

### Principal News



Annice Lappin  
Principal

Dear Families,

Last week, the Year 5/6 students, teachers and myself enjoyed a fabulous three days at **Camp Kangaroo** in Princetown. It is a camp that St Mary's School has attended every second year for many years. I am delighted to once again share that it was a fantastic experience and the students were a pleasure to accompany. Throughout the camp and on our return, all the adults agreed and commented on how the students were remarkable both in terms of participation and behaviour. The camp provided an opportunity for learning beyond the classroom with a variety of team building activities, outdoor adventures and lots of fun! It was great to witness the students' cooperation and positivity throughout the entire experience, even when we encountered some very cool, wet and windy weather! Thank you to all the adults who attended, making this experience possible. I hope that if your child attended, they have shared with you all the highlights. There are many photos on our social media platforms if you would like to see what the students enjoyed throughout the three days.

This Friday, many of our Year 3 students will receive God's forgiveness through the **Sacrament of Penance** through the celebration of Reconciliation. Please pray for these children as they take this important step on the Sacramental journey.

**The Colour Run is fast approaching!** This is a much loved family event, supported by the Parents and Friends' Association and the final opportunity to raise funds for our school in 2025. Please purchase your \$10 Family ticket via the **Trybooking link**. We hope to see as many families there as possible. It will be a fabulous school community event to celebrate the end of a wonderful school year!

A huge thank you to **Louise Phillips** who coordinated the P&FA Tea Towels. Thank you also to everyone who supported this fundraiser.

In staffing news, congratulations to **Ms Brodie Thulborn** and her partner Andrew Wilson on the birth of their daughter, Lainey. We hope they are enjoying this precious time together.

A reminder that the **'Thank You Morning Tea'** will be hosted on Thursday, 11 December from 9:00am until 10:00am. Please respond to the Operoo for catering purposes. You may like to bring your own morning coffee.

This year, St Mary's School will again be partnering with the **Bay Leaf Community Kitchen** to assist in providing hundreds of quality Christmas food and toy hampers to Geelong's most vulnerable families. The Bay Leaf Community Kitchen is a local charity that supports families experi-

encing health, financial and emotional crises. The Geelong based charity helps local families by providing free family meals and other much needed support. They're about spreading love and inspiring positive change. Their ministry is ongoing and supports many families, including families in our St Mary's School community. To spread some extra joy and love at Christmas, our St Mary's School staff, students and families are invited to donate Christmas food items to go into their food hampers. Examples include chocolates, savoury/sweet biscuits, condiments, chips, long-life custards, puddings, etc. A collection point will be set up for food items in the school's administration area.

Alternatively, or as well as, you may choose to donate vouchers from local stores, eg, Kmart, Target, Rebel Sport. These vouchers will be distributed with hampers to families so they can purchase items of their choice, for under their Christmas tree. These generous gifts can be delivered to the school's administration area and will be collected from the school on Wednesday, 17 December. You may also, or instead of, choose to make a donation via direct deposit to the Bay Leaf Community Kitchen: BSB: 633000, Account Number: 168394740

**Some of our senior students, Amelia, Sophia and Nikita are also organising a raffle to raise funds for The Bay Leaf Community Kitchen.** Tickets are \$1.00 each and they will be selling tickets on various days from tomorrow until Friday 12 December. If you would like to purchase any raffle tickets, please send the money in an envelope to school, clearly labelled.

2026 Class lists are now finalised. This year, we have again used a computer program with many parameters entered, to allocate students to classes. This is to ensure the best possible combinations of students. Our leadership team and teachers then review these combinations and to ensure all areas required for setting students up for success have been considered. As St Mary's School has open and flexible classrooms, students are in the privileged position of interacting with everyone in the year level cohort and all the teachers and LSOs in the learning space on a daily basis.

As a lovely end to this week, on Friday, all students will be invited to make and enjoy their own salad sandwich, with all ingredients provided by the school. Students will be able to choose fillings on their sandwich, ranging from ham, cheese, lettuce, carrot and tomato on white bread.

Kind regards, Annice

### School Links

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.



