



St Mary's School



Geelong

Principal News

Dear Families,

Over the past couple of weeks I have had the pleasure of conducting the first of our 2026 Foundation Enrolment Tours. Showcasing our school, sharing our achievements and speaking about our wonderful school community is an absolute honour. Enrolments are open now and close on Friday, 4 April. Applications for enrolment are online via our school website and I encourage any current families who have a child ready to begin school in 2026 to complete the application, as soon as possible. If you know any prospective families, I encourage you to let them know to visit our school website for more information.

At last week's assembly our 2025 Year 6 Captains were presented with their badges. We congratulate our School Captains: Harry Cronk, Isla Best and Kitty Humphrey and our House Captains: Mercy (Blue) Rafferty Evans, McAuley (Gold) Duke Allchin and Mannix (Red) Joel Mathews. We place trust in our captains and all our school leaders and rely on them to be role models for all our students. It is also lovely to see all Year 6 students wearing their leadership polos with great pride.

Last week, families had the opportunity to meet with their child/ ren's classroom teachers at our first Parent and Teacher Conversations. All the feedback that I received was positive and that it was a great opportunity to build the partnership between home and school. We pride ourselves on working together for the benefit of all in our community, particularly our students.

Yesterday, Bishop Martin Ashe visited the Year 6 students who will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation on 12 March. Please keep these candidates in your thoughts and prayers as they prepare for this important step on their Sacramental journey.

Traditionally, Shrove Tuesday is the last day of feasting before fasting for Lent. Lent begins the following day, Ash Wednesday, continuing until Holy Week. On Tuesday 4 March the school will be cooking pancakes for the students. No money needs to be brought on the day, as this is covered in the Activity and Event Levy. On Wednesday 5 March, our Year 3-6 students will be attending Mass at the Basilica at 10:00am. Our Year F-2 students will participate in an Ash Wednesday, non-Eucharistic liturgy at school.

Our F-4 Swimming program begins next week. Please ensure all Operoo correspondence has been read.

Our Year 5/6 students have again been invited to take part in this year's World Day of Prayer to be held on Friday, 7 March at Wesley Church. This significant day is a global movement which brings Christians of many traditions together to observe a common day of prayer each year. Through preparation and participation in the worship service, we can come to know how other countries, lan-



Top: 2025 School Captains (I-r) -Isla, Harry, Kitty, Rafferty, Duke and Joel Below: Bishop Martin Ashe

guages and cultures un-**Biblical** derstand the their passages context. It will also give our students the opportunity to hear concerns and needs others around the world have and pray with and for them. In this way, we hope it will enrich our students' faith in 'outward' facing expression. Everyone is most welcome to attend.

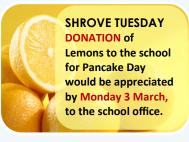
Tonight the Parents and Friends' Association will gather from 7:00pm at the Centra for their first meeting. Everyone most welcome to attend.

Finally, I look forward to our Foundation and New Families Welcome Evening which will be held this Friday evening at the Centra. I hope many are able to attend, building

connections with the families they will share at least the next seven years with, as well as many staff members.

Kind regards,







Religious Education

Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday



As we begin the season of Lent, our students will reflect on the significance of Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday. Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Tuesday, is a time to prepare our hearts for Lent by acknowledging our need for God's grace. Traditionally, it was a day to use up rich ingredients before the Lenten season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. As a school, we will enjoy pancakes together on this special day.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, reminding us to turn our hearts towards God through repentance and renewal. Our Year 3-6 students will attend Ash Wednesday Mass at the Basilica, receiving ashes as a sign of their commitment to this sacred season. Foundation - Year 2 students will participate in a special non-eucharistic liturgy at school, where they will reflect on God's love and the meaning of Lent in their own lives.

Throughout the week, students will engage in learning activities that explore the themes of Lent - prayer, kindness, and making sacrifices to grow closer to God. We look forward to journeying together as a faith filled community during this important season.

