St Mary's School
Geelong

Principal News

Dear Families,

The recent long weekend was a welcome opportunity to relax and reset. I hope all our families were able to enjoy the extra day, free from routines and are ready for the final four weeks of this term.

Next week is **Catholic Education Week**. It is a time to celebrate and be grateful for all the blessings a Catholic education brings and time to reflect on and celebrate all that is good about St Mary's School. I am particularly grateful for the many contributions made by leadership, teachers, staff, students and their families, that make St Mary's School a wonderful faith-filled, learning community. Thank you for the positive contribution that you make!

Last week's swimming lessons were a great success! Having been at the pool four out of the five days, it was very rewarding to see many students' water safety and swimming skills improve. Thank you to the teachers and staff for their supervision and support of all students while undertaking this offsite, extra-curricular activity. Thank you to the families who were able to attend to assist with their children's changing. Thank you to everyone for adhering to our child safety standards while at the pool. The incidental feedback from the swimming instructors and pool staff has been extremely positive, complementing our students' overall behaviour, manners and enthusiastic participation. It is wonderful that our students are consistently displaying the values of respect, responsibility and safety, both at school and when out and about in the wider community.

NAPLAN testing began today and will continue this week and next. If your child/ren are in Year 3 and 5, we ask you to ensure that they are at school and on time to ensure that they are prepared to undertake the assessments and that they are not disrupting any other students.

Western Regional Bishop, Martin Ashe will visit with the Confirmation candidates on Friday 20 March to discuss the important step they are taking on their Sacramental journey. He and **Fr Jim** and **Fr Vinoth** will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation for our Confirmation candidates on Wednesday, 25 March. Thank you to our teachers who have prepared these candidates in partnership with their families, the first and best educators of their children in the ways of the Catholic faith. Please pray for these young people as they become fully initiated in the Catholic faith.

This Friday is Mannix Feast Day. Students are invited to wear a touch of Red with their school uniform or RED casual clothes. The class with the most visible red worn, will be rewarded with an extra 10 minutes of play. A reminder that appropriate and suitable clothing for school should be worn and closed toed shoes are mandatory.

Thank you to **Greg** from **East Fruit Market** who is once again generously providing all our students with Fresh Fruit, free of charge, this Friday. Thank you to **Ange** from the P&FA for coordinating this event. If you are in a position to do so, please support East Fruit Market.

Tonight, orders for our first P&FA fundraiser, **Billy G's Gourmet Cookie & Biscuit Dough** will close. If you are in a position to do so, please register and make a purchase. Funds raised will go directly towards supporting our students and the redesign of our school oval space. Your participation, whether big or small, will make a real difference to our school community. Thank you for your continued support. Together, we can make this fundraiser a great success! Please note that this fundraiser is in place of the Cadbury fundraiser, traditionally held in Term 2.

This year, for the first time in my time at St Mary's School, students are invited to participate in an **Easter Bonnet Parade**. The parade will take place at 9:00am on Thursday, 2 April. Families are most welcome to attend.

Tickets for our annual **P&FA Easter Raffle** will go on sale tomorrow and the winners will be drawn after our end of term, Holy Week liturgy on Thursday, 2 April.

Any current families wishing to **enrol a child for Foundation in 2027** are encouraged to submit their application before 1 April. Due to significant enrolments, late applications cannot be accepted.

A final reminder that a **Baptism preparation program** will be held at St Mary's School next term, during school hours. This program will teach the enrolled children about Baptism and what to expect during the Sacrament. If you would like you child to be Baptised, please email me principal@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au Once your child/ren have completed the Baptismal program, they will be eligible to celebrate the Sacrament through the St Mary of the Angels' Parish, at the Basilica on a designated Saturday.

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.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.

Deputy Principal News

Deborah Boland
Deputy Principal

Dear Families,

At St Mary's School we place a strong emphasis on ensuring every student develops confidence and competence in the essential skills of **reading, spelling, writing and mathematics**. Our teachers work collaboratively with a whole-school scope and sequence that carefully maps learning from Foundation through to the senior years, ensuring that skills are explicitly taught, practised and built upon each year. This structured approach allows us to provide high-quality instruction and clear expectations for all learners, helping every child to grow academically and develop the strong foundations needed for future success.

