



**ST MARY'S SCHOOL**  
GEE LONG



MELBOURNE  
ARCHDIOCESE  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

# St Mary's School Geelong

2021

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 549

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## Contact Details

ADDRESS	66-68 Little Myers Street Geelong VIC 3220
PRINCIPAL	Annice Lappin
GOVERNING AUTHORITY	Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd
TELEPHONE	03 5229 9453
EMAIL	principal@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au
WEBSITE	www.smgeelong.catholic.edu.au
E NUMBER	E1056

## Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Annice Lappin, attest that St Mary's School is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2021 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.

06/04/2022

**NOTE:** The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

## Governing Authority Report

2021 has been a momentous year for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, with Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) assuming governance and operations of 290 schools which previously operated under unincorporated structures.

MACS was established to ensure these schools continue the mission of Catholic education to proclaim the Good News while equipping our young people with the education, knowledge, skills and hope to live meaningful lives and enrich the world around them.

Our schools were again asked this year to respond to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. Although asked to implement many measures to keep our staff and students safe, our schools were able to continue delivering a high-quality Catholic education through the resilience and dedication of our principals, school leaders and teachers.

Alongside this important work, we were also able to deliver a new policy suite for schools to ensure our students are safe and which enhance the consistency and transparency of school decision-making, while preserving school autonomy and respecting the local context of our schools.

School Advisory Councils have been established to actively support the principal and embed the life of the local Church in the life of each school. It has been wonderful to see so many parents and members of the wider parish community engaged in these critical forums.

Thank you for the support you have given our schools in 2021. We look forward to continuing to work with you as we strive to provide the young people of the Archdiocese of Melbourne with the best kind of education possible, one that fosters a formation of the whole person that is deeply and enduringly humanising.

Yours sincerely

Jim Miles

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

## Our School Vision

Following Jesus and His mother, Mary, we aspire to be a just, compassionate and inclusive learning community, striving to be the best we can be.

## School Overview

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, is part of St Mary of the Angels' Parish Geelong and is set on a one hectare site, adjacent to St Mary's Basilica and situated in the central business district of the City of Greater Geelong. The school is one of the oldest in the Geelong area, established in 1842. The school has operated from various locations and in 2010 the school was relocated from its previous site in Myers Street, to the current site, in Little Myers Street. St Mary's is one of four Catholic primary schools in the largest parish of Geelong, St Mary of the Angels. Fr. James Clarke is our parish priest.

The school buildings incorporate many modern features to support contemporary learning and teaching approaches. The two-storey building, while compact, includes four large learning areas, currently housing twelve class groupings that are flexible in design allowing for differentiated learning. Each learning area has its own library and resource area. There is a multi-purpose area, an administration wing, meeting spaces, planning room, a staff room and a large undercover atrium. A lift is available to the second level and ramps provide easy access.

The school site has been carefully landscaped to provide two adventure playgrounds, grassed playing areas, an asphalt playing area, attractive gardens and seating areas. An adjacent drive-thru on the property provides easy access for parents to drop off and pick up children at the beginning and end of the school day.

The school's central location provides opportunities for students to use many of the outstanding educational facilities that the City of Greater Geelong has to offer. Our location is further complemented by the visible presence of our Parish Church, St Mary of the Angels' Basilica. St Mary's School provides an inclusive education for girls and boys from Foundation to Year 6 with enrolments in 2021 totalling 236 students. There are two straight Foundation classes with multi-age structures from Year One to Year Six.

A comprehensive curriculum based on the VicCurriculum, is taught as well as Religious Education in the Catholic Faith as set by the Archdiocese of Melbourne. St Mary's School remains diligent in working to achieve the goals and targets identified in the School Improvement Plan across the five spheres of; Religious Dimension, Learning and Teaching, Student Wellbeing, Leadership and Management and School Community.

St Mary's School values the strong and supportive relationship we enjoy with our parent community. The quality partnerships between home and school benefit the students' learning and wellbeing. Many opportunities for parents to be involved in our school and their child(ren)'s learning, are offered. Our supportive Parents and Friends' Association, are strong contributors both financially and in community building. Their efforts are integral to the success of St Mary's School. The School Advisory Council meets regularly and continues to provide an effective voice of the parent community as members include a representative from each of the year levels, the Principal and Deputy Principal, and an independent Chairperson. The School Advisory Council has the capacity to influence outcomes as it provides a wide range of viewpoints on many matters. The strong spirit of partnership between our parents, teachers, students and the wider community remains a satisfying aspect of our school. As a Catholic school we strive to demonstrate our commitment to our faith and provide living examples of God's loving care for all people.

## Principal's Report

I am delighted to present the 2021 Annual Report to our school community. 2021 began with uncertainty about what it would bring, particularly with the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although challenges arose, as a school community we faced any adversity with faith, positivity and hope. As a community, we remained solution focused to ensure the 2021 school year was very successful and rewarding for all at St Mary's School.

Our Foundation enrolments were 36, contributing to a total student enrolment of 236. This is again testament to the high regard in which St Mary's School is held. Some new classroom teachers and specialist teachers also commenced at St Mary's School, bringing with them, a wealth of experience, fresh innovative and dynamic ideas.