Exploring the Year of Jubilee

Year 1/2



In recent Religious Education lessons, our Year 1/2 students have been exploring the significance of the Jubilee Year in the Catholic Church, focusing on themes of forgiveness, reconciliation, and belonging. They have been learning about the importance of repairing relationships, with both God and others, and reflecting on journeys as depicted in Scripture. Through stories and discussions, students have been encouraged to develop empathy and deepen their understanding of these important faith concepts.

Additionally, students have discovered the meaning of a Jubilee Year, the symbolism of the Holy Door, and the role of Pope Francis in the global Catholic community. They have also reflected on how both church and school communities are part of God's family.

One meaningful activity invited students to imagine who or what they would like to see when opening a door. Whether pictur-

ing friends, family, or a symbol of love - such as a big heart - students considered how the space beyond their door could represent warmth, kindness, and belonging, just as the Holy Door in the Church serves as a symbol of welcome and grace.

These lessons have provided valuable opportunities for reflection and connection, helping students grow in their faith and understanding of God's love.





Sacrament Enrolment Masses

Information regarding the Sacramental Program has been sent to families with children in Year 3 (Penance), Year 4 (First Eucharist) and Year 6 (Confirmation).

Families wishing to enrol their child/ ren in the Sacramental Program facilitated by the school are required to attend <u>one</u> Sacramental Enrolment Mass at St Mary's Basilica held over two weekends:

- Saturday 22 February, 2024; 6:00pm
- Sunday 23 February, 2024; 7:30am, 9:30am, 11:00am
- Saturday 1 March, 2024; 6:00pm
- Sunday 2 March, 2024; 7:30am, 9:30am, 11:00am

At the Sacramental Enrolment Mass, families can scan the QR code to complete the enrolment form, which is a requirement for enrolling your child in their Sacrament. If you need any assistance, our welcoming staff from our Parish Schools will be in the Narthex.

Baptism Preparation Program

I will be facilitating a Baptism Preparation Program for students of families who wish to have their child/ren baptised.

The Baptism Preparation Program will consist of 4 one hour lessons, taking place on Monday afternoons, during school time, beginning Term 2. Parents/Carers/Guardians do not attend these sessions. The Program introduces Baptism as the Sacrament of Initiation into the Church community and focuses on the key symbols and actions used in the Rite of Baptism. This school-based Preparation Program will be offered every third year and completion of this Program enables eligibility for Baptism at St Mary of the Angels' Parish, this year. If you would like to enrol your child in the Baptism Preparation Program please complete this Google form (Click here) by Friday 21 March. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, Caitlin.

Term 1 School Calendar, 2025

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
5	FEB 24 Year 5/6 Cricket 2026 Foundation Tour; 9:15am	FEB 25	FEB 26 Foundation Students Rest Day Newsletter PFA Meeting; 7:00pm	FEB 27	FEB 28 Whole School Photo Day Foundation Parents/ Carers' Welcome Evening; Centra Hotel, 7:00pm	Sacramental Enrolment Masses: SAT MAR 1 6:00pm SUN MAR 2 7:30 9:30 11:00 am
6	MAR 3 Foundation to Year 4 SWIMMING WEEK 2026 Foundation Tour; 9:15am	MAR 4 Shrove Tuesday	MAR 5 Ash Wednesday Mass, Year 3-6 Ash Wednesday Liturgy, Foundation—Year 2	MAR 6	MAR 7 World Day of Prayer	
7	MAR 10 SCHOOL CLOSED Labour Day Public Holiday	MAR 11 STUDENT FREE DAY Staff Professional Learning	MAR 12 NAPLAN commences— 9:05am Sacrament of Confirmation; 7:00pm Newsletter	MAR 13 NAPLAN 9:05am	MAR 14 PFA Fresh Fruit Friday MANNIX FEAST DAY— Wear touch of Red or casual clothes NAPLAN 9:05am	
8	MAR 17 Catholic Education Week 3:00pm School Assembly (1/2 Topaz)	MAR 18 2026 Foundation Tour; 9:15am	MAR 19 Geelong Student Leadership Pilgrimage and Mass NAPLAN 11:30am	MAR 20	MAR 21 2026 Foundation Tour; 9:15am	
9	MAR 24 Cross Country Foundation—Year 2; School Site Year 3-6; Eastern Gardens	MAR 25	MAR 26 School Advisory Council; 7:00pm Newsletter 'My First Year 2025' Foundation Photos appear in the Geelong Advertiser	MAR 27 2026 Foundation Tour; 9:15am PSG Meetings #2	MAR 28 Lunch Order Day— Bakery Items	
10	MAR 31 3:00pm School Assembly (Foundation) Year 5/6 Girls' AFL	APR 1 PSG Meetings #3 Open Classrooms; 3:15- 4:15pm	APR 2	APR 3	APR 4 End of Term 1; 1:00pm Dismissal 2026 Foundation Enrolments Close	



