



Principal News

Dear Families,

Thanks to everyone who joined us for our **Mother's Day Breakfast and Liturgy** yesterday morning. It was wonderful to see so many families gathering together in such a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Our staff were delighted to serve breakfast, and the opportunity to come together in prayer during the liturgy provided a meaningful moment to honour and celebrate the gift of motherhood and female carers in the lives of our students. Events such as these highlight the strong sense of community that exists within our school and the importance of nurturing connections between families, staff and students. We wish all of our mothers and special women in our community a joyful and peaceful Mother's Day on Sunday. May it be a day filled with love, appreciation and time spent with those who matter most.

Our whole school athletics day will be held this Friday, May 8, and we are very much looking forward to a wonderful day of participation, teamwork and school spirit. This annual event is a highlight of our school calendar, providing students with the opportunity to challenge themselves, support one another and celebrate their achievements in a positive and inclusive environment. We extend our sincere thanks to our Physical Education teacher, **Mr Nic Coots** for the significant time, effort and organisation involved in preparing for this event. His organisation ensures that the day runs smoothly and that all students can participate with confidence and enthusiasm. We also thank our staff for their ongoing support, encouragement and supervision, as well as our parent volunteers who generously give their time to assist on the day. We wish all students the very best as they take part and encourage families to join us if they can, to support and celebrate their efforts.

There has been a real sense of excitement across the school community as work began last week on our new sporting precinct. This significant development marks an important step forward in enhancing the opportunities available to our students for physical activity, play and learning. Once completed, the space will provide a high-quality, multi-use area incorporating a basketball/netball court, along with a football/soccer field and running track. The inclusion of an all-weather surface will ensure that students have reliable, year-round access to these facilities, supporting both our Physical Education program and active play during recess and lunch breaks.

We acknowledge that the recent removal of trees and the natural grass space has been noticeable and, for some, unsettling. We understand the importance of natural environments in children's wellbeing and development. As part of the broader plan, these trees will be replaced in Stage Three of the project. New planting will occur not only around the perimeter

of the grounds but also within other areas of the school, complementing and extending our existing shaded spaces over time. This redevelopment reflects careful planning and consultation, including discussions at School Advisory Council level and presentations at Parents and Friends' meetings. Our goal is to create a balanced environment that offers both engaging, functional play spaces and natural elements that support student wellbeing. If you have any questions, you are strongly encouraged to speak with members of the school leadership team or me directly. Venting on WhatsApp or social media platforms is counterproductive and may breach the **St Mary's School Parent/Guardian/Carer Code of Conduct**. We look forward to sharing further updates as the project progresses. The anticipated completion of the project is early in Term 3.

Our recent lunch order trial with **Mano Deli** has now come to an end. We would like to thank families for their support and participation throughout this period, which has provided us with valuable insights into how a lunch ordering service may best operate within our school community. To help guide our next steps, a survey has been sent to all families and is due by Friday. Your feedback is greatly appreciated, as it will play an important role in informing any future decisions regarding a lunch order service. We encourage all families who took part in the trial to take a few moments to complete the survey and share their experiences.

We kindly remind all families that students are expected to be in full winter uniform each day. Wearing the correct uniform helps to foster a sense of pride and belonging within our school community, and ensures consistency across all year levels. This includes correct footwear. We appreciate your support in ensuring that students come to school dressed appropriately in line with our school uniform expectations.

In staffing news, **Mrs Catherine Connolly**, 3/4 classroom teacher, has resigned from her classroom teaching position, effective from Friday 8 May. I thank Catherine for her contributions and thank her for the kindness and care she brought to her classroom. From Monday 11 May, 3/4 Onyx will be taught by **Mrs Molly Romans** on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays for the remainder of the year. Molly is a regular, experienced Contract Replacement Teacher at St Mary's School. **Miss Nicole McNamara**, current 3/4 Learning Leader, will teach Onyx students on Thursday and Friday for the remainder of Term 2. We will soon be seeking a teacher for Thursday and Friday for Term 3 and 4. Molly and Nicole are ideal replacements, as they know the students and the pedagogy of the 3/4 learning area.

Kind regards, Annice



Annice Lappin
Principal

Please click below for School LINKS

2026 Staff Email

Family Handbook

School Website

Parent Portal
password:
mary175



Facebook:
[@St.MarysPrimaryGeelong](https://www.facebook.com/St.MarysPrimaryGeelong)



Instagram:
[stmarys_ps_geelong](https://www.instagram.com/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.