The focus for the teaching staff continued to be an increased expectation of quality teaching and learning experiences for students, differentiated to meet each student's individual needs. At St Mary's School we aim to focus on 100% of students, 100% of the time. All staff are dedicated to providing a learning environment that suits the needs of our students.

Our families, staff and wider community work together to provide an engaging learning community where students can thrive. The Respectful Relationships program, which supports schools to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours, again was an initiative that positively contributed to our student wellbeing sphere. It teaches our students how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. This program added value to our strong wellbeing culture and inclusive practices.

The 2021 school year was disrupted due to regional and statewide lockdowns and remote learning mandates for children of non-essential workers. St Mary's School remained open and supervised students of essential workers, onsite. Students who were also considered vulnerable were also invited to attend onsite. In total, approximately 25 to 60 students attended school, onsite each day.

Our home learning and remote learning catered to the needs of all students and community action days, wellbeing days and specialist days ensured that a balance was achieved. It was wonderful to be able to welcome all students back to onsite learning after each lockdown. Their happy faces, laughter and enthusiasm for learning was a great indication that being back at school would be both enjoyable and productive.

Once all students were able to attend onsite, our educators were very aware that teaching and learning needed to be strategic and that our students' wellbeing also needed to be prioritised. There was again, the need for a fine balance of 'making up for lost learning' and having 'achievable expectations of our students', many of whom had worked extremely hard at home over during the remote learning periods.

Our educators continued to plan rich and rigorous units of learning for all students and term overviews were communicated with all parents/carers. Time to focus on student wellbeing was also provided. Throughout the year, school staff continued to go above and beyond to meet the students' numerous needs.

Our school camps were able to proceed, giving students the opportunity to experience learning and social activities in a camp setting. Year 3/4 students enjoyed Sovereign Hill, and our Year 5/6 students loved the camp experience at Kangarooobie.

Some 2021 programs, initiatives and events that involved many members of our community including, students, parents, families and the local community working together, proceeded, including:

School Advisory Council meetings

Parents and Friends' Association meetings

Fundraising and Friendraising Events (Chocolate Drive, Easter Raffle, Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts, Color Run.)

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program (modified)

School Assemblies (Limited)

Italian Immersion Program

Professional Development for all staff

Program Support Meetings with parents of students with additional needs (Zoom)

Excursions

School Sporting Events

Whole School Athletics

Camps

Pre-service Teachers

Fresh Fruit Fridays

Lunch Order Days

Principal For A Day

Swimming Program

Parent/ Teacher Interviews P-2 (Zoom)

Learning Conversations 3-6 (Zoom)

Sacraments

Year 6 Graduation

We are a Catholic school, proudly celebrating our Faith in many and varied ways. Thank you to Fr. James Clarke, our Parish Priest, who again provided spiritual guidance throughout 2021 and ensured a close relationship between the school and parish. His dedication and ongoing work in the faith development of our staff and students and the support he has given our Religious Education Leader, has been most valuable.

Thank you to the members of the Parents and Friend's Association for their hard work and support. St Mary's School has a strong tradition of being a vibrant community and this was evident again in 2021 despite meetings and external activities, generally placed on hold. Providing assistance and support to families in times of need was once again extremely appreciated and gratefully received by recipients. Thank you to the outgoing committee members for their generosity of time and dedication given to their roles.

Thank you to the School Advisory Council chair and members who have supported myself, the staff and students throughout the year. Thank you to the members finishing their tenure with the council. I thank you for your support and commitment throughout your time as parent representatives. Finally, as I reflect on the challenging year 2021 has been, I am proud of the



collective efforts of all, that have enabled us to overcome the many challenges presented. To our families, the school-home partnerships have never been more important and I thank the families who have been unwavering in their support and worked in partnership with the school for the benefit of all, particularly our students; thank you. To the teaching team, your adaptability and innovation ensured our students were always provided with the very best learning opportunities, particularly during such trying times and is a credit to your talent, care and dedication to our students and families; thank you. To the learning support officer team, your positive attitude, patience and guidance you show all students, particularly our most vulnerable, each and every day is very much valued by all; thank you. To the administration team, your organisation, reliability and careful management of workflows that keep our school operating, never go unnoticed; thank you. All support offered throughout our wonderful school community, has ensured staff, students and families remained united, even when physically apart. I am very much looking forward to 2022 and all that it brings.

## Education in Faith

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To provide multi-disciplinary opportunities to encounter the Sacred and learn about the Catholic Faith.

Intended Outcomes:

Opportunities are provided for the community to encounter Christ, building knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith Tradition.

Use of the Religious Education Curriculum Framework and Catholic Social Teaching is well embedded in planning and assessment cycles.

### Achievements

The worldwide COVID19 pandemic continued to disrupt many aspects of our Religious Education programs, teaching and experiences in 2021. As in 2020, 2021 presented many challenges that continued to be unique to all of us. With our strong faith and resilience, St Mary's School continued to strengthen its faith by being an active, authentic and reflective community; who cares, supports and looks after one another, always.

