



# **Parent Information Booklet**

**2020**



# General Information

---

## Principal's Welcome

Welcome to St. Mary's Parish Catholic Primary School.

On behalf of everyone at St. Mary's, I extend to you a warm welcome to our community! I hope that this handbook will be of assistance to you, the parents of our children.

We are committed to creating an inclusive and caring environment which inspires, engages and nourishes your child's growth in all areas. We want to support your child to be highly motivated about coming to school and to feel confident to immerse themselves in the diverse learning opportunities offered.

St. Mary's is the parish school of The Holy name of Mary Parish of Castlemaine. We recognise each child as being unique and formed in the image of God. We are a school community which fosters a friendly, trusting collaboration between School, Parish and Parents for the ongoing development and benefit of each child.

Our school provides a wonderful learning environment based on diverse learning activities initiated and facilitated by a team of caring and dedicated education professionals, supported by parental involvement.

I invite you to continue your fundamental role as first educator of your children. The staff aim to work in partnership with you and encourage you to be an active participant in the school activities.

I pray that God will bless our time together at St. Mary's. May it be a time full of happiness, caring and support for each other as we focus upon the learning and development of your child in an atmosphere of love and concern for each individual.

We aim to provide a quality education for the 21st Century. New approaches and skills are emerging for life-long learning and we will ensure that the best possible emphasis is given to improving each child's learning, so that they are successful learners ready to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

I wish you and your family a very happy and rewarding association with our St Mary's community of learners.

Best wishes for the year ahead.

**Ben Shields, Principal.**

# Directory

<b>PRINCIPAL:</b>	Mr. Ben Shields
<b>BUSINESS MANAGER:</b>	Mrs. Karen Williams
<b>SCHOOL ADDRESS:</b>	St. Mary's Primary School, 84 Templeton Street, Castlemaine, Vic., 3450.
<b>SCHOOL POSTAL ADDRESS:</b>	P.O. Box 595 Castlemaine, Vic., 3450.
<b>SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:</b>	5472 2270 5470 5783
<b>SCHOOL FAX NUMBER:</b>	5470 5042
<b>SCHOOL EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<a href="mailto:principal@smcastlemaine.catholic.edu.au">principal@smcastlemaine.catholic.edu.au</a>
<b>PARISH PRIEST:</b>	Rev. Fr. Wahid Riad
<b>PARISH CHURCH and PRESBYTERY:</b>	St. Mary's Parish, Hargraves Street, Castlemaine, Vic., 3450.
<b>PARISH POSTAL ADDRESS:</b>	P.O. Box 151, Castlemaine, Vic., 3450.
<b>PRESBYTERY TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	5472 1900

# Our Story

---

St. Mary's Parish Primary School has been registered since 1906 but in existence since approximately 1854. It is a learning environment that gives careful attention to a holistic education in a manner that allows children to develop to the best of their individual ability. We work hard to provide an environment that welcomes, nurtures and stimulates the children in our school academically, spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and strive to create an atmosphere of partnership in the educational process between the staff of the school and the parents. The school exists primarily to assist the Parish and its families in the faith development of their children.

St. Mary's Parish School facilities come under the master plan of the St. Mary's Parish Centre. The Parish Centre comprising of the church, presbytery, school and hall. The school currently provides six general-purpose learning areas, an administration centre, extensively resourced library, contemporary learning centre, visual art centre and performing arts theatre. Audio/Visual and the most up to date levels of I.C.T facilities are built into each classroom and are networked throughout the school. The school also utilises both the church and hall for various school's needs. We have an industrial kitchen and vegetable garden where children engage and learn about growing, harvesting and cooking their own food.

## ***Time Line of Catholic Education in Castlemaine:***

Pre 1830's	Dja Dja Wurrung aborigines inhabit the area
1820's - 1840	Explorers Hume & Hovell and Major Mitchell pass through the area. Mitchell describes area favourably. Pastoralists take up tracks of land and settlement begins.
1854	Castlemaine is an old gold mining town and the first St. Mary's School was a typical goldfield's one made of wood and canvas. It was erected on the present St. Mary's Church grotto site on the corner of Hargraves and Templeton Streets.
1869	A more substantial building of brick was built on the area now used as an Adventure Playground.
1900	Another brick building of two large rooms were added.
1905	January 20 <sup>th</sup> , four Sisters of Mercy came from Kyneton for the foundation of a Convent in Castlemaine. The following Monday, January 23 <sup>rd</sup> , St. Mary's Primary School, which was situated a short distance from the Convent, was taken over by the Sisters.
1906	The School was registered as Primary and Sub Primary on December 31 <sup>st</sup> . The registered number was 0285.

1962	On Sunday, May 27 <sup>th</sup> a new building of four large classrooms and a small staff room was opened by the most Reverend Bernard Stewart, Bishop of Sandhurst.
1974	The Secondary School, St. Gabriel's, closed and the infant section was moved to the Templeton Street site. The Mercy order withdrew from the School.
1985	Les Coyle, the first Lay Principal since 1905, was appointed.
1988	Mark Bainbridge took over as Principal.
1993	Fr. Halloran retires after 25 years.
1994	Fr. Michael Kalka appointed as Parish Priest.
1998	Mrs. Margaret Lynch appointed as Principal. Plans for building and refurbishment are actualised to cope with increasing numbers. This was made possible due to a grant from the Commonwealth Government. Official opening by Fr. Tom Doyle, 6 <sup>th</sup> December.
1999	Fr. Michael Kalka moves to Gladstone Park; Fr. Des Magennis appointed as Parish Priest.
2005	St. Mary's celebrates 150 years.
2006	Opening of two new classrooms on 10 <sup>th</sup> September.
2009	New Library building commenced, refurbishment of toilets and Tuckshop and two new classrooms added. Two portables removed. Fr. Des Magennis retires and Fr. Arsenio Tuazon appointed as Parish Priest for one year.
2010	Fr. Carlton de Silva appointed as Parish Administrator. New Library officially opened. Mrs. Margaret Lynch resigns as Principal and Mr. Terry Brennan held the position of Acting Principal until 4 <sup>th</sup> October, 2010 when Mr. Ben Donnelly commenced.
2011	Fr. Anthony Doran appointed as Parish Priest.
2014	Fr. Anthony Doran accepts a position in Melbourne. Fr. Wahid Riad appointed as Parish Priest in July.
2017	Ms. Bronwyn Phillips appointed as Principal.
2020	Mr. Ben Shields appointed as Principal





# Spiritual Life of the School

---

Respecting the sacred dignity of each child is at the centre of both the formal and informal curriculum within our school. The values, ideals and challenges of the Gospel, embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, find explicit expression in our curriculum and the ethos of the school.

An integrated Religious Education Program is realised throughout the school and support and involvement of parents is greatly encouraged.

The school follows the Religious Education Program "To Know, Worship & Love" developed by Catholic Education Melbourne.

Meaningful lessons in Religious Education are part of the school day and support the growth of emotional intelligence and offer a way of being in our world. Gospel values of faith, hope and love permeate all aspects of school life.

Children have the opportunity to celebrate liturgies which reflect the liturgical seasons and the life of the school. They also participate in prayer as part of the school day.





# Our School Vision

---

- At St. Mary's Parish Primary School, with the teachings and life of Jesus Christ as our central focus, we aspire to provide an excellent education in faith and life, within a welcoming environment. Together we nurture the Spiritual and Educational welfare and needs of the members in our Parish and School community, to foster life-long learning and their relationship with God. Our vision therefore is expressed as:

**"We gather in a faithful, supportive and inclusive community to build partnerships and a sense of belonging.**

**We listen to God, others and our-selves to develop positive relation-ships.**

**We share responsibility for being active in our learning and guiding the learning of others.**

**We act with faith, kindness and resilience to make a real difference in our world."**

We are:

- **Active in Faith**
- **Active in Learning**
- **Active in the Community**
- **Active in Life**

## Our Aims

In partnership, we aim to provide the best education possible for your child. Specifically our aims are:

- To provide a welcoming and safe environment which stimulates curiosity, engages students in their learning and is a happy and supportive learning community in which children feel they are accepted and belong.
- To provide our students with the basis to nurture their spiritual being and develop a conscious, loving relationship with God our Father in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in the tradition of the Catholic Church.
- To provide an excellent education for our students which develops their talents and capacities to full potential and is relevant to the social, cultural and economic needs of the nation.



- To enable our students to achieve high standards of learning and to develop self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, respect for others and achievement of personal excellence.
- To provide a foundation for further education and training, in terms of knowledge and skills, respect for learning and positive attitudes for education.
- To provide students with the knowledge and skills to actively participate and positively contribute to an ever changing world.

### **Our Beliefs**

We believe that parents, students, teachers and our parish community have an obligation to co-operate to provide an environment which can be truly called an inclusive and loving Community in which Gospel values flourish. It is our hope that together we will endeavor to achieve this aim to the fullest. We base our endeavors in the beliefs:

- That each individual is a unique creation made in God's image and therefore possessed of inherent dignity.
- That education is about learning what it means to be human and that in Jesus Christ we have a model of what it means to be truly human.
- That education is a means for discovering the meaning in life, of developing human potential and liberating and empowering individuals to be responsible for their lives and to contribute to the society in which they live.
- That education, shaped by the continuing search for truth, serves the true and enduring needs of our society.
- That education enables an integration of faith, life and culture.

### **SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM**

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation is conducted through a Parish Based Program. Refer to the School / Parish Bulletin/ Website for details or contact the Parish or School Office on the number above.

## School Times

---

It is essential that students arrive early enough to school so that they are prepared and settled for their first lesson. In the same way, there is an expectation that teaching staff also arrive at school in enough time so that they are able to ensure that their classroom and the learning plan for the day is well prepared, organised and resourced. The teacher's promptness in arriving at the classroom and at assembly times sets the expectation for students.

**8.30 am** – Students may arrive from this time and play outside until classrooms are opened. On wet days students may read in the library at this time.

**8.40 am** - Classrooms are opened no later than 8.40am so that students are able to place bags in lockers, to prepare items for the day or have a catch

up chat with the teacher. Parents wishing to speak to the teacher at this time are asked to ensure that it be kept brief or to make an appointment at the end of the day as this time is a valuable time for the student and the teacher in developing their relationships and final class preparation within the classroom prior to class beginning. This is also a great time for parents to come into the classrooms and ask their child to show them what they have been doing in class.

***If a student is later than 8.50 am, parents are required to accompany their child to the office to sign in a late pass.***

<b>8.40 am</b>	Students are in classrooms preparing for the start of the day.
<b>8.50 am</b>	Roll & Morning Prayer.
<b>9.00 am</b>	Start of 1 <sup>st</sup> Learning & Teaching Session.
<b>11.00 am</b>	End of Learning & Teaching Session. Play lunch eaten in class (5 minutes). During Terms 1 & 4, classroom teachers check that all students are wearing a school hat prior to going to play and encourage the application of sunscreen.
<b>11.00 am</b>	Children sent out to morning recess.
<b>11.25 am</b>	Class begins in 5 minutes. Students assemble at the meeting area and then return orderly and quietly to their classroom.
<b>11.30 am</b>	Start of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Learning & Teaching Session.
<b>1.35 pm</b>	End of Learning & Teaching Session. Lunch eaten in class (10 minutes).
<b>1.45 pm</b>	Children sent out to afternoon recess.
<b>2.20 pm</b>	Class begins in 5 minutes. Students to assemble at the meeting area and then return orderly and quietly to their classroom.
<b>2.25 pm</b>	Start of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Learning & Teaching Session.
<b>3.10 pm</b>	Prayer followed by reflection on learning achievements of the day.
<b>3.20 pm</b>	End of Learning & Teaching Session. Students dismissed to go home.
<b>3.40 pm</b>	End of supervision at front of school. Any student who has not been collected by a parent or guardian is brought into the school foyer.



# School Term Dates

---

2020

**TERM 1** - Tuesday 28 January–Friday 27

March

Students return: Wednesday 29

January

*\*Easter 10–13 April*

**TERM 2** - Tuesday 14 April–Friday 26

June

**TERM 3** - Monday 13 July–Friday 18

September

**TERM 4** - Monday 5 October–Friday 18

December

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS (Pupil Free Days)

The Catholic Education Melbourne allocates a number of Professional Learning days each year for staff. On these days the school staff work together on a selected focus related to Spiritual Enrichment, Curriculum and Professional Learning.

# Facilities

---

At St. Mary's we offer a beautiful learning environment at St. Mary's and we encourage creative play both in and outdoors. We take pride in our grounds and facilities and all students and staff have a responsibility to care for them. All learning spaces are air-conditioned and heated. All classrooms are equipped with e-Learning technology allowing students both access and the opportunity to explore the world through a digital medium. St. Mary's has many other wonderful facilities:



- Spacious, dynamic, well lit and clean learning environments
- Dedicated performing and visual arts specialist rooms
- A well-resourced library that supports the learning and inquiring minds of our students
- An indoor multi-purpose area
- Hall – shared with the parish
- A commercial kitchen for the engagement of students in the development of food tech skills
- Shaded adventure playgrounds for junior and senior students



- Basketball / Netball Courts
- Beautifully maintained playing grounds catering to ball games such as football, soccer and cricket
- Paddock to plate garden that engages students in sustainability practices whilst providing them with the opportunity to eat what they grow
- Extensive undercover shaded areas
- Plentiful outdoor tables and seating and outdoor learning areas
- All facilities located under the one roof line other than the hall and multi-purpose room
- Spacious classrooms equipped with the latest I.T. equipment and furniture.



## School Administration & Finance

---

St Mary's office hours are between 8.30am – 4:00pm

Telephone: (03) 54 722270

Fax: (03) 54 705042

Email: [karen.williams@smcastlemaine.catholic.edu.au](mailto:karen.williams@smcastlemaine.catholic.edu.au)

Website: [www.smcastlemaine.com](http://www.smcastlemaine.com)

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS / PHONE NUMBERS / PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Please inform the school office if there is any change to your telephone number and or address details. This enables us to maintain accurate records so that parents can be contacted promptly, especially in the case of an emergency.

### **NOTES TO THE OFFICE**

All notes are collected each morning in the classroom and sent to the office. Bus pass applications, confidential letters and fees can be sent this way. Please ensure that you write the child's name and class or who it is for clearly on the outside of the envelope.

## **EARLY DEPARTURE**

If your child needs to be collected early from school for an appointment, the teacher is to be advised at the earliest opportunity via phone or email. On these occasions when a child is to be collected early, the parent is required to first come to the office before collecting the child from the classroom and complete an early departure form which is to be given to the class teacher when collecting their child. In this way we will ensure that only parents and those responsible for the child take the children to appointments.

## **ABSENCES**

**If your child is away from school for any reason, please contact the school office to inform the school of your child's absence.** In the interests of child safety if we haven't heard from you we will phone you.

**When your child returns to school, please ensure that a written note of explanation is provided to your child's teacher.**

Notes are required for part absences, i.e., if they are absent for part of the day. All notes regarding absenteeism are kept as official records.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

All school policies are published on our school website:

[www.smcastlemaine.com](http://www.smcastlemaine.com). On a regular basis, school policies are published on a rotational basis in the school newsletter to ensure a consistent school wide understanding of our policies, procedures and expectations. Policies are reviewed on a cyclical basis via the Parish School Advisory Council. If adjustments are required, further parental consultation is sought.

## **A CHILD SAFE SCHOOL**

The St. Mary's Parish School community places the highest priority on the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people. Founded in Christ and sustained by faith, St. Mary's Parish School seeks to fulfil its mission of enabling each student to come into the fullness of their own humanity. This includes paying attention to the inherent dignity of children and young people, and their fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and safeguarded by all. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. Because of this:

- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently within the framework of robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

- Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

### **CODE of CONDUCT**

As part of your child's enrolment all parents are asked to agree to and sign the code of conduct which supports us in keeping our school environment a safe and respectful one.

## SCHOOL FEES

---

The school fee structures are approved by the Parish Finance Team and consist of a School Family Fee and a Student Levy.

The School Family Fee is billed to every family and is an annual fee that supports the capital improvements and general running of the school.

The Student Levy is billed per child and covers the costs associated with the purchase of learning materials, specialist equipment, incursions, excursions, participation in sports programs and / or Sacramental programs.

We take great pride in the fact that we are able to achieve excellent educational outcomes for our students whilst providing an affordable Catholic education. In keeping our costs low and affordable, it is essential that families contribute to their child's education by ensuring that payment of the fees and levies are made each year.

The current **School Family Fee** for 2020 is: **\$1125 per family** and **Family Capital Levy** is **\$165**.

The School Family Fee is payable in three instalments over the first three terms of the school year. This billing process aims to remove expenses from Term 4 where families have other priorities including Christmas.

The current **Curriculum Levy** for all students for the 2020 school year is **\$300 per child**, which covers all books, supplies, etc. for the year. The **Excursion Levy** is \$100 per student (rebated in 2020 due to COVID-19).

**Please note that all school fees are due at the beginning of each billing period or by instalments as arranged with the Principal. It is important that if you are experiencing financial difficulty, that you please make an appointment to discuss this with the Principal.**

### **COLLECTION OF MONIES**

All monies to be sent to school should come in an envelope marked with the student's name, amount of money included and purpose of payment. Other forms of payment include EFT and Direct Debits via Debit or Credit Cards.

## Starting School at St Marys

---

### **Getting ready for school - what you can do to help**

It is a big change for a five year old to pass from the intimacy of the family circle to school life. Here are some practical ways in which you can help with the transition.

Encourage independence when possible and as age appropriate for example allow your child opportunity to:

- put on and take off clothes e.g. tuck in shirts, do up buttons and put on jumpers
- put on and do up shoes, particularly laces
- eat and drink without help
- use a handkerchief or tissue

It is important that your child knows how to:

- open and close lunch boxes and drink bottles
- use and flush the toilet and wash their hands unassisted
- ask clearly for things - could a teacher understand your child?
- say his/her name and address
- recognise name/property
- have a go at writing his/her own name
- recognise his or her name among others



Also try to let your child get used to:

- playing with groups of children of the same age
- sharing and taking turns
- staying at a friends or relative's houses for a few hours without you around
- caring for and putting away playthings
- helping with small jobs around the house - most children enjoy doing responsible tasks to please the family
- re-telling the highs and lows of the school day
- knowing what to do if parents are late



- following simple instructions

Some weeks in advance rehearse with your child, in a spirit of play, the different situations to be met within school life:

- opening and closing the school bag
- unpacking and eating the school lunch (a sensible amount)
- dressing for school and making the journey to and from school
- listening to stories, looking at pictures and talking about them
- greeting companions by name

### **When school has begun**

Please send your child on time each day and every day so he/she learns punctuality and consideration for others.

Let your child talk to you about his/her experiences - it is important that you share in his/her new life.

Be interested in things he/she brings home from school - talk about them, display them, treat them as something special for that is what they are to your child.

Always look in your child's bag for any newsletters or notes.

**Your child's greatest asset is the development of independence.**

## Communication

---

If there any concerns or issues, please contact your child's teacher **first**. If this has not resolved the concern, make an appointment to speak with the Principal.

### **School Newsletter**

This is sent home electronically each week via email. You are also able to access it via the school website [www.smcastlemaine.com](http://www.smcastlemaine.com) or request a hard copy.

This is a valuable source of information about events within our school community and a vital means of communication between school and home. It is important that parents read the newsletter carefully.

Parents are invited to contribute to the newsletter. If you or someone you know has family, cultural, sporting or other news or achievements you would like us to share and/or celebrate please forward the details in writing to the school office.

## **PARENT / TEACHER COMMUNICATION & Reporting To Parents**

As a school, we strongly encourage parent engagement in your child's learning and the development of positive parent / teacher relationships that enhance the learning and development of your child. If at any time you need to speak to your child's teacher, it is important that you contact the school and let your child's teacher know what's on your mind. In turn, we continually promote to the staff the need to communicate with parents regarding the growth and challenges of their students to their parents so the learning, social development and personal growth is done in a collaborative way that promotes our vision of working in partnership with the community.

We have many formal and informal processes to keep parents well informed on their child's progress. Formal methods include Half Yearly and Yearly Learning Reports and family conferences. Informal communication can be through comments in books, diaries, parent/teacher meetings, a phone call, awards, and so on. Our teachers are very approachable and available, so please ring if you have a concern so that a mutually convenient time can be organised to meet. Teachers are generally not available between 8.40am and 3.20pm which is class time.

### **Other Important Information**

Please inform our office and your child's teacher if:

- Has a medical appointment during school hours
- Is attending any medical specialists, eg. Speech or Occupational Therapy
- Has to wear glasses
- Has a hearing aid
- Is under medical treatment or has a health problem that may affect their learning
- Has any food allergies
- Is to be absent for an extended period of time
- Needs to leave school early
- Has recently experienced a major upset (eg. Family break-up, death in the family, moving house, etc.)
- Is being collected by a parent or authorised friend from within the school grounds

# Parental Involvement

---

Parents are encouraged to play an active role in the life of our school. There are many opportunities for parents to assist and we hope you will be keen to offer your help in one or more of the following areas:



- Attending school prayer celebrations and liturgies
- Assisting with classroom activities (e.g. Sport, Math/Reading groups etc.) when requested by the teacher
- School library (e.g. covering books)
- Supporting school events such as Athletics Carnivals
- School excursions when requested by the teacher
- Canteen
- School Fair – we would really appreciate your assistance

All volunteer workers at St. Mary's are required to undergo a **Working with Children Check**. Without this you will be unable to participate and assist in classroom activities or excursions.

**Confidentiality** and **Privacy** are important issues for any volunteers working with our St. Mary's students.

## Parents & Friends Association

St Mary's Parents and Friends Association operates to support the school. They are a dynamic group of parents focused on the learning, welfare and wellbeing of the St Mary's students. Meetings are held once a term. The aim of the association is:

- Parent involvement and participation in the life of the school
- Active support for the Parish of St Mary's and its ministries
- Learning and child based agendas with business kept to a minimum
- Ongoing dialogue/ feedback/ shared decision making re fund raising and social events for St. Mary's
- Support student learning and welfare through fundraising
- Provide services to families (eg canteen)
- Develop a culture of welcome and invitation
- Promotion of the school in building community spirit
- Support for the learning goals and expectations of the St Mary's school community.

## Bi-Annual School Fair

Our bi-annual school fair is a major event. It is the one occasion in that year that showcases just how amazing our school community is to both the local and wider township. As a parent, it is the school's expectation that you participate and or contribute in some way to its success. Every little bit helps.

Parents are contacted via CareMonkey allowing you to choose in which way you wish to participate.

### **School Visitors**

Due to child protection procedures, any adult remaining on the school site or working with the children on a voluntary basis will be required to sign in at the school office. They will also be required to wear the appropriate badge and sign out when leaving the school premises. Any queries regarding these procedures can be directed to the Principal or Assistant Principal.

### **You Are Your Child's First Teacher**

The children are in your care for the first 5 years of their life. You then enter St Mary's, in partnership to continue the child's learning and growth.

Learning to speak and listen starts with you at home. Try to:

- Talk to your child about what you are both doing
- Listen to your child carefully
- Answer many of the endless questions
- Read a story **every day**, maybe at bedtime
- Borrow children's books and toys from your local library
- Teach songs, rhymes, jingles, the names of colours and of parts of the body
- Count things. Does your child know what the number means? Try things like asking your child to set the table and count the plates, etc.
- Sort and match collections of things like fruit, clothing etc.
- Ask your child to follow simple instructions such as, "Take off your shoes and put them on the verandah"
- Take some time to play with your child; find out about their ideas and feelings
- The importance of listening to children and making them feel loved cannot be over emphasised
- Teach them good hygiene and sanitation
- Be consistent and follow through with what you say

## Getting To & From School

---

### **Parking & Road Safety**

We need to take special care when parking, dropping off or picking up children, this includes:

- following all parking and road signs, especially near the crossings
- being thoughtful and considerate towards neighbours by not parking across driveways
- if parking on the other side of the road from the school, leave your car and cross the road with your child
- the school carpark, located between the Church and school itself, is for staff use only
- keep the bus bay clear as directed by the signage
- obey all directions from the supervising teacher when on duty



## Safety on the street

Be sure your child knows the safety rules for busy streets.

Show your child how to:

- look right, then left, then right again before attempting to cross the road
- use marked crossing if there is one nearby
- walk quickly across the road, but do not run, take special care when getting off the bus

## Bicycles

Students travelling to and from school need to be safe. Bicycles, scooters and other wheeled items are popular means of transport for students, but require regulation and management by parents and the school. When possible we encourage students to choose means of transport to and from school other than cars and buses. This will encourage fitness in our students and alleviate traffic congestion and parking problems around our school perimeter and surrounding streets.

To provide a school environment that is safe for students and balances the rights of individuals with the school's duty of care towards all staff and students we encourage students and parents to comply with the following recommendations, when travelling to and from school:

- Students in Foundation to Year 4 ride bikes or scooters to school only if accompanied by a responsible adult
- Only students in Year 5 and 6 ride bikes or scooters to school unaccompanied by an adult
- Students wear a helmet if riding a bike or scooter to school
- All bicycles and scooters are kept in a road worthy condition
- Skateboards, roller blades and roller skates are not recommended means of transport to and from school; in any event, the wearing of helmets is encouraged.

## Student Attendance

Teachers will be on playground duty in the school from 8:30am. Please make sure your child gets to school **before the school bell at 8:50am as students are required to be present in the classroom at 8.50am with formal tuition beginning at 9.00am.**

It is important that you work your child's schedule to fit in with the school hours. Children need plenty of time to eat breakfast and prepare for school. Children arriving at school after 9.00am must be **accompanied by the parent** to be signed in. A late pass will be provided which must be presented to the classroom teacher before commencing lessons.

Please collect your child promptly after school at 3.20pm, otherwise they begin to worry and sometimes get anxious. If you are held up for any reason simply phone the school office. We would appreciate as early notice as possible, preferably before 3.20pm as this will allow us to let the child know in

time before they are dismissed. Staff also have meetings to attend three times each week so need to be available to attend these on time.

Your child should attend school every day, unless sick when they are better to stay at home. If a child becomes sick at school, parents will be notified to collect them.

## Health & Safety

---

### **Keep a Sick Child at Home if You See the Following:**

**Fever** - This is one symptom that automatically rules out school, no questions. Your sick child should be fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours before you send him/her back to school. As a school, we do not administer over-the-counter fever-reduction medication; instead, we believe that it is definitely worth keeping your child home, making sure they drink plenty of fluids so they can recover from whatever they are battling.

**Diarrhoea** - This could be a sign of a viral infection, so it's best to keep your child at home. It's also important to keep rehydrating him/her with an oral rehydrating solution when s/he has diarrhoea, and the best way to do that is by keeping him/her at home.

**Vomiting** - Aside from the fact that your child won't be comfortable, s/he could vomit again. Keep him/her home until s/he has gone 24 hours without throwing up – that way you won't feel guilty if you send him/her to school and we call you up to come and collect your vomiting child.

**Cough** - This depends on how severe the cough is. Coughs can spread infection to other students. A serious cough can also keep a child from getting a good night's rest, which means s/he'll be too tired for school in the morning. As a general rule, if your child has a serious wet cough, particularly if it's accompanied by breathing troubles, seek medical advice. But if it's just a mild cough and s/he has no other symptoms, s/he can probably go to school.

**Rashes** - Skin rashes could be a sign of a contagious infection, such as impetigo. You should have a rash evaluated by a doctor before sending your child to school.

**Conjunctivitis** - This infection can quickly and easily spread from one child to another, as many parents of primary-school age children already know all too well. Keep your child home until the doctor says s/he is no longer contagious.

