



SUCCESS STORY:

Mary MacKillop Catholic College

891
Students

80,748
Slips sent

Joined in
2018

A gold star EdSmart school experience for others to follow

With approximately 900 students in prep to Year 12 school, Mary MacKillop Catholic College in Toowoomba, west of Brisbane, commenced their partnership with EdSmart when looking for a cloud-based digital solution to improve workflows and communicate with parents more efficiently.

Additionally (although as importantly), they were keen to lighten teacher workloads and become a more sustainable school by reducing the amount of paper used.

"Initially, we were very much paper-based, which caused a multitude of issues," admits Carolyn Richardson, Mary MacKillop Catholic College's Marketing and Communications Officer. "It takes time to process a letter or a permission [slip] to parents, because you need it to go from the teacher or staff member through to the principal's desk for approval, and then out to parents via multiple photocopies (which in itself is an issue in sustainability)."

Carolyn's enthusiasm indicates no one at Mary MacKillop truly anticipated the 'revolution in paperwork' they would undergo by introducing EdSmart to their school processes and community engagement. But it was nothing short of drastic.

Prior to EdSmart, the school's administration team allowed a two-week turnaround time for letters and forms, which meant that last-minute activities or urgent dissemination of information could not be accommodated (luckily, they'd already implemented EdSmart before the pandemic hit).

Now, the turnaround time for approvals from parents has been reduced from 14 days down to 24 hours or less where required.

How has EdSmart reduced workloads for school staff?

Today, that process has been transformed into an invisible one with EdSmart doing the grunt work digitally behind the scenes.

Carolyn explains how staff can log in at any time and create a permission slip based on one of their pre-approved templates and workflows.

Compliance is improved because only people who need to approve the form are included in the workflow. This results in reduced workloads and forms sent to parents much faster.

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CAROLYN RICHARDSON
Marketing & Communications Officer
Mary MacKillop Catholic College



As the College has grown in confidence, so too has the level of sophistication of its users in exploring the full functionality of the EdSmart platform at their disposal. This has meant cutting down on workloads even more.

"We're now using the Processes module in EdSmart [with more advanced automation features, flexibility and triggers], and that has made an even greater difference to how forms get approved," says Carolyn. "From the Deputy Principal approving the activity, through to the risk assessment, the leave approval and the permission slip to parents – it's all so much easier."

How has EdSmart improved risk and compliance control?

Carolyn believes EdSmart has minimised the school's exposure to risk in two remarkable ways:

1. By ensuring the right person, in the right area, approves the content on a form before it's sent to parents;
2. By making EdSmart the single source of communication from the school to its parent and caregiver community.

"Knowing there's that level of control with the workflows has made a huge difference," explains Carolyn. For staff, it means there is only one method of communication with parents, and there are only certain templates or certain processes they can use. They're almost streamlined into working in a particular way and there's no other way about it."

"For parents, that compliance comes in where we set up the templates and the responses, so they get nudged if they haven't given a response by a certain time. That means we're definitely getting a 100% response rate for excursions, and we're managing risk for any excursion knowing we have permission from every parent before each child hops on the bus."

How has EdSmart improved parent engagement?

A school-wide review prior to the introduction of EdSmart disclosed that communication from the school to parents was a problem or, in Carolyn's words, "a major cause for concern."

She recalls this being a big topic at the College's five-year review: "And, having just finished our next five-year review, we can safely say the outward-facing communication to parents is no longer an issue and a major part of that is EdSmart."

"Parents know exactly what comms from us look like, exactly how to respond to them, and that – for every activity, excursion or piece of information they need to know about their child – they'll receive a specific type of email from Mary MacKillop Catholic College through EdSmart."

"It has been really well received by our parents," Carolyn continues. "As you can imagine, a parent with one, two, three or four children might be receiving anywhere between 10 and 30 pieces of communication in any given week. So, for them to know what they've got to reply to, what's outstanding and what they have already responded to, has been a real game-changer."

How has EdSmart performed as a digital transformation partner?

Carolyn points out that anyone with permissions on school staff can jump on the EdSmart platform and easily use it. As she says, "There's no expert power required." This has been seminal in ensuring cross-College usage of EdSmart, a complete buy-in of the investment, and the stunning success of the digital transformation of their school administration and engagement processes.

EdSmart's role as a digital transformation partner has also involved working hand-in-hand with other technologies at the College.

For example, EdSmart's ability to harmoniously integrate with their school app from Digistorm, and their LMS through both Canvas and Sentral – is another factor that Carolyn considers a game-changer.

Not only has the integration led to notable reductions in the number of hours spent on bringing admin functions together – such as automated enrolment data migration from Digistorm into EdSmart – it's helped save the school a considerable amount of money in staffing hours, as well as the particulars of holding important events.

"When we are hosting an event in a space that might not hold the entire school, we need to know who's coming," Carolyn outlines. "So being able to use EdSmart for receiving RSVPs has really helped to manage and plan those events better."

"Our entire enrolment process is through Digistorm, which we implemented at the same time as EdSmart," says Carolyn. "We can collectively see the impact of the combination these technologies have had on our overall communication strategy, and also the impact on our enrolments and our numbers over the past few years. Being able to track that data, being able to communicate more clearly, and being able to host events better has made a huge difference."

When directly asked what would happen if the College dismantled EdSmart tomorrow, Carolyn doesn't hesitate to say, "For the most part, I don't think that we could work without it anymore."

"I think we've come too far, as a school and as a society, in our digital progression. We can't step back now. We have other schools within our diocese wanting to come and physically sit in the room with us and learn what we do with EdSmart – learn the processes that we go through to communicate better with our parents – because they want to do that too. I can't see anyone ever taking EdSmart off us!"

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366,231
Broadcasts
sent

50%
response
rate within
6 hours