Student interactions have demonstrated a commitment to Gospel values and social justice through rich and engaging Religious Education units of learning by their teachers. These teachings and activities encouraged participation through explanation, interpretation and reflection.

Though the Sacramental dates were interrupted due to the pandemic, we were still able to celebrate all Sacraments; Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation for our Year 3, 4 and 6 students and with our 2021 Year 4 students being able to also celebrate their First Eucharist at The Basilica also. This was able to occur due to the flexibility and commitment of our Parish Priest Fr Jim Clarke.

The Sacramental program provides powerful learning experiences for our students that gives them the confidence to wonder, reflect and develop in the light of Jesus. At St Mary's School we take great pride in developing the knowledge of our students as they undertake their Sacramental Journey.

In 2021, St Mary's School continued their partnerships with Social Justice organisations such as the St Mary's Parish Pantry, CARITAS, St Vincent De Paul as well as maintaining our partnership with the St Mary of the Angels' partner Parish of Mary Immaculate in Viqueque, providing them with financial support and friendship. Being involved in these initiatives instils the importance of being a just, compassionate and inclusive community that inspires our students to learn about the wider world and care for others through their faith connection.

In 2022, St Mary's School will continue to build Christian relations, modeling aspects of Social Justice in staff and students and encourage love, patience, compassion and understanding with all people. We will continue to build on strengthening prayerful meditation and mindfulness and for this to be an embedded practice at our school. The teaching staff will also be provided with Professional Development opportunities in maintaining their Catholic accreditation to teach religious education or lead in a Catholic school.

## VALUE ADDED

Strengthening meditation and mindfulness practices

Collaboration with parish schools and our parish priest to plan and celebrate the Sacraments

Maintaining links with local Catholic organisations such as St Mary's Parish Pantry

Encouraging students and their families to strengthen their relationship with the parish by attending Sunday Mass regularly

Visible display of religious symbols, icons and student artwork promoting Catholic Identity around our school

Contributing to the visible, public display of religious symbols, icons and student artwork outside the Basilica, promoting parish events and celebrations

Christ-centred community activities, building awareness of diversity and social justice

Acknowledging the sacred moments in our church calendar, such as journeying through the 'Stations of the Cross'

Weekly faith-centred tasks and activities during Remote Learning that families were invited to participate in

## Learning & Teaching

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To develop educator capacity and practice to maximise impact and deep learning.

Intended Outcomes:

Educators collaborate to design learning that is evidence informed, utilises high impact strategies and challenges all learners.

### Achievements

Repeated Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns continued throughout the 2021 school year. Whilst the school's learning and teaching programs were adapted for periods of remote learning, evidence-informed instruction continued to inform our practice.

After a series of short, circuit breaker lockdowns, an extended period of remote learning occurred in Semester 2. The school's Remote Learning Program was underpinned by four main design principles:

- Purposeful learning; remaining true to delivering the planned English and Mathematics content to our students and meeting their needs.
- Family focused; understanding the diverse needs and possible challenges that families balance during times of school closure.
- Technology balanced; using screen time purposefully and ensuring it is a tool for learning.
- Aligned practice; ensuring school communication and expectations were consistent across the school.

Using our learnings from the 2020 remote learning experiences, the school's Remote Learning Program (Term 3) offered families:

- Year Level Timetables, distributed to families each Sunday.
- Daily 'Morning Meetings' via Google Meet for students in Foundation - Year 2, complemented by pre-recorded English, Mathematics, Religious Education and Inquiry sessions with instructional videos, posted on Google Sites.
- Daily 'Morning Meetings' as well as Mathematics and Spelling sessions via Google Meet for students in Year 3 - Year 6, complemented by Google Classroom tasks.
- Weekly 'Specialist Days', enabling students to engage in a rotation of Art, Physical Education and STEM and providing staff with structured planning and meeting time.
- Community Action Days, celebrated each Friday.

Onsite learning continued for children of essential workers and vulnerable students. Along with the school's educators, Learning Support staff provided much care and expertise to deliver the Remote Learning Program onsite.

We acknowledge the many demands placed on families and school staff during the extended periods of school closure. We are proud of our school's community - the dedicated staff and

supportive family partnerships, which ensured the success of the school's Remote Learning Program.

Although the strategic actions were regularly redirected to remote learning throughout the year, staff professional learning focusing on evidence-informed practice, continued to be an important priority.

Further work to enhance staff capacity and knowledge of Reading Science, and its research, was prioritised at the beginning of the year. Drawing on research, and from the experts in the field, a series of targeted professional learning, developed by the school's Learning & Teaching Team, provided an opportunity for the exploration, reflection and practice of each key component of reading instruction (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension). This strengthened the school's systematic approach to teaching phonics by including all essential components of reading into our English learning design and delivery.

