

College Principal's NEED TO KNOW 23 February 2022



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

The students, both old and new, arrived with enthusiasm for the year and have been engaged in their learning during this term. I welcome the Year 7 students to Penola Catholic College, as well as the new students in Years 8 -12. We have seen all the new students settling in well and being supported by their peers and teachers who care for them. As we progressed through Term 1, you will have noticed that some school activities are returning to normal within changed COVID-19 guidelines.

Through 2022, we will continue to emphasise to all students the need to do their best, care for one another and concentrate on their learning, making the college a place which has a positive learning experience. The students have been working hard this term to ensure they are achieving an improved learning gain.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new staff who are joining us at Penola in 2022:

Ms Alison Billiards: Diversity Leader of Learning

Mr Matt Young: IT Leader of Learning

Ms Brittany Azzopardi: HSIE and RE

Ms Yasshene Manuel: Science and Mathematics

Ms Cassie Yang; LOTE and TAS

Mr John Drake: Mathematics Leader of Learning

Ms Olivia Dunn: English

Ms Hannah Robinson: English and specialist intervention

Mr Shaun Miller: Diversity Teacher's Aide

Miss Annie Kelly: Diversity Teacher's Aide

Year 12 – 2021 HSC High Achievers' Ceremony

Yesterday I was privileged to attend our 2021 HSC High Achievers' Ceremony, although we should first acknowledge that success and achievement look different for each person, the occasion celebrated the efforts and achievements of all students from the class of 2021.

I congratulate the Graduates of 2021 on their outstanding results and I thank Ms Tania Cairns and the teaching staff for their unwavering commitment to the 2021 HSC Cohort throughout a challenging year. A summary of the results has been published on Facebook, other online and print platforms.

Return to Face-to-Face Learning and Teaching COVID Requirements / Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT)

I would also like to thank you for your attention in ensuring each student is tested for COVID-19 using a Rapid Antigen Test twice a week. The infection numbers at school are very stable, indicating that the school's hygiene and safety practices are sound, and that the community is cooperating with the measures put in place to protect everyone. More information about the COVID requirements will be sent to all families via Compass Information Letters during the remainder of Term 1.

Parents as Partners Hub

I hope that later this term when parents/carers are allowed on site to recommence the Parents Partners Hub and join us for learning and wellbeing conversations that will help us in providing feedback to assist the next steps in strengthening all aspects of our school journey.

Opening College Mass

Our Opening College Mass took place today.

There were two masses for the different cohorts and clear separation of community members to ensure we follow all the COVID protocols. This was an opportunity for all of us to come together as a Catholic faith community. We are looking forward to this celebration to begin the new school year in prayer and reflection as we walk in the tradition of Mary MacKillop, promoting the values of courage, compassion, integrity and hope.

2023 Enrolment Update

The Open Evening on site will be held on Tuesday 15 March from 5-8pm. This will be an opportunity to highlight everything that we do here as a community with students and staff displaying our school to the wider community with genuine warmth and enthusiasm.

We will continue in our planning to monitor and amend according to the COVID-19 requirements. Please refer to our Facebook page for information for the open night evening or if you would like to book a tour click on the following link to book a tour for this evening.

[Tour Bookings](#)

We will be also organising tours at different times during this year for the families that are not able to attend the Open Night.

Already our high Open Evening attendance numbers via bookings should also serve to remind parents and carers that it is important to submit enrolment applications promptly to ensure a place at Penola Catholic College in 2023. If you know of a family that wishes to enrol their son/daughter in Year 7 at the College in 2023, please advise them to contact the College to obtain an enrolment information pack by either contacting our Enrolment Officer, Mrs Sharon Clarke, on 4728 8120 or send an email to penola@parra.catholic.edu.au

Enrolments are also available for any other students who are not currently at Penola Catholic College, especially Year 11 for 2023.

Student Attendance

Thank you to all students and parents/carers for working together in 2022 to improve our overall student attendance rate. Students who attend school regularly have been shown to achieve at higher levels than students who do not have regular attendance.

Communication

Schools and teachers know that good communication with parents/carers and students is important as it helps us all learn and succeed. The parents/carers and students' responses in the Tell Them From Me Survey responses last year has shown the implementation of Compass has improved the home school partnership with more timely and relevant communication.

At the College we also recognise that email is a fast and convenient way to communicate with your child's teacher. As you could appreciate, teachers read their emails at various times throughout the school day. Further, other than in the case of a genuine emergency, they are generally not expected to respond to emails from parents/carers and students outside of normal working hours. Please keep in mind that if you send an email to a member of our staff outside of normal working hours, a reply may not be received until the following working day.

If you wish to contact your child's teacher, please continue to direct your emails to the teacher which will be replied to as per usual practice. We appreciate your assistance and understanding.

Communication between parents/carers, teachers and students is crucial to ensuring a student's education and wellbeing is at its best. In response to the ever-increasing digital communications via social media, we will continue to embrace these technologies in a positive and productive manner. Currently we use Compass, College website, Facebook, intranet, SMS and email as the information is provided closer to the date of the event.

The use of Zoom for the parents/carers/student/teacher interviews has also resulted in a higher number of interviews being completed in comparison to being required to attend on site.

Compass Parents Portal

You can learn more about Compass using our parent guide available [here](#). We have been preparing for the further implementation of the different modules of the Compass Parent Portal during 2022. More information will be sent to our community later this term.

2022 Term 1 Weeks 5-8 Major events that affect students across year groups

Wednesday 23 February	2022 College Opening Mass
Friday 25 February	College Swimming Carnival Competitors Only due to the current COVID Restrictions All other students are expected to attend their normal timetabled classes on this day.
Wednesday 2 March	Ash Wednesday Liturgy
Wednesday 9 – Friday 11 March	Year 7 Camp is postponed due to current COVID Requirements. New date for Year 7 Camp has not been finalised.
Tuesday 15 March	5-8pm 2023 Enrolment Open Night Tour Bookings essential

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