So, we’ll just begin by introducing the members of our Program Support Meeting. So, we’ve got Mr. Damien Stead here from Mackillop. He’s the Learning Diversity Leader. We’ve got Michelle Portelli, who is our Learning Diversity Team Member for Years 5 to 7. Mr. Mark Barlow, Classroom Teacher, myself Melissa Evgeniadis, who is the Learning Diversity Leader at Corpus Christi, Denise Tuite, who is the Learning Support Officer for Year. Thank you for coming and joining us this morning. And we thought if you had any questions about MacKillop or if you had anything that you'd like to share, you can begin.

But also, a bit of an opportunity just to you, for you to talk to MacKillop about you as a person, you as a learner. And what are some of the things that you think would be really important for them to know to help you out next year so that you can have a really successful Year. So, we've kind of put you on the spot there. So, it's okay if you're not ready to share. But what are some things that you would like MacKillop to know about you as a person or as a learner?

I like sport.

Yep.

Do you want to tell which is your favourite ones?

I like football, basketball. My favourite subject is maths. I’m really close with a lot of friends. I love my mom and I don't like. No, I like a lot of things.

You’ve done some pretty good stuff with sport this year, both at school and outside of school as well. He’s a pretty good footballer, won a couple of awards the last couple of years. Did you want to tell them what awards you won at footy?

Last year I won Most Courageous.

And you've just started playing basketball outside of school again in the last two weeks, three weeks? How many games have you played?

Two.

Two. And a couple of teammates, sorry, a couple of classmates are on his basketball team and his footy team as well. How many of your footie side are going to MacKillop?

Um, I think all of them really. I haven't heard any that aren't going to MacKillop.

Which I think could be one of the good things for next year won’t it that not only will you know a lot of Corpus kids go to MacKillop, but you'll also know a lot of other kids from other schools that are going there as well, yeah?

Yep.

Which will really help because obviously there's about how many Year 7 grades you got next year?

We’ve got 14 classes, we’re currently sitting at 342, I think enrolments in Year 7. So, there is going to be a lot of people there. Yeah.

I think you need to be really proud of the fact that you've forged some really great friendships over the last couple of years. Yeah. Because I think that was probably a worry at the start of the year, wasn't it? With a lot of your Year 6 friends last year, obviously headed off to Year 7 because you were mates with a lot of the older students, weren't you? Mom and I think that's been a pretty successful year with some of the friendships that you've developed. Would you agree?

Yeah.

Because not only have you kept some of those really close friends, but you've also gotten quite close to some of the other years that you probably weren't as close with before? Yeah?

Yeah.

Do you want to talk maybe about what's going to help with your learning?

So obviously MacKillop now knows a little bit about you as a person. Let's find out a little bit about you as a learner. What's going to help you as well. So sometimes with just so that you're aware, Damien, the agreement that myself, Michelle and Katrina put in place about halfway through the year was that he was going to have a go at doing his reading, his writing, his maths every day, which has been really, really successful.

It's been great.

So even though there are other subjects, like we obviously do enquiry and wellbeing and religion, of course they haven't been a focus because we really wanted to focus on his literacy and his numeracy. So that's been a really successful go and we would work together to negotiate even times. So just having a chat with each other. Did you find that beneficial yesterday?

Oh yeah, because it gave me a little bit of breathing spot in the middle of the day where you know, I know that if I had that little break in the last middle block, I could, like, you know, really smash out my work in the last block and get the the best work that I could get out of myself in the last block. Because, you know, I’d had a new mindset and, you know, I could, you know, do my best work.

Yeah.

And I think that's one of the things that’s worked well this year. So, there might be times where he will come up and say “Oh, can I just go shoot some hoops? “or “Can I just go and play some cards? “So just allowing that work really hard for a bit and then going outside and having a break so that like he said, he can kind of refresh and and focus really hard because sometimes if it's too long of a session, I know my mind starts to wander and a lot of the others do as well. Is that something that MacKillop could?

So, I know Katrina you spoke with Troy already about the need for those breaks and so forth and our structure is going to be a bit different. How do you feel about having lots of different teachers?

