



ST MARGARET MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 11, Term 3, Week 2 2026



Monday 27th July - 5/6 Red Assembly 2:45pm

Tuesday 28th July - Book Fair & Grandparents Day

Tuesday 4th August - AUSLAN Incursion

Principal's Message

Schools are lively places!

From the outside, a fortnight can look pretty ordinary. The term rolls on, children arrive back at school, classrooms settle into routine and another newsletter lands in your inbox. But inside those same two weeks, hundreds of small moments make a big difference. They are one of the many reasons why being Principal of SMM is such a blessing.



We don't get to see everything, but collectively we witness so many positive moments: a child finally understands how multiplication and division are connected; a nervous group of volunteers lead the school in singing the National Anthem Monday morning; a dance rehearsal finally comes together (after plenty of laughs along the way); families and parishioners gather at Mass and in the hall to give thanks for a spritely lady's 60 years of service; and, last week, Fiona Parnell and I had the privilege of reminding a former student that, even after leaving SMM, he remains very much part of our community and in our prayers.

Principal's Message

I think one of the strengths of our SMM community is that we don't let these everyday moments go unnoticed. Together, we celebrate them and give thanks for them. They remind us that the real work of a school isn't measured only by reports, performances or test results, but by the steady growth in confidence, character, faith and belonging that happens every day.

Staff Learning Together

Last week, under the expert guidance of Cathy from Rookery Road, staff explored current research into dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia, together with practical ways assistive technologies can remove barriers and open learning opportunities for students.



What I loved witnessing most was that the day wasn't about finding a single solution. It was about becoming more observant, asking better questions and building a larger toolkit so every child has the opportunity to experience success. Great teaching remains at the heart of every classroom. When used thoughtfully, technology simply provides another pathway for children to demonstrate what they know, communicate their ideas and participate with greater confidence and independence.

Every classroom at St Margaret Mary's will benefit from this learning, and we sincerely thank our families for supporting this important investment in our staff and, ultimately, every child in our care.

Learning Through Faith

This week James Mitchell, members of our Religious Education and Sacramental Team, Maddi Prskawetz and Brooke Hutchins, Paul Smith and I joined colleagues from schools across the Archdiocese for the two-day Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Religious Education Symposium.

The symposium challenged us to continue creating learning experiences that help children not only understand their faith, but encounter it in meaningful and authentic ways. We left inspired to keep finding opportunities for our students to experience faith not simply as something they learn about, but something they live each day.

As with all professional learning, the real value lies in thoughtfully bringing these ideas back into our classrooms, liturgies and sacramental programs for the benefit of our students.

Principal's Message

A School Alive with Music

Walk through the school at the moment and you'll hear music playing, children counting beats and plenty of laughter as another rehearsal gets underway. Our whole-school production is steadily taking shape, and it has been wonderful watching students embrace rehearsals with such enthusiasm. Every dance rehearsal brings growing confidence and another step towards performance night. One of the things I love most about our production is that every child, from Foundation to Year 6, is experiencing a new opportunity in their school life! Every student belongs, every student contributes and every student will have their moment to shine. Watch out for the new SMM Hugh Jackman and Kate Cebrano!



Ticket information and performance details will be released shortly.

A Visit That Meant a Great Deal

Last Friday, Fiona Parnell and I had the privilege of visiting Chris, one of our former students now in Year 7. He was happy for us to share this photo with our community to let you know he is on the mend. It was wonderful to see him making encouraging progress following his accident and to witness the courage, resilience and faith of Chris and his parents, Tony and Katia.



Given Chris's artistic talents (thanks for the reminder, Mrs McGuirk!) and his next-level love of soccer, we presented him with a box of art supplies and a LEGO World Cup trophy. We also handed over a beautiful card created by his former classmates, together with messages from our staff, students, families and parish community.

While the gifts were appreciated, I suspect it was the reminder that an entire community continues to think of him and pray for him and his family that meant the most. It reinforced something special about St Margaret Mary's: even after our students leave, they remain part of our community. It is another example of the strength of our school and parish connection. I know you will continue to pray for Chris and his family.

Principal's Message

Thank You, Irene, for a Lifetime of Service to SMM School and Parish

On Saturday evening, our parish gathered to celebrate and thank Irene Bongetti, whose decades of quiet service to St Joseph's Parish and St Margaret Mary's School have touched countless lives.