## Sacrament of Penance

Dear Families,

This term, many of our students have been preparing to receive the **Sacrament of Penance**, through reconciliation. This is a very special step in their faith journey, as it offers them the opportunity to experience God's mercy and forgiveness in a personal way. Through this Sacrament, our students learn that God is always ready to welcome us back when we make mistakes and that we are called to reflect this same spirit of forgiveness in our own lives.

**The Gospel reading that will be read during this Sacrament is:**

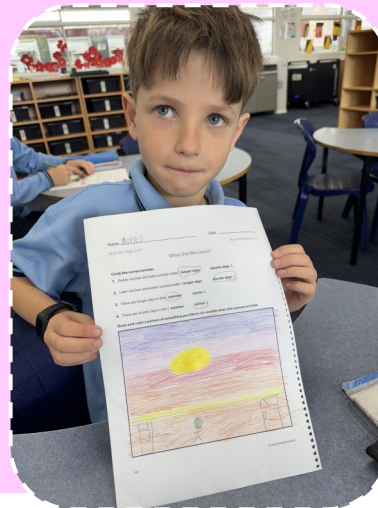
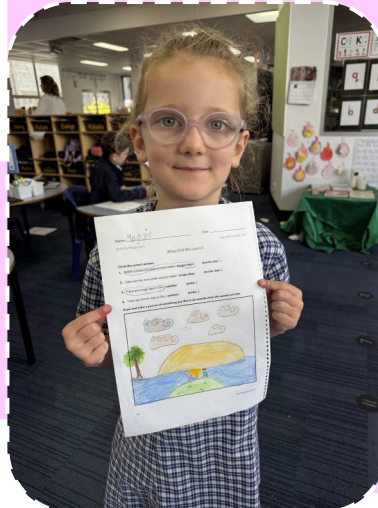
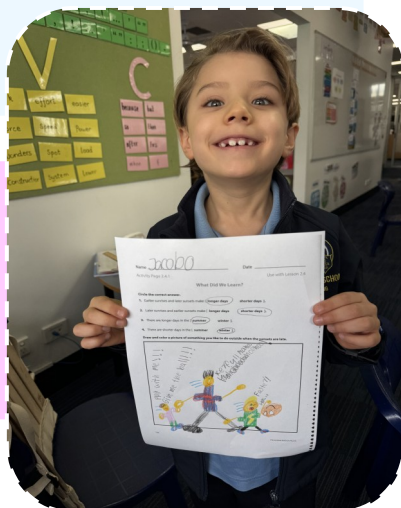
*The Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11–32), more commonly known as the Parable of the Prodigal Son. In this story, Jesus tells of a son who leaves his father, makes poor choices and feels unworthy of returning home. Yet when he does return, the father welcomes him with open arms, showing love, compassion and unconditional forgiveness. This parable reminds us that no matter what we have done, God's love is greater and we are always invited to return to Him.*

For our students, this Gospel passage is especially meaningful as they prepare for Penance. In class, their teachers have guided them to reflect on the story and think about how it connects to their own lives. Just like the son in the parable, they recognise moments when they have made choices that have not shown love or kindness and they see how important it is to say sorry and to make things right again. This Gospel helps them to understand that God always welcomes us back with love and that we are also called to forgive others and begin again.

We ask our whole school community to keep these students in your prayers as they prepare to receive the Sacrament of Penance for the first time on **Friday 21 November**. May this be a joyful and faith-filled moment where they come to know more deeply the peace and mercy of God.

Warm Regards,

Deborah Boland



## Spotlight into Learning Year 1/2

**This term, our Year 1/2 students have been exploring the fascinating topic of the Sun, Moon and Stars.** Through hands-on activities, stories and observations, students are discovering how these objects appear to move and change in predictable ways.

We've been learning about the sun and its patterns, including how it rises in the east and sets in the west, creating the daily rhythm of day and night. Students are also observing how the times of sunrise and sunset change throughout the year, giving us the longer days of summer and shorter days of winter.

Our young astronomers are also learning about the moon: how it changes shape over time in a repeating cycle called the lunar phases and how it appears to move across the night sky.

By exploring these predictable patterns in the sky, Year 1/2 students are beginning to understand how Earth's movement and position in space affect what we see each day and night.



