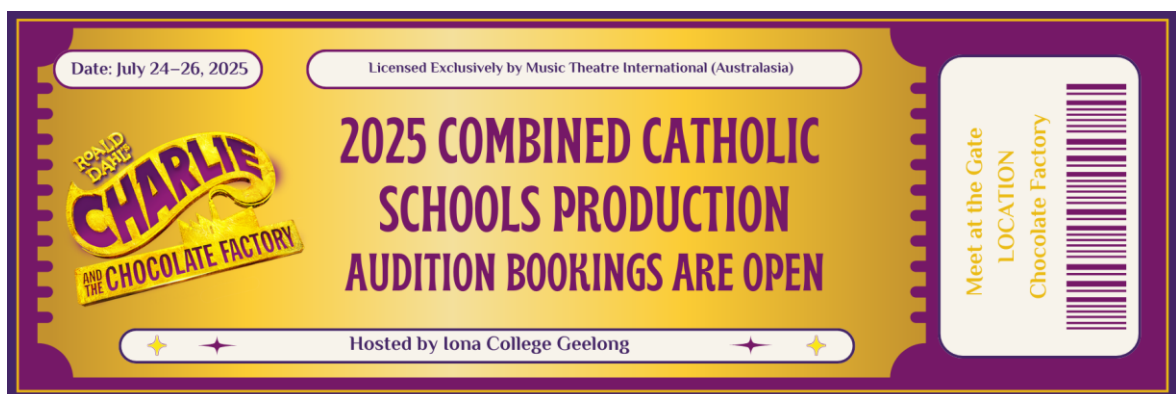
On or near photo day, all students received a flyer which included a code unique to them. You will require this 2025 code to register online and view your photos. If you have already registered, you will receive an email or SMS from Arthur Reed Photos with a link to view your photos.

If you have not yet registered, please go to order.arphotos.com.au and enter your code to complete your order. If you have misplaced your registration code, please contact the Arthur Reed Photos customer service team directly on 5243 4390 (option 1) or customerservice@arphotos.com.au.

Please note that you will need to register online with your **2025 photo code** to gain access to this year's images. All photo packages will be sent directly to your nominated address, so please ensure that you enter the correct details and the nominated shipping address upon checkout.

If you require any assistance ordering your photos, please contact Arthur Reed Photos directly on 5243 4390 (option 1) or email customerservice@arphotos.com.au

2025 Combined Catholic Schools Production– Limited Tickets Available



We are delighted to share that there has been a huge uptake in tickets to our upcoming production of *Roald Dahl's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

There are only a limited number of tickets remaining – if you'd like to be part of this production, please be sure to [book your tickets online soon!](#)

Geelong Regional Library Opportunities

Geelong Regional Libraries is offering a range of engaging opportunities for our community across several local branches:

- Torquay Library is running a variety of After-School Programs. These are a great way for students to get involved in activities outside of school hours. [Please refer to their flyer for full details.](#)
- Leopold Library is hosting a panel discussion for those interested in a career as a veterinary nurse. This is a valuable opportunity for students considering pathways in animal care. [More information can be found in their flyer.](#)
- Waurm Ponds Library is currently exploring the idea of starting a Youth Book Club. If your young person is a keen reader and enjoys discussing books with others, [please take a look at their flyer](#) for more information.

We encourage families to take a look at these flyers and consider getting involved in these wonderful community offerings.

Careers & Pathways Press Expo Save the Date

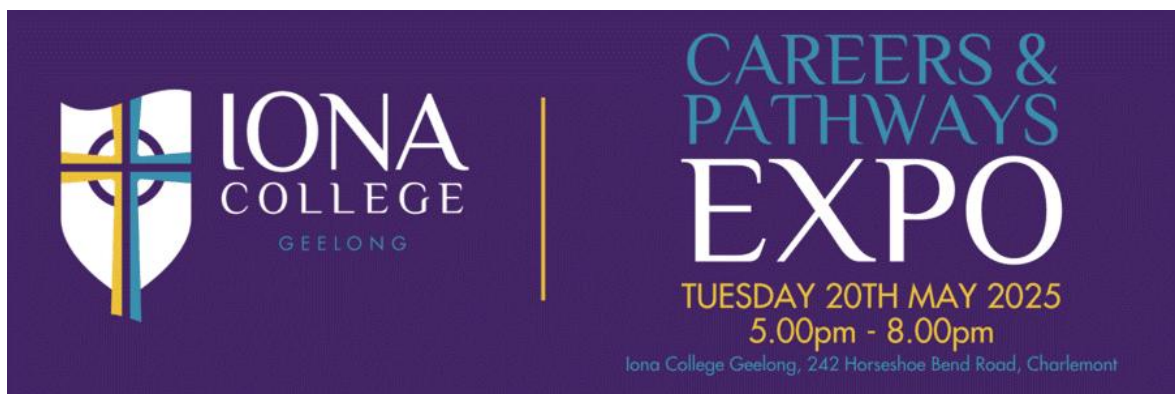
Mark your calendars – our very first Careers and Pathways Expo is coming up this term!