Oh, I know I’m going to miss Mr. Barlow because he's really good teacher, but I don't really know at the moment. One of the big challenges is going to be that obviously Mr. Barlow all day, he knows when you need a break, how many breaks you've had during the day, when you're planning to to give your best effort, like you just described, having multiple teachers each day, they’re not going to necessarily know what’s going on in the previous class because it's a completely different subject, completely different teacher. And so, it is going to be important that you communicate not only with teachers but also the learning support officers that will be in your classroom pretty regularly about what you need. Like the way he just described yesterday about needing the breaks, refreshing. We want you to continue that communication, whether it’s with your homeroom teacher, your subject teacher, myself, somebody learning diversity, because we want to make sure that we have the most opportunity for you to get the best out of yourself.

Yeah.

I hope you don't mind me saying, but it's probably something that you haven't found the easiest in going up to different teachers and saying “Can I please have a break? “or “Can I please go and shoot hoops? “But I think if there's maybe, like you said, a learning support officer or someone to help him develop those skills and to help him through that, I think that will be really helpful. We have a lot of learning support officers at MacKillop, we've currently got 20 employed. You’re not going to meet all 20. What we will do is have a group of about three or four that will get to know you and your homeroom. And so, they will get very familiar with you. Hopefully, you get a nice and familiar with them and so that they become another regular face that you’ll probably see more often than most of your subject teachers because they'll go into multiple subjects, whereas a teacher might only teach you science or just teach you maths.

So, they will be a really good resource and someone that hopefully you can let them know I need a break, I'm feeling this way and get comfortable with them enough and then, if necessary, they can speak to the teachers on your behalf as well. Yep.

And maybe we could, you know, at the beginning, beginning of the year, maybe there could be some sort of like how they would like him to ask for it or some sort of code or some way of indicating.

They will help to support you. Like Mums shared a fair bit of information with MacKillop already, which is excellent. I will be sharing that with whichever learning support officers are going to be working with you and they’re they’re going to help you instigate. They might see that you're starting to struggle with what you're working on and that you may need a break and so they may suggest to you to take a break. I know that we've discussed the green card with you, and we’ll explain more about how that works next year. But that's an opportunity to take a break, bit of a brain break whether it's a short trip to get a drink, go to the bathroom or a bit of a longer break to relax, to build up to the rest of the day. We’ll make sure that you're familiar with all of that and that you are supported so you can get the best out of yourself.

Do you remember me telling you about that green card? So, you can actually just hand it to the teacher, so it doesn't have to be a huge amount of conversation. And if you feel that you're getting anxious or worked up about something, you just show the green card and that will end the conversation, whatever the conversation is. And then you can go and take a break, come back 5 minutes later, 20 minutes later, and not pick up where you were, but start over. Start again for whatever you’re working on at that time. Yep.

I was going to say as well, we're inviting you to join our our visit to MacKillop later on this month. So, if that's something that you’re happy to do and I feel like we've already had these chat before about joining and becoming perhaps a way to feel classy. Bringing back some information about MacKillop, bringing to MacKillop some questions you’ve got all your classmates as well and then you can bring them back and share, you can possibly just jot them down for a visit later this term.

Yeah.

And it would be nice probably if you do, I think it'd be a great idea if you could do the visit because I think once you have a look around the school about the layout and that might actually prompt some questions, as in, you know, how long are the classes and what are the things that indicate that you need to move from different spaces and all of that type of thing, might make it.

And our classes are long, they’re generally 100 minutes. So, it can be a very long session that it's going to be important. It is broken up for you. So, the 80 minutes of on task is better than minutes of breaks is better than 60 minutes of work and 40 minutes of being distracted. So, we will be incorporating things like that. But it is a long list, and you are going to move around a lot. We are a big school, so you'll have most of your classes at your homeroom, but specialist classes like Science and PE and Music, you will travel around the school.

You’re part of our literacy program, which is excellent. That’ll be upstairs in the library, and that's going to, no more than seven people in it. Do you know much about that program?

No.