Sacrament of Confirmation (Yr 6)

Wednesday 12 March 7:00pm St Mary's Basilica



Sacrament of First Eucharist (Yr 4)

Note: DATE CHANGE— **TBC** St Mary's Basilica



Sacrament of Penance (Yr 3)

Friday 21 November 12:00pm St Mary's School



Staff Email

Family Handbook

School Website

Parent Portal password: mary175



Facebook: @St.Mary'sPrimaryGeelong Instagram:

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St Mary's School acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Wellbeing



Bernie Hellard Learning Diversity and Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader



Nicholas Coots Wellbeing Leader & Physical Education Teacher



Moira Whelan Provisional Psychologist

At St Mary's School, we prioritise the social and emotional wellbeing of our students through a range of dedicated programs. These initiatives are embedded in our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons and reinforced during our daily school-wide meditation.

Our well-being curriculum is thoughtfully designed in conjunction with the following programs:

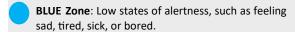
- The Zones of Regulation Helping students develop self-awareness and emotional regulation strategies.
- The Resilience Project Fostering gratitude, empathy, and mindfulness to build resilience.
- Resilience, Rights, and Respectful Relationships Promoting emotional intelligence, respectful interactions, and positive relationships.

The following information provides an in-depth look at these programs and their impact on student wellbeing.

At St Mary's School, we are committed to helping students develop essential self-regulation and emotional management skills. One of the key tools we use across all classrooms is the *Zones of Regulation*, a framework designed to help children recognise and manage their emotions in a constructive way.

What Are the Zones of Regulation?

The Zones of Regulation is a curriculum that categorises emotions and states of alertness into four color-coded zones:



GREEN Zone: A calm, focused, and ready-to-learn state, often associated with happiness, contentment, and confidence.

YELLOW Zone: A heightened state of alertness, where emotions like excitement, frustration, anxiety, or silliness

RED Zone: Intense emotions such as anger, fear, or extreme excitement, where self-control may be more difficult.

Each zone is a normal part of human emotions, and the goal is **not to eliminate certain feelings** but to help children recognise them and develop appropriate strategies for managing them.

How Families Can Support at Home

We encourage families to use the Zones of Regulation language at home. You can:

• **Talk** with your child about their emotions and help them identify which zone they are in.

- **BLUE ZONE GREEN ZONE** YELLOW ZONE **RED ZONE** Sad Happy Frustrated Mad/Angry Sick Calm Worried Terrified Tired Feeling Okay Silly/Wiggly Yelling/Hitting Bored Focused **Excited** Elated Moving Slowly Ready to Learn Loss of Some Control Out of Control
 - Model and practice strategies like deep breathing, stretching, or taking a break when emotions become overwhelming.
 - Reinforce that all zones are normal and help your child brainstorm healthy ways to move toward the green zone when needed.

By working together, we can empower our students with lifelong skills to navigate their emotions and build strong social-emotional wellbeing.

Thank you for being partners in your child's emotional growth!

If you have any questions or would like more resources on the Zones of Regulation, please reach out to your child's teacher.