In the second half of the year, staff professional learning centred around the research and practice of a knowledge-rich curriculum. Adopting *The Knowledge Gap* by Natalie Wexler, as a mentor text, provided educators with the opportunity for dialogue and reflection about the pivotal connection between knowledge and reading comprehension. By engaging with Natalie Wexler's work, teaching staff were able to conclude that an achievement gap in reading, is in essence, a 'gap in knowledge'. In the latter part of the year, designing and embedding a sequential, knowledge-rich curriculum, based on the Victorian Curriculum, became a priority for the Learning & Teaching Team. A two-year knowledge building scope and sequence inclusive of a reading spine that outlines critical texts to complement units of work, as well as updated planners and aligned timetable structures, were launched at 2022 planning days, held at the end of Term 4, 2021.

Building on the success of the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) baseline data, collected in Term 4, 2020, all educators participated in online DIBELS Training, offered by the University of Oregon. DIBELS subtests, which measure critical skills and abilities that are necessary for reading success, were administered at the beginning, middle and end of the year and informed instructional decisions as well as benchmark and progress-monitoring of student achievement.

With the introduction of Enhancement Educator roles in 2021 and building a shared understanding of the Response to Intervention (Rti) Model, the collation and use of DIBELS data was integral. Individual and cohort DIBELS data was analysed by teaching teams, alongside Enhancement educators to identify and plan for student learning within the three-tiered Rti Model:

- Tier 1: Core Instruction (The whole class); all students receive a strong evidence-based curriculum and methods. This tier targets the whole class.
- Tier 2: Targeted Interventions (Small group interventions; 15-20% of students); evidence-based targeted supplemental skill-building interventions for some students who require support to make progress.
- Tier 3: Intensive Interventions (one-one; usually 1-5% of students); evidence-based intensive targeted interventions for students whose needs are not being met by tier 1 or 2.

This model, which begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all students, became an essential framework for both academic and wellbeing learning and teaching in all classes, throughout the year.

Student learning was further supported through participation in:

- Daily Italian sessions, underpinned by the Autonomous Language Learners (ALL) approach, focusing on using functional language and gestures to support language learning.
- Systematic synthetic phonics instruction, utilising the Little Learners Love Literacy resources.
- Writing instruction that encompassed the Hochman Method, from *The Writing Revolution* by Jan Hochman and Natalie Wexler.
- Mathematics lessons that further developed the four key proficiencies in Mathematics - Understanding, Fluency, Problem Solving and Reasoning, which are fundamental to learning mathematics and working mathematically.
- Various virtual 'excursions' and special guests such as the Honourable Richard Marles MP, Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party.

St Mary's School has a dedicated staff with a collective and shared commitment for student learning. As researchers of our profession, professional learning remains a high priority of the leadership team and is highly valued by all members of staff. The year's extended periods of remote learning challenged our staff, students and families to adapt to different ways of prompting connection and learning continuity. However, the strength of the community's supportive partnership between home and school contributed to a productive and rewarding year of learning.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Due to the nation-wide cancellation of NAPLAN in 2020, only changes between 2019 and 2021 data sets can be effectively compared. This data set shows the results of the same group of students, comparing Year 3 in 2019 and Year 5 in 2021.

With the exception of numeracy, Year 5 2021 mean scale scores reflect a similar trajectory from 2019, whereby scale scores continued to be slightly above state means. Overall, the majority of students have made medium to high growth across all curriculum areas assessed.

As part of the school's ongoing commitment to the purposeful use of data, core instruction programs and targeted enhancement and intervention groupings are regularly reviewed. In addition to NAPLAN, data in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics is collected in accordance with the school's Data Plan. At a team, staff and leadership level, data collected is periodically analysed to inform teaching practice and learning design, where goals and targets are set for cohort groups and students at risk.

Specific programing that focused on student needs across the school included:

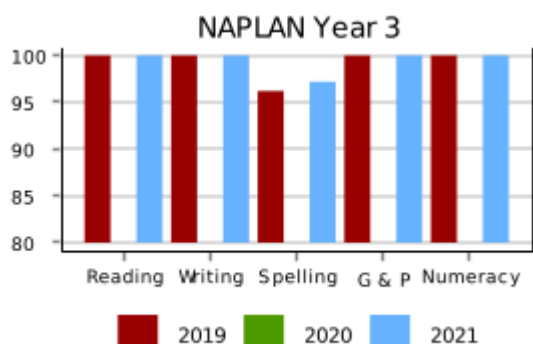
- continuing to strengthen the school's phonics program to build students' knowledge of the alphabetic code in Foundation - Year 2 core instruction and targeted intervention as part of Year 3-6 tier 2 instruction.
- introducing a phonemic awareness component to English instruction from Foundation - Year 6 to enable students to increase student ability to isolate and manipulate sounds in spoken words.
- ensuring reading fluency practice to promote reading with expression, automaticity, rhythm and phrasing and smoothness are targeted teaching areas in the senior school.
- continuing to prioritise pre testing in mathematics to target student needs effectively.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Reading	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Spelling	96.2	-	-	97.2	-
YR 03 Writing	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Reading	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	-	-	96.3	-
YR 05 Writing	97.1	-	-	100.0	-

\* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

\*\* Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

\*\*\* No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



## Student Wellbeing

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To cultivate learners who are adaptable, motivated and empowered.