Many families know Irene through her work preparing children for the Sacraments. Others remember her years of service with our Parents and Friends Association, in the parish office, as Parish Treasurer, welcoming families and supporting parishioners as they prepared funerals during some of life's most difficult moments. Her generosity, humility and commitment have quietly shaped our community for many years. Like our recent visit to Chris in hospital, Saturday evening reflected the blessings that come from the strong and enduring connection between our school and parish.

Irene was so very appreciative of the thank you poster created by our students and the gift of a hand-carved olive wood Mary and Jesus figure made in Bethlehem I gave her on behalf of the families and staff of SMM school.



What stood out to me most, however, was not only celebrating Irene's remarkable contribution, but seeing so many St Margaret Mary's families and children choose to be there. In a world that often moves quickly from one thing to the next, taking the time to honour those who have given so much matters. It speaks volumes about the values we hope to instil in our SMM children.

Principal's Message

Just as Irene and so many others helped build the community we enjoy today, our current parents, carers, grandparents, members of our Fundraising Social Group (FSG), School Advisory Council (SAC) and parish volunteers are helping shape the St Margaret Mary's that future generations will inherit.

I have no doubt that, years from now, today's volunteers and families will be remembered with the same gratitude and appreciation. Thank you to everyone who joined us on Saturday. By choosing to be there, you not only honoured Irene's remarkable contribution, but also showed your children the importance of gratitude, service and remembering those whose generosity has helped shape our community.

As I look back on the past fortnight, and also look forward to the SMM events to come: (Grandparent's day, Book week, student disco) I feel incredibly grateful to lead a community that values learning, faith and one another so deeply. Thank you.

Take care,
Colleen





TERM 3, 2026 DATES

Mon 27th Jul	Assembly - 5/6 Red
Tue 28th Jul	Book Fair
Tue 28th Jul	Grandparents Day Mass
Tue 4th Aug	AUSLAN Incursion
Wed 5th Aug	First Eucharist Evening - 6:30pm
Fri 7th Aug	School Disco (FSG)
Mon 10th Aug	Assembly - 3/4 Orange
Tue 11th Aug	Feast of St Mary of the Cross
Thu 13th Aug	Foundation 2027 Drop In
Tue 18th Aug	Whole School Book Week Incursion
Sat 22nd Aug	First Eucharist - 5:30pm @ SMM Church
Sun 23rd Aug	First Eucharist - 10:00am @ SH Church
Mon 24th Aug	Assembly - 5 Lime
Wed 26th Aug	Foundation 2027 Drop In
Thu 27th Aug	School Production
24th - 28th Aug	BOOK WEEK
Thu 3rd Sep	Foundation 2027 Drop In
Fri 4th Sep	Father's Day Breakfast
Mon 7th Sep	Assembly - Foundation Blue
Fri 18th Sep	Last Day of Term

Week 2 Awards

FB

Tommy M - For demonstrating the value of Integrity by doing the right thing, listening carefully, following instructions and giving your best effort. Wonderful work, Tommy!

1G

Pippa M - For modelling compassion toward her peers and demonstrating a consistent willingness to help others. Pippa your kindness brings a light to our classroom.

Lily G - For demonstrating a commitment to excellence across all areas of learning. Lily you consistently work to the best of your ability and apply feedback to produce quality work. Well done!

2Y

Aiden D - For demonstrating excellence across all areas. You have been working so hard in the classroom, completing your work well and helping out your peers and teachers. On the yard, you have been able to follow the rules and solve conflicts with compassion. Well done!

Lara M - For demonstrating persistence in your academic excellence, especially in writing. You wanted to finish your work and made mature choices to help you do that. Keep up the great work!

3/4O

Hunter N - For demonstrating excellence in Mathematics through his confident and accurate approach to solving division worded problems. Well done, Hunter!

3/4P

Marlo T - For demonstrating the school value of Respect and Excellence in your learning. You have been a fantastic role model for the class. Well done!

5L

Harrison D - For your creative thinking and determination to persevere when faced with challenges. Well done!

5/6R

Patrick L - For displaying the value of Integrity by consistently doing the right thing, leading by example both inside and outside the classroom.



Student Representative Council News

Below are our Semester Two SRC members.