St Mary's School is committed to Child Safety.

We promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children.

Gem

Each fortnight we will include a **GEM chat** from *The Resilience Project* that you are encouraged to talk to your child about either before or after school.

This week's focus is GRATITUDE



WELCOME TO

RESILIENCE PROJECT.

Parents & Carers

Why?



<mark>adolescents</mark> have a nental illness.



of adolescents do



primary school children





ver 50%

of students are at risk of a poor learning mindset (anxiety + disengagement).

Source: National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's Youth: Mental Illness

About the program

TRP is committed to teaching positive mental health strategies to prevent mental ill health and build young people's capacity to deal with adversity.

We're proud to be implementing TRP's evidence-based whole school wellbeing program to support positive mental health in the classroom, staffroom and wider community.

Students will engage in weekly lessons to understand and strengthen their practice of Gratitude, Empathy, Mindfulness and Emotional Literacy, with regular opportunity for parent/carer involvement.



Get involved with TRP@HOME

Scan the QR code or click here to find activities and resources to implement the GEM+EL principles at home.



Evidence-based

TRP's School Partnership Program has been independently evaluated by The University of Adelaide and The University of Melbourne.



Scan the QR code to learn more about how the program is significantly lowering the risk of mental illness.



The imperfects podcast

The imperfects is hosted by Hugh van Cuylenburg, Ryan Shelton and Josh van Cuylenburg, celebrates just how imperfectly perfect we all are. Together, they chat to a variety of people who bravely share their struggles and imperfections alongside valuable learnings we can apply to our own lives and use to support the teachings of TRP in the classroom. Guests include Nathan Buckley, Grace Tame, Jack Steele, Zan Rowe, Michael Klim, Billy Slater, Lael Stone, Pat Cummins, Tim Minchin and many more.

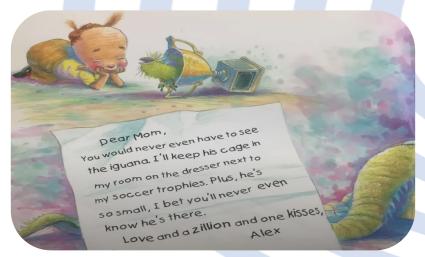




(03) 9113 9302 theresilienceproject.com.au

PRESILIENCE PROJECT...

Windows into Learning





YEAR 3/4

This week in Year 3/4, we began our Core Knowledge unit focusing on Geography, specifically Australia's characteristics and connections to other parts of the world. We are looking forward to exploring other continents such as Africa and South America and the similarities they share with Australia, as well as the differences. We have begun our unit on persuasive writing, focusing on using emotive language to create strong arguments in order to convince our readers to agree with us. Student's explored Karen Kaufman Orloff's text, I Wanna Iguana, to inspire their own persuasive piece about a pet of their choice. Our 3/4 learning space is certainly full of talented writers!

YEAR 5/6

Interschool Sports

Over the past two weeks, Year 5/6 students have taken part in various interschool sports events, including volleyball, volley-stars, basketball, and cricket. A highlight was the number of students participating in all 4 sports, with many students taking part in a sport outside of their usual interest. St Mary's School Mixed and Girls' Volleyball teams have progressed to the next round, while our Girls' Cricket team also progressed. The students displayed fantastic sportsmanship throughout, representing our school values of Respect, Responsible and Safe, at all times.







Confirmation Celebration

Our Year 6 students met with Bishop Martin Ashe at St Mary's Basilica on Tuesday, 25 February. During the visit, they had the opportunity to engage in a Q&A session with the Bishop, discussing the meaning of Confirmation as well as the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This discussion is an important part of their preparation for the upcoming Confirmation celebration. Participating Year 6 students will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation on Wednesday, 12 March at 7:00pm, St Mary's Basilica.

