

Principal News

Dear Families,

Here at St Mary's School we want everyone to feel welcome, safe and included. Therefore, over many years, we have built a culture of high expectations for everyone and everyone is supported to meet these expectations. Staff are expected to abide by the MACS' Child Safety and Code of Conduct and all Parents/Guardians/Carers in our school community are expected to abide by the MACS Parent/Guardian/Carer Code of Conduct. Students' behavioural expectations are explicitly taught and regularly reinforced and students are expected to abide by the MACS Student Code of Conduct. If anyone in our school has difficulty in meeting our expectations, processes are followed to ensure the dignity of all is maintained and a solution to any problem is found. This has resulted in St Mary's School having an excellent reputation where families and staff work in partnership, students behave within the expected boundaries and an overall calm and cohesive atmosphere and environment prevail. Thank you for supporting your child/ren to be their best and in turn achieve their best. Together we can ensure that our school community continues to thrive.

Last year, I was approached by MACS and asked if there was someone in our school who would like to be interviewed by *Teacher Magazine* to discuss our schools' journey to achieve great learning success. I asked **Deborah Boland** (F-2 Learning Leader) to speak on behalf of our school and last week the article was published. Please take the time to read the [article](#) and know that your child/ren are reaping the benefits of the hard work and dedication of various educators over several years, many of which continue to work at our amazing school.

Many families have taken the opportunity to purchase the new sports polo and sports jumper and they look fabulous! Please note that there is a two year transition period. If your child/ren have the older style polo or rugby jumper, they may continue to wear



Deborah Boland , Foundation to Year 2 Learning Leader in class teaching

these until the beginning of the 2027 school year.

Thank you to the families who consistently support their child/ren to wear their school uniform correctly and proudly. **Please note:** Students who wear incorrect socks will be asked to wear borrowed socks from our spare uniform supply. Please ensure these borrowed socks are returned to school, washed and ready to be reworn.

St Mary's School, like all Catholic parish and diocesan schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne is under the guidance of MACS. Every school has a **School Advisory Council** as a way of giving parents/guardians/carers a chance to be involved in the school. Our SAC meets once each term and advises me on important matters and provides support to myself and the school leadership team in their decision-making process. The Term 1 meeting will be Wednesday 26 March. There are currently positions vacant for the 2025/2026 period. As principal I very much value the support and advice offered by members of the council on such matters as: the strategic direction of the school, enrolments and enrolment policy, school resources, improvements in the school and family partnerships. If you are interested in

applying for one of these SAC positions, please send an expression of interest (by the 28 February), including the names of three referees to:

principal@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend our recent P&FA Family picnic. It was a great opportunity for families to reconnect after the holiday break. In 2025 the P&FA will continue to "fund-raise & friend-raise" with their first meeting to be held on Wednesday, 26 February from 7:00pm at the Centra. Everyone is most welcome to attend. We are currently looking for volunteer/s to fill the position of President, or Copresident. If this is of interest to you, please contact me directly by emailing, principal@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au Again the P&FA will generously supply classrooms with wipes and tissues this year. These have traditionally been donated by families. If you would still like to donate these items, they will be gratefully appreciated by your child/ren's classrooms.

Kind regards,



Annice Lappin
Principal

A Prayerful Start to the School Year

As we begin a new school year, our students have been focusing on the power of prayer within our classrooms, particularly through the recitation and understanding of our school prayer. By engaging in this daily practice, students are becoming more familiar with the words and meaning of our prayer, deepening their connection with God and strengthening their sense of community. Prayer offers a moment of reflection, gratitude, and guidance, reminding us of God's presence in our daily lives and fostering a culture of faith, respect, and kindness.



ST MARY'S SCHOOL
GEELONG

God our Father,
bless this community of St Mary's so that
we may love you more each day.
Help the members of the staff, the
parents, and the students to grow in
strength and kindness as good
Christians.
Encircle all of us with your loving care.
To the sick grant health, to the aged
bring serenity, and to those in sorrow,
joy. May we grow in faith, tolerance and
understanding, and may our love for one
another grow deeper in our daily living.
Amen

Exploring the Year of Jubilee



Over the next fortnight, students will embark on a meaningful exploration of the **Year of Jubilee**, a time of renewal, mercy, and hope in the Catholic Church. Across all year levels, students will engage in learning experiences that highlight key themes of forgiveness, reconciliation, and spiritual growth.