Intended Outcomes:

Explicit strategies for social and emotional learning are embedded.

### Achievements

Every day, the wellbeing of all our students, staff and families are a high priority. 2021 and the continuation of the COVID19 pandemic brought its challenges, particularly with lockdowns, government restrictions and periods of remote learning.

Once again, practices and processes were put in place to ensure that everyone was supported. St Mary's School remains committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. We pride ourselves on our positive school culture, one of which is highly inclusive, respectful and nurturing, contributing to the positive wellbeing of all in our community. This is evidenced by the 2021 MACSSIS results for staff, students and families.

We recognise that wellbeing impacts learning and contributes to overall health and success of students. Our students are at the core of all we do and all staff continue to promote positive experiences to ensure students are engaged and connected to their learning.

In 2021, St Mary's School continued to consolidate practices for supporting student wellbeing. Explicit teaching of social and emotional skills continued. The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) Learning Curriculum to support students' social and emotional development was taught on a regular basis, and events and initiatives occurred each semester to further the learning and focus of developing respectful relationships.

The School Wide Positive Behaviours Support (SWPBS) continued to be a major focus of our school throughout 2021 to support classroom and playground management and provide a consistent whole school approach. Fortnightly behaviour foci were included in teachers' morning routine, to solidify the SWPBS. Classroom and playground Behaviour Management flowcharts were reinforced and used across the school to provide a consistent behaviour management approach. Each classroom teacher created a classroom agreement based on the classroom and playground Behaviour Management flowcharts. Various strategies were implemented or consolidated to enhance student wellbeing in 2021 at St Mary's School. These included circle time, meditation, restorative practices, brain-breaks, safety plans for students with behaviour needs and the teaching of growth mindset.

The student leadership structure again aimed to develop student leadership, develop strong student role models and include student voice. Senior students were educated on what it takes to be a good leader and were invited to give speeches to apply for leadership positions. School Captains and House Captains were elected by students and staff. There were a range of leadership opportunities for the students which included: isea, icare, respectful relationships' committee, STEM leaders, buddy leaders and kitchen greenies. These leadership positions gave students the opportunity to have a voice and positively influence the school in an area they were passionate about.



The facilitated play initiative continued in 2021 to support students with social and emotional needs during our break times. Facilitated play was supervised by a member of staff who would stay with small groups of students during breaks and build their capabilities in turn taking, patience, play and social problem-solving. Students would opt into facilitated play during break times if they were feeling isolated, needed support or wanted a break from the playground.

All staff undertook professional learning in the Berry Street Education Model. Classroom teachers then utilised aspects of the Berry Street Educational Model in their day to day classroom routines.

In maintaining a calm environment and supporting students with mindfulness, whole school meditation continued in all learning spaces. Each day after recess, the whole school engaged in meditation, giving students the opportunity to practice mindfulness as a tool toward self-regulation and as an enhancer of student and staff wellbeing.

With the impact of COVID-19, staff went above and beyond to ensure that students were supported while working both remotely and onsite. Leadership ensured that families were coping with the ongoing challenges of supervising their children, while also in many instances, working from home. Student and family check-ins were regular and various strategies were employed to ensure a sense of community was maintained, even though distance was mandated.

MACSSIS data indicates that students feel safe, connected, cared for and engaged. They value the relationships they have with staff and feel they belong. 95% of students indicated that it is important for them to do well at school and 93% stated that they try hard. Students identified that they have student voice and agency through school structures and student leadership opportunities.

Overall, staff, students and families appreciate the energy committed, policies and procedures followed and care provided, to ensure the wellbeing of all in our St Mary's School community.

#### VALUE ADDED

St Mary's School has worked collaboratively to improve and enhance student wellbeing and meet student learning needs of all students through:

Regular teaching of the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships initiative.

Curriculum to explicitly teach social and emotional learning and behaviour expectations

Emphasis on safe, responsible and respectful behaviours and consistent behaviour expectations and behaviour management processes

Strategic use of calming spaces, reflection sheets, reflective meditation and teacher request forms for students needing space and time for de-escalation and one-on-one staff support

Regular communication and Program Support Group (PSG) meetings to support students with social and emotional learning needs and their families.

Professional development for staff in the Berry Street Educational Model

Leadership opportunities for senior students

Support for Individual students and families

Maintaining a safe school with a positive tone and inclusive school culture

## STUDENT SATISFACTION

2021 MACSSIS data indicated that students feel safe, valued and supported at St Mary's School and overall results across all domains were high. With an overall average of 92%, students feel that teachers have rigorous expectations of them and encourage students to do their best.

In the School Engagement domain, St Mary's School students were above the MACS average in all areas. 81% of students indicated that they are excited about going to their class, while 79% of students indicated that they were focused on activities and 78% were interested in their classes.

The School Climate domain indicated that behavior expectations were high and there was energy around learning from both teachers and students. The School Teacher-Student Relationships domain indicated that students feel cared for (92%), respected by their teachers (89%) and would like to have their teachers again (81%).

Students indicated that they feel included at St Mary's School, with an overall average of 84% in the School Belonging domain.

Students also expressed their gratitude for the many learning and social opportunities they had throughout the year. Students communicated that they were well cared for by their teachers, both during onsite and remote learning. Learning tasks and activities were created with the students and their families at the forefront. Teachers checked in regularly with students when learning remotely to ensure positive wellbeing and offered timely feedback on work submitted.

In the Learning Disposition domain, 93% of students reported that they try hard at school. The overall average achieved in this domain was 85%, with each above the MACS Average.

The 2021 Student MACSSIS data was very high and is a reflection of the opportunities provided by St Mary's School and the gratitude expressed by students.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

St Mary's School ensures all duty of care expectations are met to support student safety.

'Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education' - Every Day Counts, Victorian State Government. Regular student attendance is vital as it affects their school work (academic growth and progress) and social adjustment (attitudes to school).

Therefore, at St Mary's School, regular student attendance is expected and encouraged. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Student Attendance Roll School attendance rolls are legal documents and are marked twice daily: 8:58am (morning period) and 1:58pm (afternoon period). Students arriving to school after 8:58am must be signed in by a parent/guardian using the school's VPASS system, located at the front office.

Absence from School In the event where a child is absent for any reason, the school's student absence procedure must be followed. Families are required to send a written correspondence

to: [absence@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au](mailto:absence@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au) as well as their child's classroom educator prior to 8:58am on the day of absence.

When correspondence from families is not received, the student absence will be considered to be 'unexplained'. All unexplained student absences are followed up with an SMS, alerting families to the fact that their child is absent without notification and a reason.

The Principal follows up extended periods of absence with a phone call. Families planning a holiday during school term time must provide formal correspondence to the Principal and classroom educator prior to the child's absence. Please note: educators do not prepare and assign work for students during this time of holiday absence.

Recording of absences during Remote Learning Periods for children of essential workers, who were attending onsite, the procedure for school absence remained the same. For students learning remotely, they were required to check in via a Google Form or through Seesaw. This information was then recorded daily on nForma.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	88.5%
Y02	86.1%
Y03	85.6%
Y04	82.7%
Y05	82.0%
Y06	83.0%
Overall average attendance	84.7%

## Child Safe Standards

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### GOALS:

To ensure St Mary's School is compliant with all Child Safe Standards and develops further as a Child Safe School.

#### INTENDED OUTCOME:

To ensure the safety of all students.

### Achievements

The safety of all students at St Mary's' School, continues to be a priority. Professional development at staff meetings and professional learning team meetings ensured that staff remained informed of the requirements of compliance, with relation to Ministerial Order 870 that prescribes specifically what schools must do in order to comply with Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The necessary and relevant policies, procedures and strategies to ensure legal and regulatory compliance were maintained.

The 'PROTECT, Identifying and Responding to all Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools' was revisited with all staff.

The revisiting of embedded procedures has led to staff having a clear understanding of what has to be reported and how support is offered. It has clarified our role as a school in ensuring child safety and highlighted to our community that child safety continues to be a school priority.

The school actively displays all the relevant information posters around our school, as a visual support of staff, students and families who may require support in making a report.

Child Safe matters are addressed at each weekly staff meeting and items are as noted on the agenda and in the minutes.

Ongoing training of teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers ensured all on the school site were aware of their obligations in relation to Child safety.

Anyone who visits our school is required to acknowledge that they have read and will abide by the St Mary's School Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct.

All staff received ongoing professional development regarding Child safety and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to ensure the continual embedding of policies and commitments into every day practice.

Through our 'Respectful Relationships' strategies addressing the principle of inclusion and student participation and empowerment strategies were again revisited.

Human Resources practices were again reviewed and processes refined to ensure child safety was addressed when employing new staff and allowing contractors on the school site.

Rigorous referee checks are undertaken and copies of photo identification are collected for all staff and placed in personnel files to accompany Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration Cards and Working With Children Check cards.

## Leadership & Management

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To develop a culture of collaborative professionalism, characterised by a shared intent, evidence informed practice and critical reflection.

Intended Outcomes:

All stakeholders enact a shared vision for faith, wellbeing and learning.

Educators will engage in ongoing cycles of learning that involve goal setting and feedback

### Achievements

In 2021, the Leadership Team continued to implement and embed recommendations from the school's 2019 School Review. The Principal and Leadership Team ensured all policies, procedures and documentation met all compliance requirements to meet all VRQA standards. 2021 was the second year in the four-year review period. St Mary's School continues to be highly regarded by students, families and staff. Relationships are built on high levels of trust, clear communication and decision-making processes which contribute to a positive ambience. MACSSIS survey staff results indicate that staff view St Mary's School leaders as friendly, approachable, motivating and trustworthy. They care about staff members as individuals and are confident that they work in the best interest of the school.

Students, staff and families identified that the school climate is positive. MACSSIS Survey results indicate that all stakeholders consider St Mary's School as having sound policies and safe practices where respect is evident between all community members.

Although Catholic identity and faith celebrations were scarce in 2021 due to lockdowns and government restrictions, students, staff and families acknowledged that staff give witness to Gospel Values in their interactions with, and care for, each other, the students and families.

The school continues to evolve and is experiencing great success. The school is continuing to benefit from the explicit improvement agenda that it has been implementing. Throughout 2021, the strengthening of a dynamic, Catholic learning culture, supported by positive relationships and engagement from staff, students and parents, was again the priority. This again required the school to think and act differently, with extended periods of Remote Learning necessary, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns with schools closed to all students other than those of essential workers.

As a school, we are proud of how again everyone adapted to the extraordinary circumstances we found ourselves in during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, particularly, school staff. For extended periods of time this year, our school was very quiet, as we missed the very essence that brings life and joy to the buildings - all our students, learning together.

The gratitude expressed in many emails, cards and kind gestures received from our families, thanking the teachers for their efforts to support their children during the lockdowns, were greatly appreciated.

I take this opportunity to again thank our staff for the way they quickly embraced all the challenges of 2021 and ensured the support and care of our students both onsite and offsite during this time.

The school continued its journey of reviewing strategies and processes to embed an explicit change agenda to improve student outcomes. During the past six years, there has been a shift to explicit teaching and differentiated learning. Evidence-informed strategies, collaborative planning, professional learning teams and clear processes for data analysis are continuing to support this shift. A whole school approach is being embedded with strategic actions in place to again strengthen this shift in 2021.

The 2021 Annual Action Plan was created and focused on improvement in all spheres. Due to COVID-19, and the disruption of remote learning, parts of the 2021 Annual Action Plan were placed on hold. The school felt that in responding to the needs of students, staff and families, the schools' priorities needed to be adjusted.

2021 again saw the leadership team working with teachers to build their capacity, through strategically targeted, professional development. All teachers and staff were given extensive opportunities to build their knowledge and skills in a range of areas, particularly with staff working from home for extended periods of time. MACSSIS survey results indicate that staff were very satisfied with the professional learning opportunities afforded to them. A financial commitment to this endeavour, again saw all staff undertake extensive professional learning, mostly online or via Zoom. A commitment to professional development ensured that skill levels were of a standard to facilitate improvements in student learning. There is focused teaching and our students are experiencing success. I am very proud of the work that our teachers do, and I am very grateful for their continued dedication. Overall, many gains have been made in the area of Leadership and Management and the evidence of this is the motivated and engaged, staff, student and parent population.

MACSSIS staff survey results in the School Leadership Domain were above the MACS Average in all areas. All staff appreciate St Mary's School as a safe workplace with clear goals, excellent communication and a positive tone and culture.

## EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

### Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

Due to COVID19, many external professional development was conducted via online platforms when face to face was not permitted.

GCPPN- Geelong Catholic Primary Principals' Network

GCDPN - Geelong Catholic Deputy Principals' Network

MACS - Religious Education Leaders Network 1,2,3,4

MACS -Primary Learning Diversity Leaders Connect 1,2,3

MACS - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Online Funding Application

MACS - Exploring Mathematical Pedagogies F-2 1,2,3

MACS - Exploring Mathematical Pedagogies 3-6 1,2,3

MACS - Developing Mathematical Understanding 3-6 Fractions

MACS - Western Region Primary Religious Education Leaders Network Days

MACS - Inclusion Leaders Network Days

- MACS - Student Wellbeing Leaders Network Days
- MACS - Geelong NCCD Network Meetings
- MACS - Languages
- MACS - LEAC
- MACS - SRO Tier 2 Assessments - Administration of the York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (Primary)
- MACS - Finance Cluster Meetings
- MACS - Assessment in Religious Education. Professional Learning for leaders and teachers of Religious Education in the Western Region.
- MACS - Advent with Dr Marg Carswell
- DET - Respectful Relationships in Catholic school communities
- DET - NAPLAN Training
- CTC - Enhancing Catholic Faith - Online Sessions
- School Based - Emergency Management Systems
- School Based - Faith Formation
- School Based - Weekly Professional Learning Team Meetings (Religious Education, Literacy, Maths, Student Wellbeing)
- School Based - Little Learners Love Literacy
- Learning Diversity Australia - Science of Reading
- Webinar - Lea Waters
- Webinars - Learning Diversity Australia
- The Writing Revolution

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2021	25
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1200

### TEACHER SATISFACTION

The 2021 St Mary's School staff often expressed their gratitude to be able to work in a well regarded school, where the contributions of all were valued and appreciated. MACSSIS data reported high results in all domains, which is an amazing achievement, particularly as 2021 was the second year of the global pandemic and many challenges were faced by all St Mary's School stakeholders.

The staff MACSSIS data in the Safety domain and the School Climate domain were above the MACS average in all areas with all areas achieving between 75% and 100%. In the Staff-Leaderships domain, the results were very pleasing, with 95% of staff acknowledging that school leaders work in the best interest of the school and 90% agreeing that school leaders are friendly and respectful towards staff. In the Instructional Leadership domain, 95% of staff indicated that school leaders are knowledgeable about learning and teaching practices, while

84% of staff agreed that the school leadership team helps teachers address instructional issues in their classrooms.