Dear Families,

Our teachers and Learning Support Officers have recently been strengthening their practice around **“opportunities to respond,”** following recent professional learning led by **Bron Ryrie-Jones**, on Tuesday 21 April. This work centres on ensuring every student is actively engaged in learning, rather than passively observing. In classrooms, this looks like teachers carefully planning multiple chances for all students to think, speak, write and demonstrate their understanding throughout each lesson. Strategies such as targeted questioning, partner talk, mini whiteboards and structured turn-taking are being used to ensure that every voice is heard and every learner is cognitively involved.

This focus makes a noticeable difference to student engagement and confidence. When students are given frequent, supported opportunities to respond, they are more likely to stay focused, take risks and build their understanding in real time. Importantly, it also allows teachers to check for understanding and adjust instruction quickly to meet student needs. By embedding these practices consistently across the school, we are continuing to build classrooms where all students are expected to participate, feel successful and experience growth in their learning every day.

A critical part of this practice is **“closing the loop”** through immediate, specific feedback. When students respond, teachers are deliberately providing timely guidance; affirming correct understanding or quickly addressing any misconceptions before they become embedded. This might involve rephrasing a question, modelling a correct response or prompting students to refine their thinking on the spot. By ensuring that every opportunity to respond is followed by clear feedback, teachers are helping students to consolidate accurate understanding and move forward in their learning with clarity and confidence.

At the heart of this work is our strong commitment to every child’s learning, with teachers continually reflecting on and refining their practice so each student is supported to succeed.

Warm regards,

Deb Boland

Staff Spotlight

Meg Ferguson

Outside of teaching Foundation at St Mary’s School, I spend most of my time with family and friends in the beautiful Bellarine region, particularly Ocean Grove, where I live. I love taking my Golden Retriever, Doug, for walks along the beach or up to the Barwon Heads Bluff, always stopping for a coffee and a muffin at Starfish Bakery in Barwon Heads! This year, I have returned to netball and will spend my Saturdays playing for Barwon Heads Football Netball Club, where my partner, Michael, plays football and coaches the Under 16 team. During the holidays, I enjoy spending time in Lorne at my family’s caravan, visiting local restaurants and relaxing at the beach, my favourite place, no matter the weather! When I can I also enjoy travelling and experiencing different cultures. Last year I was fortunate to visit several countries throughout Europe, my favourite being Croatia, I cannot wait to get back there one day!



Staff Spotlight

Krissy Thompson

When I'm not working at St Mary's School, I love to "Fill my bucket" by spending time with family, catching up with friends, enjoying walks along the beach, and continuing to develop my Musical Theatre skills. My passion for the Arts began early—I started classical ballet at age five and later explored a range of dance styles, even studying Dance as a Year 12 subject. In recent years, I decided to extend that passion by joining an Adult Musical Theatre class with Stage Arts. These classes have allowed me to grow my acting, singing and dance skills while learning from industry professionals. At the end of last year, I took a deep breath and auditioned for a show—and I'm thrilled to share that I was cast in the currently running production of **Sister Act** at GPAC (1–9 May 2026). I am playing Sister Mary Theresa, the oldest nun in the convent who certainly packs a punch.

I feel incredibly grateful for this opportunity and for the chance to work alongside such a talented cast. I often encourage my students to step outside their comfort zones and give things a go, and now I'm taking on that same challenge myself—nerves and all. If you would like to purchase tickets please click on the following link: <https://geelongartscentre.org.au/whats-on/all-events/sister-act/>



Ruth McGurk

When I'm not teaching music at St Mary's School or busy with my young family at home, I like to fill my time with creative projects. I have always loved writing stories and have become a traditionally published children's author, and I also love performing on the stage. This year, I've begun a very special project that combines both of those things: adapting Nick Bland's **The Wrong Book** into a musical production that will be on at the Geelong Arts Centre later this year. It's equal parts scary and exciting, and the cast will feature a parent from our very own St Mary's School's - Cara Oliver!