Event Details:

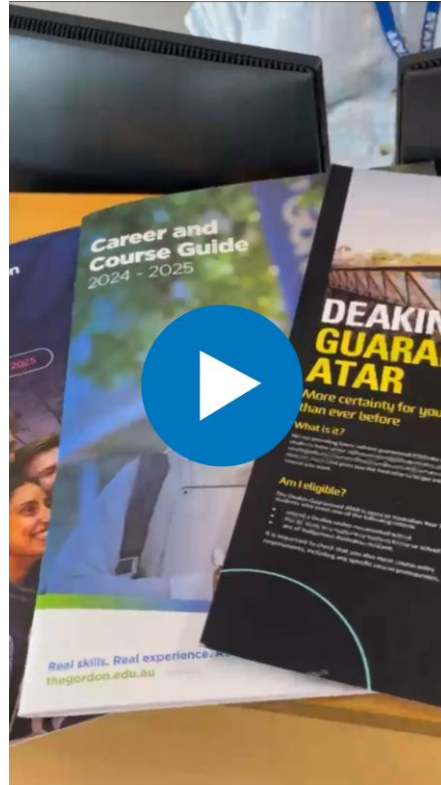
Date: Tuesday, 20 May 2025

Time: 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

This is a fantastic opportunity for students and families to explore future study and career options, speak with industry representatives, and gather inspiration for the journey ahead.



[Here's a short video from the Careers team](#) giving you an idea of what's to come at the upcoming Careers & Pathways Expo:



More information about the Careers & Pathways Expo will be shared in the coming weeks.

Uniform Items Available from Reception

We're pleased to let families know that we've added a few new items to our range of uniform accessories, available through the Canteen Online Shop under the 'Uniform Items' section. Once an order has been placed, students will receive an email notification when their item(s) are ready to collect from Main Reception.

In addition to our current items:

- Bucket Hats – \$15
- Baseball Caps – \$20
- College Ties – \$27
- College Beanies – \$20

We now also stock:

- Iona Scarves – \$33
- Formal Grey Socks (2 pack) – \$20
- Sports Socks (2 pack) – \$20

This service is designed to support families by making it easier to access those smaller uniform items that are often needed at short notice or are easily misplaced.

Farewell to our first Exchange Student



On the last day of Term 1, we bid a fond farewell to Lilli Mohr, our Austrian exchange student who has been a valued member of the Iona community since July 2024.

Lilli has brought a unique perspective and a vibrant energy to our classrooms and school life during her time here. Her enthusiasm, kindness and willingness to immerse herself in every opportunity have left a lasting impression on both staff and students alike. To mark her final day, we hosted a special morning tea with some of Lilli's close friends and teachers – a small celebration of the wonderful connections she has made and the memories she will take with her. It was a heartfelt occasion, filled with laughter, photos and well wishes.

We sincerely thank Lilli for the time she spent with us and the contributions she made to our Iona community. We wish her every success in her continued education and future endeavours, and we hope she carries with her fond memories of her time studying with us at Iona College.

Auf Wiedersehen, Lilli – you will always have a place in our hearts!

Term 2 2025 Dates to Remember

Date	Event
Friday 4 April	End of Term 1 (2:05 pm Finish - Formal Uniform)
Tuesday 22 April	Term 2 Starts
Wednesday 23 April - Thursday 24 April	Year 12 Retreat
Thursday 24 April	Consent Labs - Parent Webinar, Powering Parents and Carers (Online , 6 pm - 7:30 pm)
Thursday 24 April	ANZAC Day Assembly (Formal Uniform)
Friday 25 April	ANZAC Day Public Holiday
Friday 2 May	Year 12 Photo (Formal Uniform)
Monday 12 May - Wednesday 14 May	Year 7 Group 1 Camp
Wednesday 14 May - Friday 16 May	Year 7 Group 2 Camp
Monday 19 May	Student Free Professional Development Day
Monday 19 May	Practise GAT Exam - All Unit 3 Students
Tuesday 20 May	Careers Expo Evening (Iona Stadium, 5 pm - 8 pm)
Thursday 22 May	Year 7 & 8 Parent & Carer Evening - How Do I Talk To My Teen About Food, Onsite (Iona Resource Centre, 6 pm - 7 pm)
Thursday 29 May	Reconciliation Week Assembly (Formal Uniform)
Thursday 29 May	Autumn Soiree
Monday 9 June	King's Birthday Public Holiday
Tuesday 17 June	Student Free Professional Development Day Except for GAT Students
Tuesday 17 June	Unit 3 VCE & VCE VM GAT
Wednesday 18 June - Thursday 19 June	Year 10 Semester 1 Exams
Friday 20 June	Year 12 2026 Subject Selection Due
Saturday 28 June - Wednesday 9 July	Indonesian Study Tour
Monday 30 June - Tuesday 8 July	Central Australia Immersion
Friday 4 July	End of Term 2 (2:05 pm Finish)

If you would like to download a printable version of the schedule above, [please access it here](#). This link will be updated each week in the newsletter as new events are added to the calendar.

Please note that tomorrow, Friday, 25 April, is a school closure day for the commemoration of ANZAC Day.

Thanks for your support.

Damian, Kylie and Melissa