Alongside this strong focus on academic learning, we also recognise that a rich school experience extends well beyond the classroom. Programs such as our **Chess Club**, **Music Bus lessons** and the **School Choir** provide wonderful opportunities for students to explore their interests, develop creativity and build confidence. Chess Club challenges students' strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, while The Music Bus and Choir allow students to develop musical talents, practise collaboration and experience the joy of performing together.

We also love seeing our students participate in a range of **sporting events and activities during the school day**, where teamwork, perseverance and school spirit are on full display. These opportunities remind us that education is about nurturing the **whole child**, supporting their academic growth while also fostering creativity, wellbeing, social connection and resilience. While we dedicate significant time to building strong learning foundations, we equally value celebrating the many talents and passions that make our school community vibrant.

Warm regards,

Deb Boland

Wellbeing

Bernie Hellard
Learning Diversity
Mental Health &
Wellbeing Leader

Nicholas Coots
Wellbeing
Leader, Physical
Education
Teacher

Alice Szeto
Provisional
Psychologist

Alice Szeto

Dear St Mary's School Families,

I am delighted to have joined the St Mary's School community as the **Provisional Psychologist for 2026.**

In my final year of my Education and Developmental Psychology training, and with experience in the Education sector, I look forward to working with your family to best support your child at home and at school.

If you would like more information, kindly reach out to **Bernie Hellard** who will assist you with referral inquiries and processes.

This week's GEM chat focus is

MINDFULNESS

Keeping the Spark Alive

At the start of a new school year, children are often excited to meet new teachers, make friends, and explore new learning opportunities. After a few weeks or months, however, it's normal for that excitement to fade and the novelty of the new school year wears off.

This doesn't mean your child isn't engaged or learning — it's simply a natural part of settling into the school year. Even when school feels "less exciting," learning is still happening every day. Children are developing important skills, building friendships, and growing in confidence, even if it isn't always immediately obvious.

Parents can help keep children motivated by showing interest in their learning, celebrating small achievements, and creating opportunities to make learning fun at home. Encouraging curiosity, connecting school topics to everyday life, and maintaining routines helps children feel supported and engaged, even when the initial excitement fades.

Parent Tips

Ask open-ended questions: *"What was something interesting you learnt today?"*

Connect school learning to life at home: cooking together, measuring for a project, or reading a fun book.

Maintain routines: consistent bedtimes, mornings, and after-school schedules help children feel organised and motivated.

Encourage curiosity: explore topics your child shows interest in and link them to what they're learning at school.

By recognising that the excitement of a new year naturally changes and supporting children to stay engaged, families can help maintain motivation, confidence, and a love of learning throughout the year.

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.

NAPLAN TEST SCHEDULE 2026

MAR 11
9:05am
Writing Yr 3 (40 mins) & Yr 5 (42 mins)

MAR 12
9:05am
Reading Yr 3 (45 mins) & Yr 5 (50 mins)

MAR 16
9:05am
Conventions of Language Yr 3 (45 mins) & Yr 5 (45 mins)

MAR 17
9:05am
Numeracy Yr 5 (50 mins)

MAR 18
9:05am
Numeracy Yr 3 (45 mins)

Term 1 School Calendar, 2026

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7	**MAR 9** **SCHOOL CLOSED** **Labour Day Holiday**	**MAR 10** Interschool Swimming	**MAR 11** **NAPLAN Begins** Newsletter **Billy G's Cookie Dough Sales Close**	**MAR 12** **PFA Easter Raffle Opens** 1:30pm, *Geelong Advertiser* Foundation 2026 Photo **NAPLAN**	**MAR 13** **MANNIX Feast Day (students wear Red & casual clothes)** **PFA FRESH FRUIT FRIDAY** **Lunch Orders Close Sunday 15 March.**
8	**MAR 16** **3:00pm School Assembly** (1/2 Crystal) Catholic Education Week Neurodiversity Week **NAPLAN**	**MAR 17** **PSG Meetings # 2** **NAPLAN**	**MAR 18** **SAC Meeting; 7:00pm** **NAPLAN**	**MAR 19** **2027 Enrolment School Tour; 9:15am**	**MAR 20** **2027 Enrolment School Tour; 9:15am** Lunch Order Day-Hot Pastries **Parish Mass; 10:00am** **Yr 3/4 & Foundation** **Mass of St Patrick (Melb)**
9	**MAR 23** School Cross Country (Yr 3-6)	**MAR 24**	**MAR 25** **Sacrament of Confirmation (Yr 6) 5:00pm** Newsletter **Billy G's Cookie Dough Delivered**	**MAR 26** **PSG Meetings # 3** Music Bus—Final	**MAR 27** **Parish Mass; 10:00am** **Yr 1/2 & Yr 5/6** Chess Club –Final
10	**MAR 30** **2027 Enrolment School Tour; 9:15am** **3:00pm School Assembly** (5/6 Sapphire) **AFL Girls**	**MAR 31** **PFA Easter Raffle Closes**	**APR 1** **2027 Foundation Enrolments Close** **Open Classrooms; 3:15-4:15pm**	**APR 2** **HOLY THURSDAY** **End of Term 1;** students dismissed 1:00pm **PFA Easter Raffle Drawn** **Easter Bonnet Parade; 9:00am**	**APR 3** **GOOD FRIDAY**