Foundation

Understanding what a Jubilee Year is in the Catholic Church, exploring the significance of a Holy Door, discovering the global Catholic community and Pope Francis' role, and reflecting on how church and school communities are part of God's family.

Year 3/4

Defining mercy, forgiveness, pilgrimage, and renewal, reflecting on how the Jubilee Year deepens our faith, identifying places in the school for prayer and reflection, and designing a personal Jubilee pilgrimage logo symbolising renewal and mercy.

Year 1/2

Focusing on forgiveness and reconciliation, exploring the importance of repairing relationships with God and others, understanding journeys in Scripture, and fostering empathy and reflection through stories.

Year 5/6

Exploring the theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope,' understanding the history and significance of pilgrimage, examining hope in the Church and its connection to the Sacraments, and analysing the Jubilee logo's symbols, colours, and messages.

2025 Sacramental Dates

The 2025 Sacramental Dates have now been published and can be found below. These dates will also be accessible on the school website. If your family is aware of any reason that your child will be unable to attend their Sacramental celebration, please notify Caitlin as soon as possible by emailing: csteven@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au at your earliest convenience.



Sacrament of Confirmation (Yr 6)

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



Sacrament of First Eucharist (Yr 4)

Sunday 10 August
2:30pm
St Mary's Basilica



Sacrament of Penance (Yr 3)

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

Sacramental Enrolment Masses

Last week, information regarding the upcoming Sacramental Enrolment Masses was shared with families of students in Years 3, 4, and 6. Please ensure you have read and responded to this Operoo notification as soon as possible.

We look forward to walking this faith journey together, supporting our students in their spiritual growth, and celebrating the richness of our Catholic traditions as a school community.

Term 1 School Calendar, 2025

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
3	FEB 10	FEB 11	FEB 12	FEB 13	FEB 14 Geelong Advertiser Prep Photo	
4	FEB 17 3:00pm School Assembly (3/4 Onyx) P&T Conversations 3:30 to 6:00pm (3/4 Garnet) 2026 Foundation Tour; 9:15 am PSG Meetings #1	FEB 18 P&T Conversations; 3:30 to 6:00pm	FEB 19 Foundation Students Rest Day P&T Conversations; 3:30 to 6:00pm	FEB 20 Year 5/6 Volleyball & Basketball	FEB 21	Sacramental Enrolment Masses: SAT FEB 22 6:00pm SUN FEB 23 7:30 9:30 11:00 am
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	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 Sacrament of Confirmation; 7:00pm Newsletter	MAR 13	MAR 14 PFA Fresh Fruit Friday MANNIX FEAST DAY — Wear touch of Red or casual clothes	
8	MAR 17 Catholic Education Week 3:00pm School Assembly (1/2 Topaz)	MAR 18	MAR 19 Geelong Student Leadership Pilgrimage and Mass	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	MAR 27 2026 Foundation Tour; 9:15am PSG Meetings #2	MAR 28 Lunch Order Day— Bakery	
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	

Staff Email

Family Handbook

School Website

Parent Portal
password:
mary175



Facebook:
[@St.Mary'sPrimaryGeelong](#)



Instagram:
[stmarys_ps_geelong](#)



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

Wellbeing Team at St Mary's School

We are excited to introduce the **2025 Wellbeing Team** as part of our school newsletter! This new section will be a regular feature, where we share valuable insights, ideas, and practical tips to support the wellbeing of all in our school community. Each fortnight, we will provide expert advice and helpful strategies to promote a positive and healthy environment for students, staff, and families.



Nicholas Coots

Since 2013, I have been dedicated to teaching in the Catholic education system across both secondary and primary schools, specialising in Physical Education, Sport and Recreation, Health, and Mathematics. In 2023, I joined St Mary's School as the **Physical Education** teacher and have since taken on the role of **Wellbeing Leader**. That same year, I completed my Master of Student Wellbeing at the University of Melbourne, further deepening my commitment to fostering a positive and supportive school environment.

As Wellbeing Leader, I actively promote student wellbeing through key initiatives such as **Bullying No Way Day**, **Harmony Day**, **RU OK? Day**, and other important awareness events. I work closely with student leaders to organise school-wide activities and celebrations, including events for our Feast Days. Additionally, I coordinate and facilitate with classroom teachers the Social and Emotional Learning programs, working in collaboration with The Resilience Project, The Zones of Regulation, and the Victorian Government's Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships framework. Through these initiatives, I strive to ensure that wellbeing education is purposeful, engaging, and tailored to the needs of our students.



Bernie Hellard

Hi I'm Bernie and I have been teaching at St Mary's School since 2012 and have enjoyed a fulfilling career in education for over 30 years. With a deep passion for supporting students with diverse learning needs, I feel honoured to serve as the **Learning Diversity Leader** at St Mary's School, where I work closely with teachers and families to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for our students. I hold a Master of Education with a focus on intervention, which has strengthened my commitment to helping students develop essential skills for success.

Additionally, I am actively involved in the University of Melbourne's Mental Health in Primary Schools initiative, serving as the **Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader**.

Supporting students to flourish and achieve throughout their primary school years is what I value most, and I take great pride in fostering their growth both academically and emotionally.

Please feel free to contact me anytime in the School Administration area or by email:

bhellard@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au



Dr Moira Whelan
Provisional Psychologist

Introducing Dr Moira Whelan, our new Provisional Psychologist at St Mary's School.

Hello, I am so delighted to be working with the St Mary's school community this year.

I am a Geelong local, and you will often find me walking my dogs at Ocean Grove or Barwon Heads beach. I love spending time with my three teenage children, and I am hugely passionate about reading and the role of local libraries in enriching children's lives, having worked in public libraries for the past 14 years. I am in my final year of the Master of Psychology (Educational and Developmental) at the University of Melbourne, and I have a special interest in working with students with Specific Learning Disorders in Reading and in supporting students on the autism spectrum.

My previous work as a researcher at Monash and Deakin University was focussed on the academic progress and wellbeing of students on the autism spectrum, particularly during the transition from primary to secondary school. I have also recently completed a research project at Monash University on school refusal.

My focus at St Mary's School this year will be to provide cognitive and educational assessments as well as counselling support. I am really looking forward to supporting the students, teachers, and families at St Mary's School this year so please pop in to my office and say hello!



St Mary's School is committed to Child Safety.

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



Windows into Learning



YEAR 1/2

Year 1/2 teachers and students are delighted to be back at school! Our start to the 2025 school year has been very calm and settled, with students working hard to be the best learners they can be. They have focused on learning the St Mary's School classroom and playground expectations so they have a learning environment that is safe and conducive to learning. Their Core Knowledge focus for the first few weeks of school is about communicating well with others and working collaboratively with respect. To help them with this goal to recognise different facial expressions and use appropriate emotional vocabulary, we are learning about the Zones of Regulation in our Social Emotional Learning.



YEAR 3/4

The 3/4 learning space has had a wonderful start to the 2025 school year! All students have been practicing our school routines and expectations while settling smoothly into the learning environment. It has been wonderful to see students reconnecting with their peers and forging new friendships. Last week, students elected Term 1 Head Rangers. Head Rangers is a Friday afternoon gathering where all Year 3/4 students come together, led by the elected students. The topics discussed include the school's fortnightly behaviour focus, upcoming events, and special celebrations.

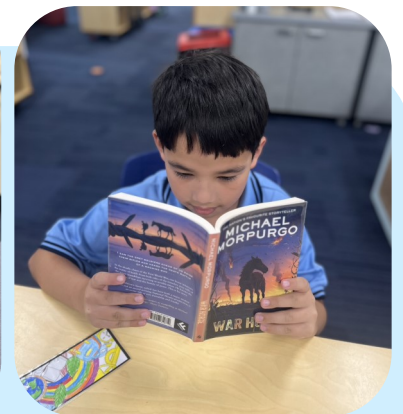
We are proud to announce our **Term 1 Head Rangers: Jimmy, Maya, Alfie, Matilda, Paddy, and Nina!** We look forward to their leadership this term.



YEAR 5/6

The Year 5/6 students have made a fantastic start to 2025. As a year level, we have been focused on establishing calm and purposeful learning environments, where

our attention is fully on learning. As part of this, we have investigated how our brains work and what happens when we 'learn'. Students have discovered the limitations of our working memory, and the magic of our long term memories. In literacy, we have been diving into our brand-new novel, *War Horse*. It has been wonderful to see such high levels of engagement as students explore this story. A special thank you to the Parents & Friends' Association for their generous donation, ensuring that every student has their own copy.



Foundation

Foundation students have commenced their first year of school in a very settled manner! Learning in the first few weeks of school has focused on the St Mary's School playground and classroom expectations, so we are able to be safe and learn at all times. In reading and writing lessons, Miss Kat and Miss Brodie have taught students about the graphemes m, s and f, and in mathematics, students are learning about pattern. They have learnt that a pattern in mathematics is made up of a number of objects or numbers that repeat or follow a rule and the unit of repeat is the part of a pattern that repeats.

School Reminders



CLASSES BEGIN AT 8:50AM AND END AT 3:15PM

School **gates close at 8:50am** each morning, when the first bell rings. Students arriving after 8:50am are required to be signed in by a parent/carer/guardian at the school's administration, please bring your mobile device. School **gates open at 3:10pm** each afternoon, with students being dismissed at 3:15pm.



STUDENT ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Families are required to inform the school of their **child's absence with a reason** via email to: **absence@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au** and their **child's classroom educator** prior to 8:50am on the day of absence. This also includes part day absences (e.g. to attend appointments or early pick ups).



EATING TIMES

Fruit Break - Thank you for ensuring that the small fresh fruit or vegetable snack packed is easy to eat whilst students are working and does not require peeling or cutting.

10:55am - 11:05am - Supervised Eating Time (Play Break #1).

1:35pm - 1:45pm - Supervised Eating Time (Play Break #2).



SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

School Assemblies are scheduled throughout the term and are advertised in the school's termly calendar. On assembly days, the **Parish and Front Gates open at 2:55pm** for families to access the school's atrium. Assemblies begin promptly at 3:00pm and conclude by 3:15pm.

Parents & Friends' Association

PFA Second Hand Uniforms

Please contact the St Mary's School Association Parents & Friends' Uniform shop

For second hand uniform requests, contact:
pfauniforms@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au

Uniform orders will be filled on the following dates:

Monday 17 February
Monday 3 March
Monday 31 March

PRICELIST

Orders are required prior to the above dates.

PFA Next Meeting

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

Art



St Mary's School Families,

Welcome back, I hope everyone had a great holiday.

A friendly reminder to please send an **art smock** to protect uniforms during art classes. An old oversized shirt or t-shirt, clearly labelled with their name would be fine. Art can be a very messy activity so it is important for the students to wear something to prevent little accidents.

Thank you in advance for your assistance, I look forward to another great year of amazing creations.

Yours truly,

Liza Rosati
Visual Arts

School Fees & Levies

School Fees Information

Following advice sent last year through Operoo, billing has now been completed for 2025 with family statements generated and forwarded home for this year's Annual Fees & Levies.

Any queries regarding Fees & Levies, including changes to your current Fee Commitment payment option, can be directed to Jacqui Kol (Back office) at:

schoolfees@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au

Or phone the school on 5229 9453 option 'Fees/Accounts'.

Forms and Fee details are available on the school's [website](#).

School Savings Bonus (SSB)

Last year, the Victorian Government announced the School Saving Bonus (SSB), a \$400 one-off payment for students in 2025. However, **the SSB is only available for eligible Health Care Card Holders receiving a payment from the means-tested Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) for students in Catholic schools.** Please note that no additional application is required for these students to receive the bonus.

The Bonus will be allocated to eligible students once the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) process has been completed for 2025.

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)

Parents/Carers/Guardians holding a valid means-tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent as at **28 January 2025**, may be eligible for the Victorian Government's **Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)** which assists eligible families by providing payments to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities. In 2025 the amount increased from \$150 to **\$154 for eligible primary school students**. The allowance will be paid directly to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions/incursions, or sporting activities for the benefit of your child. Application forms are available [here](#) for application in 2025.

Families who qualify for CSEF may also be eligible for Fee Assistance through the School Fees Concession Program.



DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT SCHEDULE

As per families' DDR Forms. [DDR Form link](#).

ANNUAL

Processed on 28 February

QUARTERLY

Processed on the third Thursday in February, May, August and November

First payment on Thursday 20 February

MONTHLY

Processed on the 20th of each month,

commencing 20 February, 2025

(February to November x 10 payments)

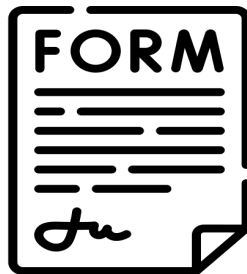
FORTNIGHTLY

Commences Thursday 20 February, 2025

(February to November x 20 payments)

NOTE:

If the 20th falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Public Holiday payment will be processed the next business day.



FEE & LEVIES COMMITMENT AGREEMENT

NEW FAMILIES to the school

Please complete an [agreement](#)

CURRENT SCHOOL FAMILIES

Only complete a New Agreement if you wish to make a change to your current arrangement (i.e. Split Billing)

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 (see attached information flyer).

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.

Community News

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE GEELONG

COLLEGE TOURS

St Joseph's College Geelong invite you to join our College Tours this term.

We are proud to continue offering an innovative education, and we welcome all senior primary school boys and their families to come and visit us.

Bookings essential

Year 7 applications for 2026 are now open until Friday 9 May
sjc.vic.edu.au

9.15am tours
 Tuesday 18 March
 Thursday 20 March
 Monday 24 March
 Wednesday 26 March
 Thursday 27 March

1.45pm tour
 Wednesday 26 March



Due to Construction of our Arts, Learning & Technology Precinct, all College Tours will be held in Term 1 2025



Disney HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

ON STAGE!

SCHOOL SHOWS
 30 JUNE, 1 JULY & 3 JULY 2025
 PLAYHOUSE THEATRE, GEELONG ARTS CENTRE

GEELONGARTSCENTRE.ORG.AU · 1300 251 200

BOOK A



TOUR & INFORMATION SESSION

- MONDAY 17 MARCH 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM
- TUESDAY 18 MARCH 11.00 AM – 12.30 PM
- WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 11.00 AM – 12.30 PM
- WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM
- THURSDAY 20 MARCH 11.00 AM – 12.30 PM

YEAR 7 2026 ENROLMENTS ARE NOW OPEN.
 ENROLMENTS CLOSE FRIDAY 9 MAY 2025.



BOOK A TOUR ONLINE NOW

LEARNING TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Book a tour and information session online: <https://iona.vic.edu.au/>



Every married couple deserves this very special weekend. Time-out to nurture your most precious relationship away from daily distractions. The two of you will come away from your weekend feeling more deeply connected and with tools to help keep the passion alive. No group sharing required. The weekend is based around Catholic values. Couples of all faiths are welcome. **Please check our website for more details and to book your special weekend:** Our next weekend is: 25-27 April 2025 at St Paul's Retreat Centre, Wantirna South. Starts Friday evening at 7pm and finishes Sunday afternoon around 4:30pm. Information/Bookings: Phone **Mercy & James 0409 183 676** or Email: vicbookings@wwme.org.au Website: wwme.org.au

The Music Bus classes are back at St Mary's School for 2025 - Enrol Now!

The Music Bus classes are back at our school in 2025 and it's time to enrol for term 1. Classes offered are : Keyboard, Guitar, drums, ukulele

If you wish to enrol, please complete this Expression of Interest Form as soon as possible as places will fill quickly.

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/ee4627a5204c46158e1ab17e7c8069c6>

For more general information about the program, go to www.themusicbus.com.au

THE MUSIC BUS

LEARN ON THE MUSIC BUS IN TERM 1 2025!

PROGRAM FEATURES:

- ✓ Skilled teachers
- ✓ Fun Curriculum
- ✓ Supportive Environment

SIGN UP NOW! ☎ 1300 168 742 🌐 themusicbus.com.au

Community News



Saint Ignatius College Geelong Year 7 Guided Tours Now Open

www.ignatius.vic.edu.au

A Jesuit Companion School.

International Women's Day

Community Evening with Dr Kylie Moore-Gilbert

Tuesday 11th March, 2025
Drinks and nibbles from 5.30pm, main address 6.30pm

Early Learning & Kindergarten for children from 0 - 6 years

BOOK YOUR TOUR TODAY

Ph (03) 5222 6406
www.baycityelo.com.au

CCS & Government
Funded 3 & 4 Year Old
Kinder Programs

PLAYERS WANTED FOR THE 2025 SEASON

THE EAGLES ARE RECRUITING. ARE YOU FLYING WITH US FOR THE NEW SEASON?

geelongcityfootballclub.com

**First Training : 13/2 5pm-6pm
@ Howard Glover Reserve**

**Rego Day : 16/2 11am-1pm
@ Howard Glover Reserve**

Scan and fill in player expression of interest form

All age groups available and any player experience welcome