As I said, it’s a class of only seven people. It not only focuses on helping with English and building up your literacy skills, but it helps you with your literacy with any subject. So, you might have a particular science task that you're working on and they will help you and the rest of your group prepare for that science task. They may do certain intervention activities to really target areas of your literacy that you do need to improve on. But it's, it's a program that is very flexible in its design your teacher will get to know you and help you with whatever it is that you need that support in, whether it’s your English class or humanities assessment, just some general work that you're doing, it’s going to be tailored to you and that teacher will get to know you quite well.

Great. While you're here, you happy for Mr. Barlow to share some of your achievements?

Yep.

That would be great. Thank you. So, like I was saying before, we had the agreement that he was going to do his reading, his writing and his maths, so term 3 he did that 79% of the time, which was really awesome. From week 5 in term 3 and onwards, he’d done about 95% of the time and he's kept up that success rate so far in term 4, which is excellent, I think he said before, even though he told me he hated maths, I was really happy before when he said he loved it, which means that's a success for me this year. And he's come a long way with it this year. So he's learnt some new strategies for some of the operations, which is really good, and even his understanding of fractions and decimals, which he was really not a fan of at the start of the year, but he's got some really good understandings with that now because of some of the hard work that he's put in trying to complete some of that work which has been, which has been really good. So, he's had a lot of successes, especially the second half of the year, with some of his learning, which is, I’ve been very proud of. And I'm really hoping he’s pretty proud of that, too.

Yep.

How do you feel about it mate?

I’m proud of myself.

Good. You’ve put in a huge effort.

Yep. You have done really, really well. And thank you for your time this morning. And if you have no other questions, then it's okay if you don't have any now and you have some later, cause you can ask them at a later time. You’re ready to go back to your class. How do you feel about that?

Ah, yeah, it was good.

So, we’ll do some information sharing. I know that you’ve already had a meeting with Troy, but if you could share some of that diagnostic information and where you're at. The cognitive assessment that had already been done formed part of that. But then there was quite a few pieces that went to that. And so, he came back with a diagnosis with level two autism. And what she felt washer has actually done a lot of masking and he has, we even know in light of probably everything going on, he has done, had a lot of coping strategies in order to exist within, I guess, the schooling systems it is. He was quite comfortable with his ADHD diagnosis and that made sense to him. But I know when he found out that he was ASD, that was really hard on him. Really. And he, he dipped quite significantly, you know, like so for him, he’s definitely not as comfortable.

But I've listened to someone talk about their own diagnosis and they talked about having ADHD is like having a V8 engine because he loves like anything to do with sports. So, we tried to talk about, that he’s got a V8. Yeah. Maybe some of us have got like V6. And some of us have got four cylinders and that no one's better or worse. But if you imagine driving a car around a racetrack trying to actually have the skill to keep the V on the road because it can actually go off the road really easy. Yeah. Because it's so powerful. We tried to talk about that.

And I think as well just to add onto Katrina's point earlier about his self-esteem. Because of these diagnoses as well, like he's questioning himself as a person, as a learner, like all the time and like every single one of his behaviours or his choices stems down from something, and it will depend on who he's with. Yeah. So, if he's with some of his good mates, like Katrina was saying, like he will act out and he will act bravado because one, he’s trying to make them laugh, two he's trying to impress them and make them like him. And overcompensate for some of those challenges. Yes, it’s the masking. He’s very aware of his abilities and inabilities. Yeah.

And he's quite social. So that sort of in those sorts of things doesn’t often meet the profile of ASD and that's probably why his challenge, his challenge to relate to that diagnosis. But the other aspects he does meet that criteria.

Whenever he's made a poor choice, whenever he's struggling academically, whenever he's, you know, distracting or impacting some other kids, like I will never talk to him about it in front of others. Yeah. It's always, “Hey, let's go for a walk. ” Can you and I have a one on one chat?” So, any time he might make a poor choice or he might be impacting others learning, it's always “Right, let's sit down.” “You and I and have a chat.” And I think, like when I was saying about some of the work that he's done this semester, we put a big emphasis on his learning this semester because term 1 and term 2 was purely getting him wanting to come to school because that was a challenge the last two years and then getting him to develop friendships, but also developing a relationship with me and Denise as well. Just so that term 3 and term 4, we could put that focus on his learning.