Windows into Learning





YEAR 1/2

For the remainder of Term 1, students in Year 1/2 will be focusing on the Humanities curriculum area, learning about geography. They will be learning about representing the location of places and their features on maps and models, including a globe, and the location of major geographical divisions of the world in relation to Australia. Last week, students learned about the seven continents and the sites, land features and weather that is particular to each one. Each class made fact charts for the seven continents and they will use this information to write information reports. This week students will read *Possum Magic* by Mem Fox and learn about the states of Australia and the capital city of each state.

Foundation

In STEM lessons this term. Foundation students have been learning that the curriculum areas of science. technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) can help us to think of ideas to solve problems, or think about how we can design and build something new. Students have read the books What do You do With an Idea? by Kobi Yamada and Not a Stick by Antoinette Portis and have then been presented with a problem to solve. They have been asked to consider how they would: Retrieve an item that had fallen into an air conditioning vent as well as turn a stick creatively into another object. Students will be using a range of materials throughout the term to come up with design solutions including Lego, cardboard boxes and Strawbees.







NAPLAN Testing: Year 3 & 5

On Wednesday 12 March NAPLAN

assessments will commence for students in Year 3 and Year 5. With the exception of Year 3 Writing, all NAPLAN tests are conducted online. Any questions or enquiries relating to your child's NAPLAN participation can be directed to Hannah Jackson (Year 3), Jack Flynn-French (Year 5).

It is essential that all participating Year 3 and Year 5 students are at school, by the appropriate time on each testing day.

Week

Wednesday 12 March 9:05am

Year 3 - 40 minutes Year 5 - 42 minutes

Thursday 13 March 9:05am

Reading

Year 3 - 45 minutes Year 5 - 50 minutes

Friday 14 March 9:05am

Conventions of Language

Year 3 - 45 minutes Year 5 - 45 minutes

Week

Wednesday 19 March 11:30am

Numeracy

Year 3 - 45 minutes Year 5 - 50 minute

Newsletter # 3 26 February 2025 St Mary's School, Geelong

School PHOTO Day



The annual school photos including sibling photos will be taken by Arthur Reed Photos on Friday 28 February, 2025.

There is no need to return any forms or money to school.

Unique image codes will be issued to all students on/after photo day so families can register online to view images when they become available in the webshop.

Registration is simple, just follow the 3 simple steps on your child's personalised flyer once you receive it and remember to add the codes for all your children attending this school.

Even if you registered last year, it's important that you do again this year using your child's 2025 image code to link their images for the current year with your contact details.

When images are ready to view and in the webshop, all parents who have registered will be notified by SMS and email.

Once registered, please wait for notification that 2025 images are online to view before making your purchase.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

It has been noticed that some boys are wearing cargo shorts (with side pockets) instead of the school shorts, and some girls are wearing blue skirts instead of the skorts supplied by Bellarine Uniforms. Please ensure your child wears the correct shorts and the skort that shows the shorts at the back and a skirt at the front, both items to be purchased from Bellarine Uniform Shop.

Sports Uniform reminder

Students are to wear the school sports shorts with the logo. Leggings are not permitted with any school uniform.

SWIMMING



Foundation to Year 4 SWIMMING PROGRAM

Geelong Aquatic Centre (GAC) 3-7 MARCH

SESSION 1:

1/2 TOPAZ, YEAR 4 STUDENTS

11:45 pm Bus pick at St Mary's School

11:55 pm Change at GAC

12:15-1:00 pm

Swimming Lesson

1:00 pm Change at GAC 1:15 pm Depart GAC

1:25pm Arrive St Mary's School

SESSION 2:

1/2 CRYSTAL, FOUNDATION STUDENTS

12:30 pm Bus pick at St Mary's School

12:40 pm Change at GAC

1:00-1:45 pm

Swimming Lesson

1:45 pm Change at GAC 2:00 pm Depart GAC

2:10 pm Arrive St Mary's School

SESSION 3:

1/2 PEARL, YEAR 3 STUDENTS

1:15 pm Bus pick at St Mary's School

1:25 pm Change at GAC

1:45-2:30 pm

Swimming Lesson

2:30 pm Change at GAC

2:45 pm Depart GAC

2:55 pm Arrive St Mary's School

Parents & Friends' Association

For SECOND HAND UNIFORM requests,

PRICELIST

pfauniforms@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au

NEXT PFA meeting is the **26 February**, 7:00pm at the Centra Hotel. Anyone interested is welcome to attend to see what we are about, with no pressure to join.