Term 2 School Calendar, 2026

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	MAY 4 District Cross Country	MAY 5 Mothers' Day Breakfast (8:15am) & Liturgy (8:50am). Coffee Van onsite. CASEA Group Session 2 MANO Deli Lunch Order Day	MAY 6 Newsletter AFL/Soccer Interschool Sport	MAY 7 PSG Meetings # 1 Music Bus	MAY 8 School Athletics Day Landy Field (Bean Cravin' coffee Van onsite)
4	MAY 11 3:00pm School Assembly (5/6 Turquoise)	MAY 12 CASEA Group Session 3 CASEA – Parent Information Session; 2:15-3:15pm. All welcome. St Mary's Student Leaders' Conference	MAY 13 Netball Interschool Sport PFA ROLLING PIN Pie ORDERS and PAYMENT due	MAY 14 Music Bus	MAY 15 CHESS CLUB Parish Mass 10:00am Yr 3/4 and Yr 1/2
5	MAY 18 PSG Meetings # 2	MAY 19 CASEA Group Session 4 CASEA Co-parent Session 1, 5:00-6:00pm	MAY 20 PFA Meeting 7:00pm Newsletter	MAY 21 PFA Rolling Pin Pie Drive Delivery Music Bus F-2 Gymnastics Incursion	MAY 22 CHESS CLUB
6	MAY 25 3:00pm School Assembly (3/4 Garnet)	MAY 26 CASEA Group Session 5	MAY 27 NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK (27/5-3/6)	MAY 28 Music Bus F-2 Gymnastics Incursion	MAY 29 CHESS CLUB Fresh Fruit Friday Parish Mass 10:00am Foundation and Yr 5/6
7	JUNE 1	JUNE 2 CASEA Group Session 6	JUNE 3 Newsletter	JUNE 4 Music Bus F-2 Gymnastics Incursion	JUNE 5 STUDENT FREE DAY
8	JUNE 8 SCHOOL CLOSED King's Birthday PUBLIC HOLIDAY	JUNE 9 CASEA Group Session 7 CASEA – Parent Information Session; 2:15-3:15pm	JUNE 10 PSG Meetings # 3 SAC Meeting 7:00pm	JUNE 11 PSG Meetings # 4 Music Bus F-2 Gymnastics Incursion	JUNE 12 CHESS CLUB Lunch Order Day—PIZZA Cello's Pizzeria
9	JUNE 15 TRP Connected Parenting Online Forum; 6:30pm (Information to follow)	JUNE 16 P&T Conversations; 3:30- 6:00pm CASEA Group Session 8	JUNE 17 Newsletter P&T Conversations; 3:30- 6:00pm	JUNE 18 Music Bus	JUNE 19 CHESS CLUB Final
10	JUNE 22 3:00pm School Assembly (Foundation Coral)	JUNE 23 MILO's BIRTHDAY— Foundation CASEA Group Session 9 SCHOOL REPORTS available to families on nForma Portal	JUNE 24 OPEN Classrooms; 3:15- 4:15pm	JUNE 25 Music Bus Final Seussical the Musical by GSODA Players, opt in excursion for school choir.	JUNE 26 End of Term 2 Students Dismissed at 1:00pm

CHESS CLASS DETAILS at St Mary's School

DAY: FRIDAY

TIME: 1:35-2:15pm

LOCATION: Upstairs

COST: \$145 per child, per term

[Chessforschools](#)

The Music Bus Enrolments

If your child wishes to join lessons in 2026, please complete the EOI link below:

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

Lessons are available at school in Keyboard, Guitar, Ukulele, Drums and vocals.

Lessons will be held on a Thursday morning.

Additional info and online bookings via www.themusicbus.com.au

St Mary's School 2026 Sacramental Dates



Sacrament of First Eucharist (Yr 4)

Sunday 9 August
2:30pm, St Mary's Basilica



Sacrament of Penance (Yr 3)

Friday 27 November
12:00pm, St Mary's School

2026 SCHOOL DATES

Term 2
20 April to 26 June

Term 3
13 July to 18 September

Term 4
5 October to 18 December

Last day for students 15/12

2026 STUDENT FREE Days

TERM 2

Monday 20 April
Tuesday 21 April
Friday 5 June

TERM 3

Friday 14 August
Monday 17 August

TERM 4

Monday 16 November
Wednesday 16 December
Thursday 17 December

2026 SCHOOL CLOSURE Days

TERM 1

Monday 9 March; Labour Day
Friday 3 April; Good Friday

TERM 2

Monday 8 June; Monarch's Birthday

TERM 4

Monday 2 November
Tuesday 3 November; Melbourne Cup
Friday 18 December

Term 3 and 4: Upcoming School Events

Thursday 13 August
Wednesday 19 August
Tuesday 1 September
Wednesday 9 September
Thursday 10 September
November 9-11
November 12

ART SHOW
BOOKWEEK PARADE
Father's Day Breakfast & Liturgy
Year 3/4 Day Camp
Year 3/4 Staff & Student Free Day
Year 5/6 Camp
Year 5/6 Staff & Student Free Day



Project Compassion Boxes were due to the school office by **Friday 24 April**, if you have a box to return, please do so by **Thursday 7 May**.

Thank you for your support.

Physical Education Participation

Student Injury Updates

If your child has an injury that will affect participation in Physical Education lessons, please confirm and provide details in writing, by emailing, Mr Nic Coots: ncoots@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au and your child's classroom teacher.