And it was that sense of safety and that we knew that we couldn't go to this part before, like you know he actually felt like he was in a really safe environment, which is just such a credit to you. You know, like we couldn't have got to here without that first aspect because we really lost two and a half years to, you know, like online learning, and in the meantime, you trying to get a kid to engage who has trouble engaging in a classroom and then you try and get them online. It was hard.

Denise, how do you find that he interacts with you? Because obviously when any student goes with a support officer, it does make them look a little bit different. Do you find that the interactions are positive? Does he instigate asking for your support?

At the beginning he didn't. Yeah. I found it really difficult to build that relationship compared to other students that I've had in the past with his diagnosis. So, he was a lot different to what I had. So, a lot of my tools that I had under my sleeve didn't really work. So, there was a lot of talking and strategy and reading into his background knowledge. But I just made a point to him that I'm here for him. But I'll leave it up to him to come to me when he feels comfortable. So, it was every daylike checking in on him, giving him that positive reinforcement all the time. Yep. There were a lot of times where he did, he could hear what I asked but would would still do his own thing. But over the past, with the new strategies that have been put in place and discussions of him working through his emotions and what would work best for him and his learning. Yeah. That's improved a lot. Yeah. Like he's got a lot more trust with myself. I give him that breathing space too. So not that constant following, which was usually a recommendation for other students. Yeah. So, we had to change a lot.

And I think what helps with you is that like a lot of that relationship was just getting to know him as a person rather than “Hey, I'm going to sit down with you and we're going to do your work.” Yeah. It was Denise would sit down and they would just talk.

And I was lucky enough because I coached basketball. Yeah. In the past that, that was the icebreaker.

Something else that’s really helped, particularly second half of the year, is having that constant communication with Katrina. So, this semester we've had fortnightly meetings.

Okay. Yep.

Tracking that engagement level as far as his learning tasks and what he's doing or not doing at school. But continuing meeting with Katrina and keeping that accountability going. And that's been really helpful in the beginning, for sure.

It was just a Google spreadsheet that just had kind of reading, writing, maths because they were his goals. Yeah. And at the end of the session and some days I'm better than others. And so, if he had completed the work, I just gave it a tick and that way Mum could see what he had done during that day and then they could have that conversation at home. So, he was getting the positive reinforcement from me. Then he'd go home and get that positive reinforcement from Mum and that's really helped this semester as well. And if there's any change to the routine Mark will comment on that spreadsheet in that way, Katrina is aware of the changes as well. So, it has that follow up communication at home as well. And that's been really helpful.

And we're going to have a case manager which will either be myself or a member of our team, in our case managers vary between, or from student to student where they’re sometimes very hands off because a student doesn’t want to know their case manager and see them all the time through to very hands on where they might see them weekly. It sounds like probably a more hands on person that the case manager may be a homeroom teacher depending on who the homeroom teacher is, it maybe someone who teaches, that just has the time to, to check in and get that progress. And I know that we work really closely with the Learning Support Officers to get that constant feedback because as I mentioned earlier, they see our students more than any individual teacher. Yeah.

If Katrina needed to make contact with the family or if someone had to make contact with Katrina, what does that look like?

So typically, it'll go through either the homeroom teacher or the case manager, which could be the same, a number of our learning diversity team are homeroom teachers at the moment. So typically, it'll go through one of those to start with. We like things coming through the case manager as often as possible because, especially if there's an update to a diagnosis or something from discussion from the OT or whoever it is. That way we can make sure it gets to every teacher effectively. And it's not just the English teacher who hears it or the homeroom teacher hears it, that we put the onus back on ourselves to make sure that everyone's aware of this change. We do have that case manager, homeroom teacher, be in contact with the various people with support because we do want to know if maths is going really well but English is going really poorly, well what’s going on different in those classes and what can we adjust to improve the English class.

Think you made a good point there just with, know his learning like I've tried to do a lot of closed tasks. Like, when it's maths it’s like “Right you need to do these ten equations for me” or “These eight equations for me.” And even reading it was like, “Right, I'll need you to answer these questions for me.” As soon as I left it almost open, which you kind of can with a lot of the others, that’s when he was like “Yeah, no I'm done.” Okay. Whereas if you almost had a “Right that's my end goal.” That’s all I have to do, and then I'm done. “He found that much easier to manage. So really getting the teachers or the support officer to set “This is today's goal, we want to get to this point.”