St Mary's School 2026 Sacramental Dates

Sacrament of Confirmation (Yr 6)

Wednesday 25 March
5:00pm, St Mary's Basilica

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 1
27 January to 2 April

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

Easter Bonnet Parade

History of Easter Bonnets

Easter bonnets have been part of Easter celebrations for more than 100 years. In the past, people would buy or make a new hat to wear to church on Easter Sunday as a way to celebrate the arrival of spring in many parts of the world. This tradition is linked to the Christian celebration of Easter and the end of Lent, a 40-day period of reflection and preparation. In the 4th century, Constantine the Great started Christian celebrations across the Roman Empire, helping Easter become an important event in the Christian calendar. Easter hats were often decorated with flowers, ribbons and bright colours to represent new life and fresh beginnings. Over time, the tradition became especially popular with children and schools began holding Easter bonnet parades where students proudly show the creative hats they have made at home.

Easter Bonnet Parade

We will be holding our Easter Bonnet Parade at **9:00am on Thursday 2nd April**. Families are invited to work together to create an Easter bonnet if they wish, using any fun and creative materials from home. Parents and family members are warmly welcome to attend the parade and enjoy seeing the wonderful hats our students have made.

Ideas for Making Your Easter Bonnet

Families can have lots of fun creating an Easter bonnet together using simple craft materials from home. A wide-brim hat, cap, or even a headband can be used as the base. Decorations might include paper or felt flowers, ribbons, coloured paper, craft foam, feathers, small toy chicks or bunnies, and plastic eggs. Natural materials like leaves, twigs or real flowers can also look beautiful. Encourage children to be creative and think about Easter themes such as gardens, eggs, chicks, and springtime. Glue, tape, or string can help attach the decorations, and remember, there's no right or wrong design - just have fun and let your imagination shine!

Italian

Jack Powell
Language Coordinator

Ciao,

Throughout Term 1, in addition to participating in 15 minutes of Italian each day, students have been actively incorporating and using the language across the school day by practising incidental Italian in meaningful contexts. This has included using Italian during prayer sessions, making the Sign of the Cross and saying "Lord, hear our prayer" in Italian.

More recently, students have also been learning how to praise and encourage one another in Italian, practising phrases such as "well done," "fantastic," and "perfect."

This has allowed the Italian language to be incorporated into our everyday lives and learning at St Mary's School.

We encourage you to ask your child/ren at home to demonstrate some of the Italian they have been learning. Examples of the phrases and language students have been practising are pictured.

Buona settimana!

Student School PHOTOS

School Photos

Unique student codes will be sent home with your child, once Arthur Reed Photos have made the images available to view and order online.

LUNCH ORDER day

Routleys
Baking Since 1947

Hot Pastries
Friday 20 March

At St Mary's School

Orders served between 1:15 –1:30pm

Place your child's lunch order here

Orders and payments via trybooking close Sunday 15 March.

School Reminders

2027 FOUNDATION STUDENT ENROLMENT

The application for enrolment period is now open for students commencing school in Foundation 2027.
New families and current school families are invited to book a school tour (this is optional) and apply for enrolment via the school website.

Foundation 2027 enrolments close on Wednesday 1 April, 2026.

FOUNDATION 2027 SCHOOL TOURS in 2026
Monday 16 February; 9:15am
Monday 23 February; 9:15am
Monday 2 March; 9:15am
Thursday 19 March; 9:15am
Friday 20 March, 9:15am
Monday 30 March, 9:15am
Tour Bookings are open via the school website.