**Stomach ache** - This one can be tough to call. If s/he doesn't have diarrhoea and isn't constipated, tummy trouble could be caused by any number of things from anxiety to food poisoning. If the stomach pains are minor enough to allow your child to continue walking and behaving in his/her usual boisterous fashion - and there are no other symptoms – this might be one of those times worth risking sending him/her to school. Later, you can talk to him/her about any emotional issues that may be on his/her mind.

**Ear Infection** - As with coughs, you should evaluate all his/her symptoms before making the call. If s/he has mild ear pain, s/he'll likely be fine; but if s/he's clearly uncomfortable, s/he will have trouble concentrating in class anyway and should be kept at home. And if there are any other accompanying symptoms such as a fever, it's a definite sick day.

**Runny nose** - Let's be realistic: If you kept your child home every time s/he had the sniffles, s/he'd miss a lot of school. Use your judgment. If s/he has a runny nose but seems otherwise fine, then it's probably okay for him/her to go to school (with a box of tissues in his/her bag).

Trust your instincts. If your child seems lethargic and is just not themselves (if s/he's not interested in playing, that is often a big clue), keep him/her home and monitor him/her for any signs of illness.

### **School Accident / Sickness**

If your child is sick or has an accident at school, the first aid officer or class teacher makes the decision as to whether you need to be contacted. This phone call is usually made by the office staff.

In the event of a serious accident or sickness at school, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The school will contact parents and call an ambulance in the case of emergency. **We advise that you have ambulance cover as a precaution.**

#### **If the parents are unavailable:**

2. The school will ring the contact person nominated by Parent /Guardian

#### **If the contact person is unavailable:**

3. The school will contact the family doctor listed on the child's personal file

#### **If the doctor is unavailable:**

4. The school will always take the necessary steps to ensure the wellbeing of the child

For this reason, it is vital that you keep us up to date with home and work phone numbers. At times it is important that we inform you of an incident even if the child isn't to go home. This is so that you are aware of what has happened and can observe your child at home, e.g. your child has fallen and bumped his/her head.

Please do not send sick children to school. This only serves to spread illness to classmates or teachers.

### **Administering Medication at School**

**Non-prescribed medication**, (e.g. Panadol, cough medicine, nasal sprays, lotions etc.) cannot be administered by staff to children without written advice from a parent.

**Prescribed medication** will be administered but must be supplied by parents in the original container, clearly marked with the student's name, the name of the drug, dosage, frequency of administration and prescribing doctor's name.

If this is the case, relevant documentation must be obtained from the school office for completion.

Antibiotics that are to be administered 3 times a day may be taken at home prior to school, directly after school and at bedtime unless specifically stated otherwise by the doctor.

### **Asthma**

All students with asthma should have a standard record filled out by their parent/carer, in consultation with the student's doctor. Although confidentiality is important, it is equally important that teachers and staff are aware of those students in their care with asthma or severe allergies.

All students who have asthma should be encouraged to carry medication on their person for self-administration to relieve asthma symptoms.

Students should be encouraged to take their blue reliever puffer (Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl or Ventolin) immediately should asthma symptoms develop.

Children requiring a nebuliser must bring their own mask, tubing and medication with a note. It is advisable for parents to come to school to administer this. Children may need to be kept home if they are ill enough to require frequent medication.

### **Anaphylaxis**

In accordance with recommendations of The Royal children's Hospital St. Mary's do not endorse the implementation of blanket food bans or attempts to prohibit the entry of food substances into the school. We adopt a Classroom Risk Minimisation approach with regard to particular foods (peanuts and tree nuts) which are the most likely foods to cause anaphylaxis. To support children who have anaphylaxis, we have a whole school approach. Please refer to our school's Anaphylaxis Policy for greater detail.

### **Animal Welfare**

Whilst children bringing animals to school is not encouraged, in the interests of child safety laws there are procedures that must be adhered to if children bring pets to show their class.

You are required to write to the principal to seek permission, then make arrangements with the child's class teacher in advance. If there is a casual teacher in the class, please do not bring the animal to school.

The animal must be taken off school premises after the class has seen it. It may be advisable to bring the animal at the end of the day if you are unable to take it home in the morning. These guidelines are for the safety and well-being of students, teachers and the animals.

We also prefer that families not walk dogs to and from school during arrival and dismissal times as these are very busy times with babies and toddlers around. It is simply not safe to have animals at school at this time.

### **Head Lice**

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for parents/guardians/carers, teachers and children. Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has head lice. Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, the control and management of head lice infections is a shared responsibility amongst a number of agencies, including the Department of



Education and Training; Department of Human Services; schools and parents. To assist us in minimising the risks and spread of headlice we ask that parents do the following:

- Regularly (preferably once a week) inspect your child's hair to look for lice or lice eggs and regularly inspect all household members and then treating them if necessary;
- Ensure your child does not attend school with untreated head lice;
- Use safe treatment practices which do not place your child's health at risk.
- Notify the school if your child is affected and advising the school when the treatment has started verbally, by email or via Caremonkey;
- Notifying parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

## School Uniform & Grooming

---

### **Uniform**

St. Mary's has a school uniform and wearing of the correct full school uniform is compulsory. It gives the students a sense of belonging and pride in their school. If this is not possible, please address a note to the class teacher which will be passed on to the principal. Students who do not wear the correct uniform will be asked to explain.

### **Uniform Shop**

We are in the process of updating our school uniform. You may now purchase your child's uniform at our local store, "Hip Pocket".

### **Sports Uniform**

Sports uniform is to be worn on the days that they participate in Physical Education classes, interschool sporting days or days specified by the school that relates to a sporting event. Children may be required to bring sports shoes at other times as indicated in the newsletter. Sports shoes are not part of the general school uniform.

### **Personal Grooming & Hair Styles**

We ask that children keep their clean and tidy and long hair (shoulder length or longer) must be tied back (helps prevent the spread of head lice)

Hair ribbons in school colours are allowed

Nail polish or any make-up is not allowed

For safety reasons we ask that children wear minimal or no jewellery at all to school, this also prevents the problem of expensive or sentimental items being lost.