## Term 4 School Calendar, 2025

| Week | Monday                                                                                                   | Tuesday                                                                                                                                                         | Wednesday                                                                                                              | Thursday                                                                                                                                       | Friday                                                                                                                         |                      |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 7    | <b>NOV 17</b><br><b>STUDENT FREE DAY</b>                                                                 | NOV 18                                                                                                                                                          | NOV 19<br>Newsletter<br><b>PSG Meetings #2</b>                                                                         | NOV 20<br>Parish Mass, Year 3/4<br>10:00am                                                                                                     | NOV 21<br><b>Healthy Food Day</b> ~ Salad<br>Sandwiches for Students<br><b>Sacrament of Penance</b><br>(Yr3) 12:00pm at School |                      |
| 8    | NOV 24<br>3:00pm School<br>Assembly (Year 1/2)<br><b>CHESS CLUB</b>                                      | NOV 25<br>Foundation 2026<br>Students—Transition<br>to School #2; 9:15-<br>10:30am                                                                              | NOV 26<br><b>SAC Meeting; 7:00pm</b><br>Advent Prayer Service,<br>8:55am                                               | NOV 27<br>Parish Mass, Year 5/6<br>10:00am<br><b>Music Bus</b>                                                                                 | NOV 28<br><b>CHESS CLUB</b>                                                                                                    | 1st Sunday<br>Advent |
| 9    | DEC 1<br><b>PFA Mango</b><br><b>Fundraiser Delivery</b><br><b>Week</b>                                   | DEC 2                                                                                                                                                           | DEC 3<br>PFA Meeting, AGM;<br>6:30 pm<br>Newsletter<br>Advent Prayer Service,<br>8:55am                                | DEC 4<br><b>Bravehearts</b><br>Foundation—Year 2<br><b>PSG Meetings #3</b><br><b>PFA Colour Run; 5:00-</b><br>7:00pm<br><b>Final Music Bus</b> | DEC 5<br><b>FINAL CHESS CLUB</b><br><b>Choir Excursion 12:30pm</b>                                                             | 2nd Sunday<br>Advent |
| 10   | DEC 8<br>3:00pm School<br>Assembly (Foundation)                                                          | DEC 9<br><b>Step Up Transition</b><br>Day; 9:00-11:00am<br><b>Foundation Transition</b><br>#3; 9:15-10:30am<br><b>Open Classrooms; 3:15</b><br><b>to 4:15pm</b> | DEC 10<br>Advent Prayer Service,<br>8:55am<br><b>Semester 2 School</b><br><b>Reports emailed to</b><br><b>families</b> | DEC 11<br><b>Thank you morning</b><br><b>tea; 9:00am for</b><br><b>parents/volunteers</b><br>Year 1/2 Excursion<br>Year 5/6 Excursion          | DEC 12<br><b>2026 School Captain</b><br><b>Photo; 9:00am</b><br>Foundation Excursion                                           | 3rd Sunday<br>Advent |
| 11   | DEC 15<br>Year 6 Graduation<br>Liturgy; 5:00pm<br>Advent Prayer Service,<br>8:55am<br>Year 3/4 Excursion | DEC 16<br>End of Term 4 for<br>Students; 1:00pm<br>Dismissal<br><b>Assembly 12:15pm</b>                                                                         | DEC 17<br><b>STUDENT FREE DAY</b>                                                                                      | DEC 18<br><b>STUDENT FREE DAY</b>                                                                                                              | DEC 19<br>School Closed                                                                                                        | 4th Sunday<br>Advent |

## 2026 SCHOOL DATES

**Term 1**  
27 January -  
2 April

**Term 2**  
20 April -  
26 June

**Term 3**  
13 July-  
18 September

**Term 4**  
5 October -  
18 December

**28 January**

**Students Commence School**

**Foundation 2027 Student Enrolments Open**

**30 January**

Beginning of Year Parish Mass; 10:00am

**27 February**

Whole School Photo Day

**2-6 March**

F-4 Swimming Program

**23 March**

School Cross Country Year 3-6

**2 April**

**Last Day of Term 1**

3 April

Good Friday

2026 Term 1 School Calendar will be published in Week 9 newsletter.

Student Free Days and School Closure Days are yet to be announced, once confirmed by MACS.



Ciao,

As we approach the end of the year and the Christmas season, I would like to share some Italian Christmas poems and carols with you, which will be included in the final three editions of the St Mary's School newsletter.

Buona settimana!

## Un Abete Speciale di Gianni Rodari (Italian)

Quest'anno mi voglio fare  
un albero di Natale  
di tipo speciale,  
ma bello veramente.  
Non lo farò in tinello,  
lo farò nella mente,  
con centomila rami  
e un miliardo di lampadine,  
e tutti i doni  
che non stanno nelle vetrine.  
Un raggio di sole  
per il passero che trema,  
un ciuffo di viole  
per il prato gelato,  
un aumento di pensione  
per il vecchio pensionato.  
E poi giochi,  
giocattoli, balocchi  
quanti ne puoi contare  
a spalancare gli occhi:  
un milione, cento milioni  
di bellissimi doni  
per quei bambini  
che non ebbero mai  
un regalo di Natale,  
e per loro ogni giorno  
all'altro è uguale,  
e non è mai festa.  
Perché se un bimbo  
resta senza niente,  
anche uno solo, piccolo,  
che piangere non si sente,  
Natale è tutto sbagliato.



## A Special Fir Tree by Gianni Rodari (English)

This year I want to make  
a Christmas Tree  
of a special kind,  
but really beautiful.  
I won't make it in the living room,  
I'll make it in my mind,  
with a hundred thousand branches  
and a billion of lights,  
and all the presents  
that aren't in the shop windows.  
A ray of sun  
for the trembling sparrow,  
a tuft of violets  
for the frozen lawn,  
an increase in pension  
for the old pensioner.  
And then games,  
toys, playthings  
as many as you can count  
with your eyes wide open:  
one million, one hundred million  
beautiful gifts  
for those children  
who never had  
a Christmas present,  
for whom each day  
is like any another,  
and is never a holiday.  
Because if a child  
is left without anything,  
even a single little one,  
whose crying is not heard,  
Christmas is all wrong.



## Brayden captures Jamie's Heart

**Brayden** (1/2 Crystal) hugs **Jamie Melham** winning jockey in this year's Melbourne Cup.

Past and present Royal Children's Hospital patients were honoured by the jockeys and Victoria Racing Club dignitaries in the Flemington Mounting yard as part of Oaks Day festivities, and in support of the Good Friday Appeal.

Brayden has had two major heart surgeries and is under care at RCH.



### Supporting Your Child for Transition to a new class

As the end of the school year approaches, many children begin thinking about what their new class will be like next year. It's completely normal for students to feel a mix of excitement and nerves during this transition. As a parent, your support can make a significant difference in helping your child feel prepared and confident.

[Here are some practical ways you can help:](#)

#### 1. Talk Openly About the Change

Begin gentle conversations about next year. Ask your child how they're feeling about going into a new class and listen without judgement. Reassure them that it's normal to feel unsure and that many children feel the same way as they are.

#### 2. Focus on the Positives

Highlight things they can look forward to—new learning experiences, new classmates, fun events, or opportunities to grow. Remind them of times they've successfully handled change before, looking at this year for example.

#### 3. On step up day

Remember that 'step up day' is approaching, make sure your child is at school to attend this important time. Seeing the new space and meeting the next year's teacher can reduce anxiety and build familiarity going into a new year.

#### 4. Establish Predictability at Home

Children cope better with change when their home routines feel stable. Consistent sleep, morning routines, and restful weekends, can help your child feel secure even when school changes.

#### 5. Practise Independence Skills

Help your child build confidence by encouraging age-appropriate independence—packing their own bag, organising materials, or making simple decisions that will help them next year. Feeling capable reduces worry.

#### 6. Share Strategies for Managing Nerves

Teach your child simple strategies such as deep breathing, counting to ten, squeezing a stress ball, or quietly repeating a positive phrase like "I can do this."

#### 7. Stay Positive and Calm

Children often take cues from the adults around them. Speaking positively about the upcoming change and showing confidence in your child's ability to cope can strongly influence how they feel. Reduce the amount of talk they may hear from you and other adults, especially if you are worried as well.

A little preparation and plenty of reassurance goes a long way. With your support, your child can begin the new school year feeling ready, confident, and excited for what's ahead.

If after the 'step up day' your child is experiencing ongoing worry, reach out to their current teacher. Staff can offer additional reassurance, practical support, or keep an extra eye out during the transition period.



**Bernie Hellard**  
Learning Diversity  
Mental Health &  
Wellbeing Leader



**Nicholas Coots**  
Wellbeing  
Leader, Physical  
Education  
Teacher

Barwon Health CASEA

(Children's mental health and Schools Early Action)



Your family would have recently received the **Barwon Health CASEA** information including a consent form and questionnaire via an envelope sent from the school. If additional consent forms are needed please see Bernie.

Thank you to those families who would like to take up this offer and have returned this to the school already.

GEM Chat  
this week is  
**Mindfulness**



Look at or walk around your environment. What are:

4 things you can **see**, 3 things you can **hear**, 2 things you can **touch**, 1 thing you can **smell**?



THE RESILIENCE PROJECT.



ST MARY'S SCHOOL  
GEELONG

**St Mary's School is committed to Child Safety.**  
We promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children.

# Keeping our kids safe online: A partnership with families

## Dear Parents and Carers,

You may have heard about upcoming government changes in the law regarding social media accounts for children under the age of 16, which will take effect on 10 December 2025.

We are committed to understanding these new changes and working with you to ensure our students have a safe and positive digital life.

### Why are these changes happening?

The new rules are all about protecting our under-16s. Many social media platforms have inbuilt design features that can:

- encourage too much screen time (like non-stop notifications or content that disappears)
- expose children to upsetting, inappropriate or difficult content through their feeds.

Experts have linked these features to problems for young people, including increased stress, less sleep, and trouble concentrating.

### What is the goal?

These changes give us all a chance to help our children by:

- learning about the positive aspects of being online and the things they need to be careful of
- building their digital, social, and emotional skills so they can navigate the online world confidently and safely
- knowing where to seek help if they see or experience anything that worries them.

### Are you ready to partner with us?

While social media platforms have the main responsibility to enforce [the age restriction](#), we all play a part in teaching our children to be safe online.

The best strategies are:

- **Clear communication** – talking openly with your child about their online activities
- **Effective teaching** – helping them understand online safety rules
- **Positive modelling** – showing what responsible and kind online behaviour looks like
- **Mindful timing** – holding off purchasing your child a smart phone.

## PFA News

### Parents & Friends' Volunteer Register

The PFA raises funds for school resources, equipment and programs and organises social events for the school community. Many parents have expressed they are not able to attend P&FA meetings but could be available to assist by volunteering.

Please complete this [form](#) if you are happy to be included on a register of volunteers.

## Quick facts about the upcoming changes



## Social media age restrictions

### New rules for under-16s

Popular platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X, and YouTube may soon restrict account access for students under 16.

Other platforms may be added to the list impacted by the legislation.

### What's still accessible

- Public content that doesn't require login.
- Educational platforms like Google Classroom and YouTube Kids.
- YouTube videos that can be viewed without signing in.

### What it means for schools

- Schools may need to explore new ways to communicate with students and families.
- Teachers can still share age-appropriate educational content to support learning.

Learn more at the [eSafety Commissioner's Social Media Age Restrictions Hub](https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions-hub)  
[www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions-hub](https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions-hub)

We will continue to update you as more guidance is provided. In the meantime, we encourage every family to subscribe to the [eSafety Commissioner alerts](#) so you can remain informed about the legislation change and ongoing digital trends.

Let's work together to help our children become safe, skilled and responsible digital citizens, who can navigate the online world with confidence and care.

Annice Lappin  
Principal

ST MARY'S SCHOOL PARENTS & FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION  
WOULD LIKE TO SAY

*Thank you* to all our school families  
and staff who ordered our  
2025 St Mary's School tea towel.  
It looks fabulous!  
We raised \$747 to go towards our  
new playground.



St Mary's School  
Parents & Friends' Association  
invite you to our

# Colour Run & Family Picnic 2025

**Thursday 4th December | 5pm - 7pm**

**COST: \$10 FAMILY TICKET**

To be purchased via TryBooking - email will be sent out.  
Funds to go towards our new playground!