Any questions to Sherryn Young pfa@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au

DRIVE THRU PROCEDURES

DRIVE TOWARDS MCKILLOP STREET EXIT

DRIVE BETWEEN YELLOW LINES

DROP OFF/PICK UP IN YELLOW ZONE ONLY

DRIVERS REMAIN WITH VEHICLES AT ALL TIMES

STRICTLY NO OVERTAKING

SPEED LIMIT WALKING PACE





DRIVE THRU REMINDERS

Drive towards the McKillop Street exit

- On entry, drive towards the McKillop Street exit to avoid congestion
- Always drive between the yellow lines

Adults are to remain in their vehicle at all times

- Please farewell or greet your child in your car
- Students need to manage their school bag and belongings independently

Students exit the vehicle along the footpath area, no earlier than 8:30am

 Students walk into the school grounds by walking along the footpath, not the drive thru area

The Drive Thru gate closes at 8:50am & 3:30pm

- MORNING DROP OFF: Between 8:30am and 8:50am ONLY
- AFTERNOON PICK UP: Between 3:15pm and 3:30pm ONLY

IMPORTANT NOTICE

For children who require assistance with their school bag or need an extra hug or kiss, please use an alternative drop off/pick up arrangement:

- **FRONT GATE**: Park you vehicle in the Haymarket Car Park. This will allow you to leave your vehicle and assist your children with their school bag. Please remind your child about road safety when walking across the unmanned crossing.
- PARISH GATE: Park your vehicle in Yarra Street. This gate is also a good option for families who walk to school. Please note, the Parish Car Park is for school staff only.

Families are reminded to take care and obey parking signs when picking up and dropping off children around schools.



Students wearing SMART Watches

As communicated in the St Mary's School Family Handbook, **Smart watches and other wearable digital devices are not to be worn during school hours.** This is to ensure that students are not distracted from learning. Parents/Carers/Guardians who choose to allow their child to bring smart watches and other wearable digital devices to school must communicate this with the classroom teacher. The smart watch or other wearable digital device must not be worn, be switched off and securely stored in the student's school bag, while at school.

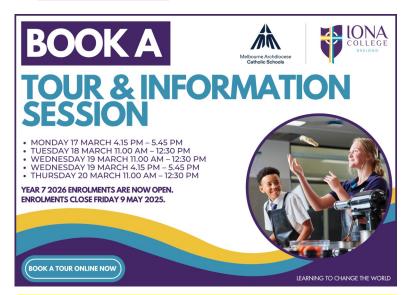
Community News







Community News



Book a tour and information session online:

https://iona.vic.edu.au/tour-and-information-session/





FREE PARENTING WORKSHOP PRESENTED BY ANDY MCNEILLY

Many of our children are struggling with worry and anxiety. They may face social and online challenges and can often feel stuck. As parents, we can find this difficult to help our children as they confront issues so different to the ones we faced at their age.



This workshop is designed to help parents teach their children to be more resilient while building their independence. It will give parents simple and practical ideas to help their children, while developing strong, loving, and connected relationships.

Andy McNeilly has been running simple and fun workshops to help parents create more connection with their family.

This workshop is recommended for parents of children aged 0 to 18 years.

WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH

7.00pm-8.30pm

VENUE

Poa Banyul Community Hub 110 Unity Drive, Mount Duneed

BOOKINGS Scan the QR code

or visit

geelong.link/BuildingResilience

This is a free event but bookings are essential.











Join the Fun TENNIS HOT SHOTS

Places Available St Mary's Tennis Club Thomson Reserve

CONTACT: Mark 0416 288956

Book your spot for DISCOVERY DAY via our website here: https://www.shcgeelong.catholic.edu.au/college-tours