# Policies & Procedures

---

Schools need policies and procedures to provide the foundation for a safe and supportive school environment. Policies and procedures provide leadership, direction and guidance for staff, students & parents.

At St Mary's, the following policies and procedures have been developed and implemented:

- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Assessment & Reporting Policy
- Asthma Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Camping Policy
- Child Safe School
- Communication Policy
- Complaints & Concerns Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Emergency Management Plan
- First Aid Policy
- Homework Policy
- Literacy Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Medication Policy
- Numeracy Policy
- Pastoral Care & Discipline Policy
- Principles of Learning & Teaching Guide Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Professional Development Policy
- Quality Learning & Teaching Policy
- Religious Education Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Standard Collection Notice
- Student Profile Policy
- Uniform & Dress Code Policy
- Visitors Policy

Most policies and procedures are available to read from our school website:

[www.smcastlemaine.com](http://www.smcastlemaine.com)

# Curriculum

---

## ***STEAMING Ahead at St. Mary's***

At St. Mary's we aim to provide a well balanced approach to learning. Our children come from varied backgrounds and they spend a big part of their lives at school. Education therefore needs to be viewed as part of life not just preparation for it. It should be relevant, and purposeful so as to engage them and serve their needs. A richly diverse curriculum facilitated by teachers who are passionate, capable as well as caring can cater for the varied interests and needs of students. Methods of delivery vary and opportunity for both formal and informal learning, keeps the school environment stimulating and interesting.

Literacy and numeracy as well as knowledge of key disciplines have been identified as the cornerstone of schooling for young Australians. Students benefit from and need explicit teaching in literacy and numeracy to gain the necessary skills to support and enjoy their development of interests in other areas as well as to gain the necessary grounding to broaden opportunity and function as literate and numerate people in the world. We use their interests to choose content to motivate them to develop reading, writing and numeracy competencies. We use a combination of teacher directed as well as student directed, open ended and experiential learning opportunities.

It is now recognised that schooling should support the development of skills in cross disciplinary, critical and creative thinking, problem solving and digital technologies, which are essential in all 21st century occupations. These objectives lie at the core of the national science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) school education strategy to lift student engagement and attainment in STEM and improve student outcomes. At St. Mary's we have added arts and call our work in these areas STEAM. Our students have displayed a keen interest and high level of engagement in our STEAM work and they are actively involved in the problem solving and learning process as well as in setting goals for their learning and mapping their path of research. The skills they practice through STEAM projects support them to develop a growth and life-long learning mindset as well as capabilities across STEAM areas. It is always wonderful to watch children to discover new potentials within themselves when engaged in STEAM activities.

***Ben Shields,  
Principal.***

# **SCHOOL CURRICULUM INFORMATION**

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

We hope to nurture the desire for learning in our students by providing a welcoming atmosphere and environment where each child is accepted, challenged and encouraged to grow as a person. At St. Mary's we aim to make every situation a learning opportunity and to support families in the broader education of their children.

The children are expected to contribute their share to this process by their care for fellow students, observance of school rules and consistent efforts in application to programs of work.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Our basic goals in religious education are that children will:

- develop a good relationship with God through prayer
- become aware of the presence of Jesus in our lives
- feel worthwhile human beings and loved human beings
- develop willingness and openness
- express Faith at their level
- know Jesus and develop a personal relationship with Him
- adopt Jesus' way of thinking, relating, living and choosing
- have a conviction of God's love as unconditional and be enabled to respond to this love
- become more sensitive and positive towards others
- grow in a sense of belonging in the Catholic Community so that they will want to belong
- know that the Spirit makes us a community
- appreciate, respect, respond to and care for the world environment.

## **METHODOLOGY -**

At St. Mary's, religion is taught formally and informally during each day of the school week. Staff plan the Religious Education program in two year cycles. The "Guidelines for Religious Education" and the series "To Know, Worship and Love" form the basis in program planning in conjunction with other Church documents and resources for children.

In each week's lessons, teaching revolves around a plan, i.e. the elements used in the teaching strategy for Religious Education. The process demands a movement through life to explicit faith and into everyday human life again, thus making possible the proclamation of the Good News about God and this love for us through Jesus Christ.

As well as formal Religious Education lessons the Religious Education program is reinforced through daily activities, events, prayers, liturgies and class, and school Masses. The children are encouraged to be active members of the Parish community and to participate in the weekly Masses in our Parish Church.

## **Victorian Essential Learning Standards**

The Victorian Curriculum F-10 incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects Victorian priorities and standards. Independent schools can choose to use the Victorian Curriculum as a model and resource for the effective implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

The standards outline what is important for students to learn as they progress through the school. All the standards are designed to engage students, build their confidence, offer varied approaches to learning and challenge them to achieve. At St Mary's our curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum, VELS. The table below explains how specific curriculum areas fit into three domains:

- ❖ Physical, Personal and Social Learning
- ❖ Discipline-based Learning
- ❖ Interdisciplinary Learning

**For detailed information you can visit the Victorian curriculum website online.**

### **PHYSICAL, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL LEARNING**

Developing students' ability to take increasing responsibility for their own physical wellbeing, learning and their relationships with others. This is achieved through the following learning domains:

#### **Health and Physical Education**

Maintaining good health and living a healthy lifestyle. Understanding and engaging in physical activity for good health.

#### **Interpersonal Development**

Working with others by building positive social relationships, working and learning in teams and managing and resolving conflicts.

#### **Personal Learning**

Students developing as individual learners who acquire self knowledge, learn with peers, set goals and manage resources and recognise and enact appropriate values within and beyond the school context.