Foundation Blue	Atlas J	Violet F
1 Green	Hugo F	Eadie L
2 Yellow	Cameron P	Frankie N
3/4 Orange	Mars V	Jenson T
3/4 Purple	Liam J	Ruby M
5 Lime	Asher P	Cynthia N
5/6 Red	Evelyn V	Ariella X



Teaching & Learning Around the Rooms

Teaching & Learning



LEARNING & TEACHING UPDATE

Reflecting on Our NAPLAN Results

Our 2026 NAPLAN results offer a valuable snapshot of student achievement in Years 3 and 5. Every student has unique strengths and demonstrates their learning in different ways. While some thrive in a standardised assessment like NAPLAN, others shine more clearly through their everyday classroom learning. NAPLAN is one of the many tools we use to understand student progress and, alongside teacher observations and classroom assessments, helps us celebrate achievement, recognise growth, and identify opportunities to further support every learner.

WHERE WE'RE STRONG

84% Year 3 Reading Strong or Exceeding	81% Year 5 Reading Strong or Exceeding	90% Year 5 Writing Strong or Exceeding	87% Year 5 Numeracy Strong or Exceeding
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Reading was a strength across the school, with 84% of Year 3 students and 81% of Year 5 students achieving in the Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels. Year 5 Writing results were particularly pleasing, at 90% Strong or Exceeding, and Numeracy was also an area of strength, especially in Year 5. Year 3 Writing results were positive too, with 77% of students achieving Strong or Exceeding.

WHERE WE'RE FOCUSING NEXT

Spelling, and Grammar and Punctuation remain priority areas, particularly in Year 3, where 55% of students achieved Strong or Exceeding in these domains. Year 5 outcomes were stronger, but continued attention to spelling patterns, vocabulary, sentence construction and accurate punctuation will benefit all students.

As a relatively small school, each student's achievement has a noticeable effect on our overall percentages. This is why teachers look beyond the headline data, examining individual responses and skill areas alongside classroom assessments, work samples and ongoing observations. Thus, helping us pinpoint exactly which concepts need reteaching, consolidation or extension for each student.

OUR LEARNING WALK FOCUS

Over the next two weeks, members of the leadership team will undertake learning walks in classrooms. These visits build a shared understanding of effective teaching and let us see how our agreed instructional practices are supporting student learning. We'll be looking for:

- Clear explanations and teacher modelling
- Explicit teaching of spelling, vocabulary, grammar and sentence construction
- Regular opportunities for every student to respond and demonstrate their understanding
- Teachers checking for understanding throughout the lesson
- Feedback, reteaching and extension based on students' responses

Learning walks are not formal teacher evaluations. They help us identify effective practice, strengthen consistency across the school, and determine where further professional learning or support would be valuable.

SUPPORTING LEARNING AT HOME

Families can reinforce this focus through simple, everyday conversations and activities:

- **Read together:** read with or alongside your child each day, and talk about any unfamiliar words.
- **Talk about text:** ask your child to explain what happened, identify the main idea, or justify an opinion using evidence from the text.

- **Explore words:** look at word families and word parts — for example, help, helpful, helpless, unhelpful.
- **Check and edit:** encourage your child to reread their writing and check capital letters, punctuation, spelling and sentence clarity.
- **Write for real purposes:** invite your child to write a shopping list, email, diary entry, review or set of instructions.
- **Talk maths:** estimate costs, calculate change, read timetables, measure ingredients, or explore different ways to solve a problem.

We are proud of the effort our students have shown, and grateful for the ongoing support of our families. By working together and responding thoughtfully to the evidence in front of us, we can continue to strengthen learning so that every student is supported and challenged.



TEACHING BEHAVIOUR NORMS

Why, How, When and Who

WHY ARE WE TEACHING BEHAVIOUR NORMS?

The purpose of teaching behaviour norms is to establish safe, predictable and productive classrooms in which all students can learn.

Just as we would not allow students to repeatedly practise an incorrect process in literacy or mathematics, we don't allow students to practise behaviours that interfere with learning. If off-task behaviour, calling out or incorrectly following a routine is left unaddressed, students may interpret this as a sign that the expectation is optional or no longer important.

Explicitly teaching behaviour norms:

- Creates consistency and predictability for students
- Helps students feel safe, respected, valued and included
- Reduces uncertainty about what students are expected to do
- Supports readiness, attention and engagement
- Prevents minor behaviours from becoming established habits
- Provides equitable access for students who may not automatically understand implicit expectations
- