

College Principal's NEED TO KNOW

12 August 2022



Dear Parents/Carers, Students, Staff and Friends of Penola Catholic College

We are entering into Week 5 of Term 3 and we have continued to know COVID 19 transmission/exposure continues to challenge our community. Please know that the College continues to be vigilant promoting COVID smart practices, including good ventilation; thorough cleaning of all learning spaces; the use of hand sanitiser; provision of air purifiers and reduction of large group gatherings/meeting/events where possible.

Students (and staff) continue to be encouraged to wear masks at school and should supply their own. Thank you to the parent/carers for advising us if their child has tested positive and for keeping them at home for the 7-day isolation period (and until they are symptom free before returning).

Learning and Teaching

Noting the challenges with COVID. The term has started very smoothly and the students have transitioned back into school life quite well. This term is marked by several key events, not the least of which includes the HSC Trial Examinations which are nearly completed. There are many other learning events in addition to the timetable lessons each day which have or will take place including formation days, subject selections, sporting competitions, excursions, assemblies, and the Final Preliminary Examinations. These and other events are regularly posted on the Penola Facebook.

Year 7 & 9 NAPLAN – National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

Towards the end of Term 3, the individual student reports will be sent to all schools for distribution to Year 7 and 9 parents/carers. These reports will contain detailed information that will provide parents/carers with the best understanding of their child's achievement in NAPLAN.

From our initial review of the online results the students compared favourably with nationwide achievements at minimum standard in both Literacy and Numeracy. The College has continued to improve the growth in both literacy and numeracy. Further information will be shared about the results with our community when we receive the final NAPLAN Reports.

Representative and Internal Sport Update

Thank you for your understanding as all secondary schools are experiencing the same challenges regarding Representative and Internal School Sport each Thursday. Most secondary schools in our region have sport on a Thursday afternoon.

The current challenges are:

- a shortage of venues – We use venues across three council areas and at times the venues are closed. Most schools such as Penola are also increasing in their student population.
- a shortage of buses. Some bus companies are no longer operating due to COVID lockdown in the last two years. Plus, for one company they now only have 15 instead of 50 drivers.
- a shortage of Officials and First Aid Personnel

This will be an ongoing challenge and we are currently reviewing how sport can be maintained in accessing external venues. Further information will be sent to families throughout the remainder about how we can maintain this important aspect of the college.

Parents/Carers Tell Them From ME (TTFM) Survey

Thank you to the parents/carers and students who were able to provide Penola with valuable feedback via their responses to the recent Tell Them From Me Survey. The school leadership team will now begin the process of reviewing this data and formulating a positive response with the intention of ensuring the most positive possible experience of schooling for all students. The survey results will be shared with our community via the Need to Know and at other meetings/assemblies with students and parents/carers in Terms 3 and 4.

The following are some of the results from the Parent TTFM survey.

- Students were included in all the learning and extra-curricular activities.
- Parents were supporting their child's learning at home.
- Parents encourage their child to do well at school.
- Parents would like more opportunities to talk with the teachers.
- Teachers expected homework to be done on time.
- Teachers expected their child to work hard.
- Teachers expected their child to pay attention in class.
- When possible, parents would like to attend the meetings at the college.
- Faith development of their child was a priority.
- The college helped their child to understand their Catholic faith.

The following are some of the results from the Student TTFM survey.

- They have friends at school they could trust and who encouraged them to make positive choices.
- Majority were intellectually engaged and found learning interesting, enjoyable and relevant.
- Important concepts were taught well, class time was used efficiently, and homework supported class objectives.
- Classroom instruction was well-organised, with a clear purpose and with immediate feedback that helped them.
- Teachers were responsive to their needs and encouraged independence.
- Teachers had a democratic approach.
- Teachers emphasised academic skills and held high expectations for all students to succeed.

Parents/Carers as Partners Hub Meeting

To provide opportunities for parents/carers to meet on site to attend at least one of the meetings each year a different day/time of the day is changed for each of the meetings.

I would like to invite all parents/carers to our next meeting in the Mary MacKillop Learning Centre at the college on Tuesday 23 August 2022 from 11.10am to 12 noon

This will be an opportunity to hear your insights and feedback about the learning of the students at the college from reviewing the Tell Them From Me Survey results.

Book tickets through [CompassTix](#)

Ticket bookings close Friday 19th August at 11:00am.

Staff Update

This situation is monitored daily, and we will do everything possible to ensure that student learning is not impacted during this time due to staff on unplanned leave because of COVID and Influenza. Thank you to parents/carers and students for their ongoing support during these unprecedented times of limited availability of teachers.

- Currently Mr. Robert Feeney – Director of Religious Education & Mission has extended his leave until the end of this term. Mr. Feeney’s classes have been taught by some of our current staff and Mrs. Pittman. Mr. Nekic and Mr. Sutton have been completing Mr. Feeney’s leadership tasks while he is on leave.
- We welcome Mr. Dominic Marsh who will be replacing Ms. Sarah Holt plus Mrs. Michelle Thompson who has replaced Ms. Samantha Berridge.

Staff Learning – Pupil Free Day

A reminder that our next Staff Learning – Pupil Free Day is **Friday 23 September**. This is the last day of Term 3. All students commence Term 4 on Monday 10 October. This is Week B of the timetable.

Please contact the college before the Staff Learning-Pupil Free Day if you require supervision for your children on this day at school.

Major Events Calendar

Term 3 Weeks 5-10

Monday 15 August	Year 12 HSC Trial Examinations conclude
Tuesday 16 August	Year 12 return to their timetabled classes
Tuesday 23 August	Parent/Carers as Partners Hub Meeting 11:10-12 noon Mary MacKillop Learning Centre - Penola
Friday 26 August	PDSSSC Regional Athletics Carnival at Blacktown International Sports Park
Saturday 27 August & Sunday 28 August	Penrith Agricultural Show
Friday 2 September	PDSSSC Boys Basketball Gala Day at Penrith Valley Regional Sports Centre
Monday 5 September – Friday 16 September	Final Preliminary HSC Assessments
Wednesday 7 September	PDSSSC Oztag Gala Day at Kingsway, St Marys
Friday 16 September	PDSSSC Girls Basketball Gala Day at Penrith Valley Regional Sports Centre
Monday 19 September – Wednesday 21 September	Year 12 Final Timetable classes.
Thursday 22 September	Last Day of Term 3
Friday 23 September	Staff Learning - Pupil Free Day Supervision will be provided on site for students who are not able to be at home on this day.

Term 4 Week 1

Monday 10 October	Term 2 Week 1 commences for all students. We commence with Week B of the timetable. Please refer to Compass for any timetable changes for Week 1B
Wednesday 12 October	HSC Examinations commence

I am always happy to speak to you about your child's education or issues that affect their education.

May the spirit of St Mary Mackillop be always with you as we walk in her footsteps as people of compassion, courage, integrity and hope.

Warm regards,



Mr. J Fanning
Principal Leader