Yeah. And so whether it’s it is a bigger open task or whether it's a group task, they’re working on, and we have we have a lot of PBL so there is going to be, Project Based Learning, so there is going to be a lot of group work in Year 7 across a lot of subjects. And so those projects go for up to a whole term for certain subjects. So, making sure he's aware of what this lesson's goal is, is going to be important. Yeah.

When I have put him in groups that’s very specific on who is in his group and who is not his group, like he still needs to feel safe. He’s always got some friends in there. It’s not always just his mates because it can't be. But I'll often, like let’s say it's a group of four. I’ll put him, you know, one or two of his mates and somebody else or like just so that he's feeling safe. He’s feeling supported as well. And not, because if he's in a group with kids that he doesn't know or he doesn't like, he's just not going to engage. And even like because Denise was saying before, she helps quite a number of students in the class, if he feels like he's in a group that all needs support, he's just not going to want a bar of it.

So, if he's in a group scenario where there's sort of a more confident leader of the group, will he respond well to that person, even if they're not necessarily a good friend of his?

It would depend, I think it would depend on how he feels about that individual, individual child. Like if he if he, like, almost respects them as a person and likes them, Yeah, he will respond well. If it's someone that he might not potentially like and might see as say bossy, he, it could go the other way.

And the other thing is, is that this is part of him moving through the world. And so, you know, I’ve seen so much progress. I’ve certainly, you know, there’s been some really tough times and there will be in him transitioning to high school, there 100% will be. We just, I will just try and for me, just keep sort of tapping him along the way and hoping that we can just get him through safely as possible.

Yeah. And I mean, we do place a big emphasis on trying to build those relationships and that while there may be behaviours at times that teachers do get upset with, it's trying to point out to any student that it was the behaviour that was the problem, not you as a person that was the problem. And really separating those two things that we could still like you as a person, but not be happy with the behaviour or the output or whatever it might be.

I just want to summarise some of the information just to make sure that we've captured it. So diagnostic information, and please jump in I've got anything wrong. So, we had an auditory processing assessment in which showed that there were some auditory challenges. So, things to consider when it's placing him in a class environment, a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and that was in. That’s the report I’ve got. There was also a sensory processing report conducted at that time as well, which showed that there were some sensory challenges and things to consider again, as part of his day. And the autism spectrum disorder diagnosis came in this year, and imputed conditions we are supporting as though he has that impairment in reading and writing. And so, he has adjustments made for those, for that as well. Now, Damien and I spoke on the phone yesterday just to share the information that we've got and to ensure that there isn't anything that we're missing. So, MacKillop has been provided the following documents. That was the ASD assessment report, the oral language assessment report, sensory profile report, and some Royal Children's Hospital paediatrician referrals and letters. We also have on our, in addition to that, we’ve got access to the auditory processing report, which does share some adjustments there. The cognitive assessment, assessment which was done through MACS (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools). Yep. The current personalised learning plan which will be really helpful, and current behaviour support plans as well, that would be also really helpful. We also have had some consultation with MACS in regards to programming support so that learning support for the reading and writing. Yep. And so, I can share that those consultation notes with you as well. And we also had some consultation regarding behaviour. So, which is the ASD on behaviour which helped put together our plan. So, we'll share those consultation reports with you with your consent. And I have a form for you to sign as well regarding those documents.

I just want to talk about some of the adjustments, so part, some of those adjustments, and there are more listed in his personalised learning plan, but tasks are enabled, scaffolding is applied, reduced work expectations, the time given for self-regulation that is constant throughout his learning day modified curriculum, instructions are repeated and visual prompts are used. Regular support and follow up is required at all times. Small group support with varied success. Yes. And learning support teacher support one to one ideally. And all of those are things that can continue with us.

There’s nothing there that, even though we're a different school, there’s nothing there that can't continue. And just, I guess for this purpose as well, that the program support meeting is just one element of our transition program and you've already met with Troy and had that induction meeting. Plus, we also have a tour. Yes. And then we'll also possibly have an opportunity for some Year 7’s to come here and share what it's like to be a Year 7 student starting in high school.