#### **Civics and Citizenship**

Students understanding their identity and roles in their community, knowing their rights and responsibilities.



## **DISCIPLINE-BASED LEARNING:**

### **THE ARTS**

Students make and share performing and visual arts through a variety of art media, dance, drama, media and music. They discuss and express opinions about their own and others' art and art works and events in their community.



At St. Mary's we are involved in the Castlemaine State Festival and also have a drama performance or a dance each year.



*Students may have keyboard lessons as well as join our ukulele or recorder group. Choir is also offered.*

### **ENGLISH**

Literacy is the key to all learning. We provide teaching and learning opportunities that will motivate and engage students and develop the skills necessary for success at school and lead them to access the opportunities available to them in our world.

In English students learn to appreciate, enjoy and use language and develop a sense of its richness and power to evoke feelings, form and express ideas, to inform, persuade and to entertain.

Our English program incorporates the development of listening and speaking, reading and written skills within a daily two-hour literacy workshop focussing on whole class and small group instruction with opportunity to reflect and share their learning.

To amplify the students' learning and give meaning and opportunity to implement these skills they are linked with the integrated topic being investigated.

A key feature of the program is the ongoing identification, planning and monitoring of students' learning to ensure students' individual needs are being met.

Reading Recovery Program provides additional support to students in their second year of schooling and is an integral part of the program.

Students may also participate in other supported reading programs including ERIK and Fountas and Pinnell which provides support for children further into their schooling. In Gr 5 and 6 the students work on the Reading to Learn program which looks at the grammar and composition of reading and writing. Parent helpers are vital for some of these programs.

## **LIBRARY**

St. Mary's has a beautiful library space which is available for the children to use and enjoy. Classes can access the Library regularly and students may borrow books each week.

Book Week activities are organised each year and provide students with the opportunity to explore the short-listed titles and present their own work to the school community.



## **LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH (L.O.T.E.)**

The L.O.T.E. studied at this school is Indonesian. We are striving to develop this into a full cultural and language program operating from Prep to Grade Six. We have an Indonesian teacher who takes classes from Grades Prep to Six and works closely with our teachers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Mathematics, like Literacy, has an essential role in empowering individuals to be able to function in our society as critical citizens. At St. Mary's, we provide learning experiences for our students to develop numeracy skills both written and mental, an understanding of shapes and location, measurement skills, and problem solving strategies.

We endeavour to achieve this through a one hour maths lesson each day which includes a focus on mental calculations, problem solving activities and open-ended tasks that provide challenging experiences for the students. They are supported in their learning with the use of a wide range of concrete materials and additional support through intervention programs when needed.

The standards we use for assessment are consistent with the Victorian Curriculum standards for Mathematics and supported by the Success in Numeracy Education (S.I.N.E) approach to teaching numeracy. The Grade 3 and Grade 5 students take part in the NAPLAN Australia wide testing program each year.

## **SCIENCE**

Students use their senses to explore the world around them, e.g. day and night, the seasons, living and non-living things. They participate in simple investigations involving observation and measurement and learn about basic procedures and processes including collecting and recording data. Students become aware of using safe procedures.

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING**

Communication, Design, Creativity and Technology, Information and Communications Technology, Thinking Processes. The knowledge, skills and behaviours found in these domains cross all areas of the curriculum and are essential for students to be active learners and problem solvers.

Children are given lessons in chess each fortnight if they are interested.

# Sustainability and St. Mary's

---

At St. Mary's we encourage real-life sustainability learning. We work towards integrating sustainability into our planning as well as developing ways to improve resource management, embed sustainability practices into the school operations, teaching and learning and we encourage community engagement. We aim to give students the opportunity to learn about sustainability in a tangible and realistic environment. Our students are actively involved in learning how to take action to minimize waste, save energy and water, promote biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. St. Mary's is part of Resource Smart Schools which is a Victorian Government initiative that helps schools benefit from embedding sustainability in everything they do. The Resource Smart Aussie Vic 5Star Sustainability Certification requires our school to demonstrate continuous improvement against benchmarks that are set in the areas of planning, biodiversity, energy, waste and water. We are continually working to become a highly sustainable school and have completed numerous projects and have many more planned to achieve this.



## Kitchen Garden and Garden Based Learning

Our students take part in garden based learning programs where they actively learn about growing food and preparing it to eat.



## Well-being

Our young people's well-being is pivotal to their ability to engage with educational opportunities and increasingly we inform and work on our practice to support them to work through emotional challenges. A happy, welcoming environment where students feel safe, accepted, valued and supported to succeed, also creates more optimum opportunity for children to thrive.

Student wellbeing underpins their ability to flourish. We value being well informed and equipped to support student wellbeing in order for them to be empowered and well-adjusted young people. Our staff have been training in, "The Berry Street Education Model" (BSEM) which is a whole-school approach which enables all staff members to share strategies to meet the complex wellbeing and academic needs of students through a consistent

whole-school approach. The Berry Street Education Model focuses on actionable strategies through five developmentally-informed domains:

- **BODY:** Building school-wide rhythms and body-regulation through a focus on physical and emotional regulation of the stress response, de-escalation in school and classroom contexts, and mindfulness opportunities throughout the school day.
- **RELATIONSHIP:** Increasing relational capacities in staff and students through attachment and attunement principles with specific relationship strategies to engage young people
- **STAMINA:** Creating a strong culture of independence for academic tasks by nurturing resilience, emotional intelligence and a growth mindset
- **ENGAGEMENT:** Employing engagement strategies that build willingness in students
- **CHARACTER:** Harnessing a values and character strengths approach to enable successful student self-knowledge which leads to empowered future pathways

Your children's teachers are building your child's capacities across these domains.