Leadership again remained committed to providing staff with professional development and opportunities for growth during 2021. Staff appreciated the scaffolding and structure provided to them, to ensure all professional obligations were met throughout the year. Improving teacher knowledge and capacity was again a focus and in house professional development remained a priority.

With the continuing impact of COVID-19 and the necessity for remote learning, with staff required to work from home, staff wellbeing continued to be a priority. Each staff member were given regular check-ins and leadership monitored all staff throughout the year and ensured staff accessed the support they required.

Annual Review Meetings were conducted, and staff were appraised and thanked for their contributions. It was pleasing that leadership also received thanks and positive affirmation from staff in all areas. The school climate was once again safe, inclusive, cohesive and positive. The staff continue to be supportive of one another and use a team approach. A strong collegial culture was maintained and teacher satisfaction and morale again remained high.

#### TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	71.8%
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#### ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	83.3%
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#### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	21.4%
Graduate	21.4%
Graduate Certificate	14.3%
Bachelor Degree	85.7%
Advanced Diploma	35.7%
No Qualifications Listed	7.1%



STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	27.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	22.6
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	14.6
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

## School Community

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goals:

To empower families as partners of learning.

To seek, develop and sustain authentic community partnerships.

Intended Outcomes:

Modes of engagement are responsive to parent feedback.

### Achievements

What a year 2021 was for all involved in the St. Mary's School community, especially experiencing a second year of pandemic uncertainty and disruptions. It was again a year that brought many challenges and showed the true value of connection at St Mary's School, an education and faith community.

In 2021, we welcomed four new teachers and additional support staff to our school community. This additional staffing allowed us to provide an extra class, leading to reduced class sizes, to support the impact of disruptions from the previous year. At the year's end, we said farewell to some classroom teachers, who are all pursuing roles in other schools, with the knowledge, skills and attributes developed while at St Mary's School. We are very grateful for the contribution of these staff members in 2021, along with our continuing staff.

St. Mary's School values parents as partners and co-educators of their children. In 2021, again we saw the partnership as important as ever. The number of times families were faced with remote learning for long periods or a quick circuit breaker lockdown meant that families again performed the role of co-teacher. Whilst this was a challenging time, it was this partnership between leadership, teachers and parents that allowed learning to continue.

During these times, students, staff and families were able to connect via a range of digital platforms. The use of goggle meets allowed students and families to connect to real time learning with their teachers and peers. This combined with Google classrooms, goggle communities and SeeSaw, allowed all involved to be able to create the best learning environment for our students. Students were also able to demonstrate their understanding and receive feedback from teachers as well as their family. Teachers and parents were also able to connect via zoom for 'Parent Teacher Interviews' or meetings to discuss student progress or concerns. We again acknowledge the many sacrifices our school families made to be able to assist their child, whilst maintaining their own work commitments at home. The school community will be forever grateful for support given.

As a school community, it was quite some time before we were all able to gather together as a whole school community. Some normality appeared in Term 1 of 2021, with 'Meet the Teacher', School Sports, Mother's Day breakfast and some celebrations of Sacraments. It wasn't until Term 2, that all other school events and opportunities were postponed or eventually cancelled. It wasn't until October, that all students were back onsite together and limited extra curricula activities were allowed. School assemblies, community events, parents onsite, parents as helpers in classrooms and excursions were not able to proceed in Term 4, as ongoing restrictions meant that families and visitors were restricted to coming onsite.

With strategic planning and COVID19 safe protocols, events such as the Colour Run, school camps for 3/4 and 5/6 students, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and some excursions were able to proceed and were enjoyed by the students. Families' attendance at the 2022 Foundation transition mornings, Year 6 graduation and last day of school celebrations had to be modified to follow new protocols. These activities and events were well attended and greatly enjoyed by all.

Our social media platforms of Facebook and Instagram were continually utilised and engaged families through images and information about school events from a distance. Communication with all staff; leadership, administration, teachers and staff continued through newsletters, phone calls, emails and zoom meetings gave families the opportunity to remain connected to our school community. During such a challenging year, the efforts of all, indeed showed what a truly vibrant school community we have here at St. Mary's School.

### PARENT SATISFACTION

The family MACSSIS data was very positive. Families indicated that they valued the safety, wellbeing, communication, relationships and learning at St Mary's School. The results in the Family Engagement domain indicated that families are likely to recommend St Mary's School to prospective families (92%). While onsite engagement was extremely limited throughout 2021 due to the continuing pandemic, families indicated that they were satisfied with the support that teachers gave them to engage in their child's learning.

In the School Fit domain St Mary's School scored above the MACS average in every area with an overall average of 85%. The School Climate domain was again high, with 100% of families indicating that school staff have respect for the students in their care.

With limited opportunity due to the ongoing pandemic, for families to participate wholeheartedly in many aspects of our school community, particularly events and activities contributing to Catholic Identity domain, it is hoped that in 2022, families will be able to contribute more often and in person.