



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools



3 February 2025

# PRINCIPAL NEWS



*This new year, like a new born child,  
is placed in our hands.*

*The old year has gone.*

*The days and weeks and months to come  
are pure gift;*

*They carry God's blessing.*

*Bless us, O God,*

*and bless the time and seasons  
yet to come.*

*Fill this New Year with your grace and  
compassion so that all who come into our lives  
may see a reflection of your Spirit as Pilgrims of Hope.*

*Amen*



# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

St. Mary's is a dynamic Catholic community of empowered learners engaging justly in the world.

Dear Families,

## **Welcome to 2025**

I warmly welcome you back for the 2025 school year. I hope that you all had an enjoyable and refreshing break, particularly as once school begins your life becomes extremely busy. We experienced true summer weather during the holidays and in our first week of school. As is usual for Term One, the term promises to be a busy one. I hope all families feel extremely welcome and I am very excited about beginning the 2025 school year. Please contact me if I am able to assist in any way as I will always do my best to assist. It is my hope that you all have a rewarding and happy year. I have faith that everyone will be enriched by our school community.

## **Congratulations Prep Students and Parents**

Congratulations to our Prep students who will be settling into school life this week and to all students. It has been a joy getting to know the students and you, their parents on the assessment days at the Crossing and hearing about your holidays. We welcome all new families to St Mary's and I look forward to many years learning together.

## **Communication Enhancement**

Responding to feedback from parents, we are streamlining our communication from St Mary's. Each week a St Mary's Bulletin will go out through Compass, to all families, dot pointing the key dates and events to remember.

Once a month, at the beginning of each term month, the Candela (newsletter) with Principal news will be shared through Compass and the Website providing

- High level School News
- Major Events
- Policy/Procedural Updates

At the end of each month, St Mary's students will be providing class/level updates via podcasts/newsletters.

- class/level updates

We are excited that the students will have some responsibility in delivering news to our families. We are engaging with Kidscast, a podcasting company designed by one of our families. Once we have initiated all of these communication strategies I would love to hear feedback from our parents to ensure we continue to meet your needs regarding communication.

## **Eating Routines**

One of the important elements to school life is the consumption of healthy food for growth and optimum learning. Last year we made important changes to the tuckshop to support the health of our students.

One of the key elements we continue to support is Brain Food. At 9.55am each day the students are expected to collect their small brain food container and eat a healthy snack to power the brain for learning and the body to sustain the learning.



Our Brain Food routine requires their food to only be:

- cut up pieces of fruit or vegetables or
- small serving of yogurt or
- pieces of cheese/hummus/boiled egg/tuna.

These items should be in a small separate sealed container (not their lunch box) for easy access and quick 5 minute consumption. Only water is to be consumed or brought in drink bottles.

As stated by St Vincent's hospital, 'By incorporating brain-boosting foods into your child's diet, you can help them improve their focus, memory, and overall cognitive function'.

Our students will be eating their next snack at Recess at 10.50am and their lunch at 12.20pm. These foods will be in their lunchbox.

### **Financial Assistance**

All families that hold a valid means tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent, may be eligible for financial support provided by the Victorian Government. There is a special consideration category for asylum seekers and refugee families. For those eligible, a grant of \$150 per primary school student and \$250 per secondary student is payable to the school. This money is to be allocated to costs associated with sport activities, excursions and camp. If you are eligible, you are encouraged to apply. The \$150 will be deducted from your School Levy. Please contact Rochelle in the Office for an application form. We also offer a Concessional Fee arrangement to any family suffering true hardship. It is our mission that no family be prevented from having a Catholic Education due to financial reasons. Statements and further information will be sent out during the week.

### **Reporting to parents**

Learning is a partnership between the school, the students and parents. St Mary's Leadership Team has assessed the opportunities available to share your child's progress with you. We believe it is important that you know how your child is tracking so that we can work together to ensure your child's progress. Therefore, in Term 1 on the 24th March we will be holding Parent/Teacher/Child Conversations. This will provide an opportunity for you to share vital information about your child and the teacher will have an opportunity to share your child's results from the assessment days, with you and your child. This will be a school closure day instead of the July P/T/C conversation date previously advertised. Reports will be shared in Term 2. In Term 3 on September 9th the second Parent/Teacher/Child Meeting will take place. The reports will be shared in Term 4. There is no need for a Meet The Teacher event as you will meet the teacher in March, if you have not done so already.

### **Infrastructure Update**

Throughout the holidays, Smith and Tracey architects and MACS representatives and I continued to update and complete documentation for the Archdiocesan Building and Property Commission (ABPC) docs for Feasibility for St. Mary's Greensborough. This is the next stage in the Refurbishment process.