**TryBooking  
Link**

*Please  
Note New  
Venue*

## VENUE:

**Geelong City Soccer Club  
Howard Glover Reserve**

5 Limeburners Rd,  
East Geelong 3219  
(off the Portarlington Highway).

## COLOUR RUN begins at 5:30pm

There will be hot chips and hot dogs  
available to purchase at the canteen,  
or BYO Picnic Dinner to enjoy before  
and/or after the run.

Some St Mary's School staff will be in attendance, but not supervising students.  
Families are responsible for the supervision of their children.



Students can wear  
white t-shirts or any light  
coloured old clothes



## HAPPY GELATI ICE CREAM TRUCK

will be there, so bring some  
money for an ice cream!



Bring mosquito repellent  
as the mozzies can be bad  
down near the gardens!



ST MARY'S PARENTS & FRIENDS  
2025 TRIVIA NIGHT

thank you

FOR YOUR SUPPORT

2025 TRIVIA NIGHT 2025 TRIVIA NIGHT 2025 TRIVIA NIGHT 2025 TRIVIA NIGHT 2025



MEET  
ME  
AT  
MARY'S

WINSTON  
& CO  
CAFE

ARMSTRONG  
FITNESS  
0403750202

Teonie Humphrey  
HAIRDRESSING

LUXE  
GLOW  
24/7 TANNING



loulet design  
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

WIZARD  
CAR WASH

A SPECIAL MENTION AND THANK YOU TO OUR  
SCHOOL FAMILIES' BUSINESSES WHO DONATED  
TO OUR TRIVIA NIGHT!

# Help shape our long-term strategies

**Complete the survey**  
for your chance to win a  
**\$100 gift card!**

## Survey now open, have your say on our future

Barwon Water services a region that is an amazing place to live, work and play. We're proud to play our part in making our region great.

Long-term planning is critical to deliver sustainable, affordable and innovative services that support thriving communities.

We need your help to shape our exciting next period of growth and transition.

We want to hear your ideas and priorities, as we plan our next long-term strategies – Strategy 2040, Urban Water Strategy 2027 and Price Submission 2028-2033.

The survey is easy to undertake and should take no longer than 14 minutes to complete.

The survey is open until 5pm, Monday 24 November 2025.  
Hard copies are available on request.

As a token of our gratitude for your participation, you'll have the option to go in the draw to win one of ten \$100 gift cards.

To learn more and have your say, please visit:  
[www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/strategies](http://www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/strategies)



1300 656 007 | [info@barwonwater.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@barwonwater.vic.gov.au) | [www.barwonwater.vic.gov.au](http://www.barwonwater.vic.gov.au) | [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [n](#)



POTTERY STUDIO-EVENTS & GALLERY

## School Holiday's Pottery & Craft Sessions

Tues 30th Dec 1-4pm Kids Pottery Class  
Tues 6th Jan 1-4pm Kids Pottery Class

Additional classes will be listed on these dates and other dates if these book out. Adults may book a spot for themselves to join in and make something as well. You can either stay or drop off.

**\$55 per person for 2 hours. Includes clay, colours, glazes and 2 kiln firings.**

To book visit the website <https://hazytales.com/events/events-calendar/>

These are a few of the other things we do at Hazy Tales Studio:  
Bespoke Pottery Parties for Adults & Kids. Custom events. Hen parties.  
Adult evening 'Clay & Cocktails by Candlelight'. Porcelain products & jewellery for sale.

16 MAYALL WAY, DRYSDALE, BELLARINE [sally@hazytales.com](mailto:sally@hazytales.com) 0439 709 492  
[www.hazytales.com](http://www.hazytales.com)



# 2027 ENROLMENTS ARE NOW OPEN

## Open Tour Dates:

- MONDAY 16 MARCH 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM
- TUESDAY 17 MARCH 11.00 AM – 12.30 PM
- WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 9.00 AM – 10.30 AM
- WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM
- THURSDAY 19 MARCH 9.00 AM – 10.30 AM

**ENROL ONLINE NOW**

[IONA.VIC.EDU.AU](http://IONA.VIC.EDU.AU)



Applications for Year 7 in 2027 at Iona College are now open. Families are warmly invited to attend one of the 2026 Tour and Information Sessions to hear from Principal Damian McKew, learn more about life at the college and explore the campus.

Enrolments can be submitted online at [iona.vic.edu.au](http://iona.vic.edu.au)