FOUNDATION 2027 Enrolments Close
Wednesday 1 April, 2026.

FOUNDATION 2027 Applicant Interview with the School Principal
Monday 27 April
Tuesday 28 April
Wednesday 29 April

CHESS CLASS DETAILS at St Mary's School

DAY: FRIDAY
TIME: 1:35-2:15pm
LOCATION: Upstairs Library
DATES: 6 Feb—27 Mar
COST: $145 per child, per term

Please note the 6/3 class has been moved to Thurs 12/3 (due to the swimming program)

Chessforschools

THE MUSIC BUS

The Music Bus has opened 2026 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.

Class will fill quickly so we encourage you to book prior to end of school year to ensure your spot to start term 1.
Additional info and online bookings via www.themusicbus.com.au

ST MARY'S SCHOOL
GEELONG

St Mary's School is committed to Child Safety.

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

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL CHOIR

No auditions.
New members welcome!

Tuesdays
8:30 – 8:50am
Upstairs in 3/4 space
(Years 1 – 6 only)

Parents & Friends

EASTER EGG RAFFLE!

Please support St Mary's School Parents and Friends' Association!

1st prize is a 1.6kg Giant Chocolate Freckle Easter Egg!

Enter the draw for your chance to win one of multiple chocolately, eggy prizes from Geelong's

CHOCOLATE freckleberry FACTORY

Any Questions? Contact Simone Shannon: 0438089906

Hurry! Ticket sales close 31st March

Raffle drawn: Thursday 2nd April

Tickets are $1 each

To purchace tickets, please scan the QR code or click on the link below:

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

ST MARY'S SCHOOL GEELONG

https://www.trybooking.com/DKDHU

PFA Fundraising Events 2026

Rolling Pin Pie Drive **- Term 2**

Art Show **– Term 3**

Potential for Sausage sizzle and/or cake stall if we can find volunteers.

Trivia Night **– Term 4**

Volunteers are needed to source and collect donations for the silent auction. Please contact the P&FA 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!

Mango Drive **– Term 4**

Colour Run **– Term 4**

Moomba Competition

Cove (3/4 Onyx) and **Fern (**1/2 Pearl) entered a competition to design a parade float for the **2026 Moomba Festival.** Their design was selected as the official Moomba Monarch Parade Float, which carried the King, Sammy J, and the Queen, Red Wiggle Catarina, during the parade.

They were very fortunate to get a special sneak peak of their parade float design ahead of the festival and interviewed by Channel 9 and complete media photos for Moomba.

Cove and Fern attended the parade on Monday and were part of Channel 9's broadcast coverage of the parade.

Photos from a "sneak peak" prior to the Festival.

Thank You from the P&FA

Your time and generosity make a real difference to the students of St Mary's School.
If you have ideas, feedback, or would like to get more involved with the P&FA, we would love to hear from you. The next P&FA meeting will be held at Centra (meal at own expense) 7pm Wed 20th May.
Warm regards,
St Mary's School Parents & Friends' Association
pfa@smgeelong.catholic.edu.au

ST MARY'S SCHOOL PARENTS AND FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION

Volunteers Needed

👉 Please register your availability here:
https://drive.google.com/drive/mobile/my-drive?usp=forms_web

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.

👩‍🎨 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 P&FA 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!

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

ST MARY'S SCHOOL GEELONG

REMINDER:

Year 3-6 St Mary's School CROSS COUNTRY

Monday 23 March, 2026
Eastern Gardens

Students walk to Eastern Gardens, departing school at 9:00am
After the event, students will return to school by bus transportation, leaving the gardens at 12 noon.
Parent helpers with a current Working With Children Check Card, are required. Please respond to the nForma permission form sent today.
F-2 Cross Country will be held later in the year on the newly installed running track at St Mary's School.
Thanks
Nic Coots, PE Teacher

Community News

Saint Ignatius College Geelong welcomes applications from Year 7 2027 students and their families wishing to seek an outstanding secondary Ignatian education via this link --> https://enrol.ignatius.vic.edu.au/enrolment-application/start

Applications close on Friday May 8th, with families reminded to ensure that they complete all sections of the enrolment.

Enrol to learn. Graduate to lead.

Community News