## **Basketball Court**

The Basketball Court rebuild is also with the ABFC. MACS has requested a geotech report. The initial report was inconclusive and a more extensive geotech report is required due to the storm water drainage beneath the surrounds of the current court. Any project over \$100,000 must be approved by MACS and the ABFC. Gary and I met with the surveyor and he has now recommended a deeper excavation to gain an accurate understanding of how deep the drainage and services are beneath the surface before we proceed and excavate. I will keep you informed of the progress.

## **Working Bee**

This year we are trying to find a day and time that will support more volunteers participating in our Working Bees. Therefore, the first Working Bee for the year is a twilight working bee on Friday 21st February. Hopefully the weather will be conducive to achieving a great deal around the school. Many hands make light work. All families are invited to attend. We have reduced the amount of Working Bees to One per Term.

We are monitoring volunteer attendance at the Working Bees as the numbers have dropped significantly since Covid. If our volunteer numbers remain low in 2025, St Mary's will have no choice but to introduce a Working Bee levy from 2026 onwards for all families. Those who attend will be reimbursed.

## **Arrival Time**

Supervision of the school grounds commences at 8.30am. Students therefore should not arrive prior to this time. Any student needing to be dropped off any earlier must be booked into our Before School Care Program. School begins promptly at 8.50am. If you are using the Kiss and Drop at Admin, please ensure your child/rens bags are not in the boot, but rather with them. Students exit cars on the left at the Admin Kiss and drop and they exit the car on the right at William St and Roadway. Please ensure you follow these important safety procedures.

## **Latecomers**

Just a reminder that any student who arrives after 8:50am must sign in to Compass in the school office. It is essential that these protocols are followed to ensure all students are accounted for and safe. Please assist your child to be punctual thus providing time for them to settle in and socialise.

## **Communication/Compass**

Please ensure you are connected to Compass. This ensures a streamlined approach which was feedback received from parents. It is vital that all families have logged in to Compass as you are missing vital school information if you have not done so. Having the Compass App on your phone means you are receiving real time information. If you are having difficulty logging in please contact the admin team at [officeadmin@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au](mailto:officeadmin@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au)

## **Principal Conference**

I am attending the North East Zone Principal retreat in Flinders on the 13th and 14th of Feb. The conference is being facilitated by Fr Steve Rigo, our wonderful Parish Priest. I look forward to sharing my learning with our staff and community. Laurina van der EL will be in charge in my absence.





## **Sacraments**

The Sacramental and Liturgical Calendar for 2025 has been placed on the school Website so that you can access dates for the entire year. In Term One we begin with a General Faith night. All Year 3, Year 6 and Year 2 parents are encouraged to attend The General Faith Night at 5.30pm or 7pm on Tuesday 11 February at St Thomas' Greensborough North. Fr Kevin Lenehan is our guest speaker. I look forward to welcoming you all to this engaging event.

## **Meditation**

Just a reminder to all parents and carers that we are meditating as a whole school at 8.55am. This means that for 5 minutes the Admin team will not be able to greet you at the front office. If you are in the Admin foyer we ask that you sit in silence, listen to our students and join us in our prayer time. It is a great way to begin our day.

## **CCTV Installation Notification**

Just informing everyone that we are installing CCTV cameras to ensure our school is safe from break-ins and vandalism. As part of the policy it is essential that I Inform you of the installation.

## **Class Liaisons**

In order to build community and provide clearer communication between our parents and the school we have decided to continue our Class Liaison Program at St Mary's. Chrissy Dacey has kindly agreed to coordinate the Class Liaison initiative through the Parents Association. The role of the Class Liaison Coordinator is to recruit and support willing parents as class liaisons and coordinate this group. The role description is below.

- Communicate to class parents and teachers, activities and happenings within the class and within the school in general.
- Encourage parents to participate in school activities and events such as:
  - Morning teas
  - Excursions
  - Swimming and sporting programs
  - Parent forums Reading
  - Working bees
  - Social functions
  - School fundraising activities
  - Sacramental program
  - Class Mass and Prayer Services during the week
- To participate in liaison/coordinator meetings.
- To foster a community/interactive spirit within the class.
- To inform the Principal/Parents' Association Parent Liaison Coordinator of any births, pending marriages or illness etc. so that contact can be made with the family concerned.
- To visit/contact new families who join the class throughout the year
- Coordinate and communicate with their partner class liaison



The Class Liaisons are a very important part of the Parents' Association and as such we would like to encourage the class liaisons to attend Class Liaison meetings with the Co-ordinator if possible. In this way there is effective communication between the Parents' Association Class Liaison Coordinator and the parents.

You will receive a message from our 2025 Class Liaisons this week via Compass.

## Policy Updates

Each month I will provide updated or new policies to our community for your perusal. Please ensure you read the student dress code and uniform policy as it requires your support to ensure we sustain pride in our school uniform.

New Policies – all Policies can be found on our website [here](#).

1. [Privacy Policy](#)
2. [Cyber Security Policy](#)
3. [Student Dress Code and Uniform Policy](#)

Marisa Matthys  
Principal



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