Wellbeing



Bernie Hellard
Learning Diversity
Mental Health &
Wellbeing Leader



Nicholas Coots
Wellbeing
Leader, Physical
Education
Teacher



Alice Szeto
Provisional
Psychologist

Parent Information Session

Understanding Children's Behaviour

Hosted by Barwon Health, CASEA Program

Tuesday 12 May

2:15pm - 3:15pm

Upstairs in the school library

To register your attendance

Please email Bernie Hellard

bhellard@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au



The **Barwon Health** Children's Mental Health and Schools Early Action (CASEA) Program will be hosting an information session to help our parent community to understand their children's behaviour.

This parent session will explore:

- Why children's behaviour can become challenging
- What is happening in the brain when children feel overwhelmed
- How emotions affect behaviour
- Practical ways adults can support children during difficult moments

All parents and caregivers are welcome.

This week's
GEM chat
focus is
EMPATHY



Think about how you were **kind** today.

What did you do and how do you feel thinking about it?



RESILIENCE PROJECT

District Cross Country

Congratulations to the students who participated in the District Cross Country on Monday 4 May. The following students have progressed to the Division Cross Country: **Michaela, Jacob, Alfie C, Harvey C, Clementine, Florence, Augustus, Jack M, Olivia U.**

Pictured are place getters (l-r); Olivia U, Clementine, Alfie and Jacob.



St Mary's School is committed to
Child Safety.

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



Rolling Pin Pie Drive

ORDERS ARE NOW OPEN for the **St Mary's School Rolling Pin Drive (Order from sent home via nForma in Week 2). Pies will be delivered to the school on Thursday 21 May.** This was a great fundraiser for the P&FA in 2025, and we had some really positive feedback that the pies were delicious and a great way to fill the freezer for an easy dinner.

ORDERS CLOSE WEDNESDAY 13 May to the School Office.

Order forms are attached to the nForma Newsletter notice.

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENTS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION

Volunteers Needed



👤 Volunteers Needed – Please Register Below

Our events simply cannot run without parent and caregiver support. Whether you can spare one hour or several, we would truly appreciate your help.

Example of Volunteer tasks include:

Sorting and handing out fundraiser orders (Cookie Dough/Mangoes/Pies)
Special lunch order day assistance at school.

Running or assisting with art show BBQ, cake stall/other food stall.

Event co-ordinator (Co-ordinating fundraisers online or major events, Trivia Night or Bunnings BBQ) Please contact us by email if you are interested.

Designing fliers or posters for events.

Communicating with fundraising providers, setting up trybooking events.

Trivia Night – Term 4

Volunteers are needed to source and collect donations for the silent auction. Please contact the PGFA email if you can assist with collecting 2-3 donations of Wine/ Vouchers or Items for auction from local businesses. Many hands make light work!

Co-ordinators needed – We need a second person to assist with co-ordinating the night and a person to co-ordinate the wine wall donations. Please get in touch if you can help!

👉 Please register your availability here:

Or email

pfa@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au

Even small amounts of time make a big difference, and volunteering is a wonderful way to connect with other families in our school community.



STEIGEN School Socks

The New custom school sock is available to purchase from the school.

Students will have the option to wear plain navy socks or the Steigen school sock as part of their school uniform (including sports).

Upcoming sale dates on the school atrium (8:30 to 8:50am):

- 7, 11 and 15 May
- \$15 per pair
- EFTPOS only

Second Hand Uniform

Please contact the PFA for second hand uniform orders via

pfauniforms@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au

[Pricelist](#)

MELI

Join us for Open Day at
**Normanby Street
Preschool**

Monday 18 May
4.15pm - 5.15pm




**SUPPORTING CHILDREN
ONLINE + AI**

**FREE
FAMILY
FORUM**

7.00PM - 9.00PM TUESDAY 19 MAY
POA BANYUL COMMUNITY HUB: 110 UNITY DR, MOUNT DUNED VIC

Technology keeps changing — but the need for calm, confident family conversations hasn't.

This practical forum explores life online and with AI, supporting families to navigate screens, relationships and digital boundaries with confidence.

Presented by City of Greater Geelong & BATForce.

To register, simply scan the QR code




**Year 7 2027
enrolment
applications
now open.**



Applications for Year 7 2027 close on Friday May 8th. Families seeking an outstanding secondary Catholic co-education for their young person are invited to complete their application via this link --> <https://enrol.ignatius.vic.edu.au/enrolment-application/start>

Enrol to learn. Graduate to lead.



ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE GEELONG

YEAR 7 2027 ENROLMENTS

Enrolments for Year 7 in 2027 are now open and will **close on Friday, 8 May 2026**. If you believe Joeys is the right place for your son, we encourage you to submit an application before the deadline.

Visit the College website to access the enrolment page. If you have any questions, please contact our College Registrar at registrar@sjc.vic.edu.au

sjc.vic.edu.au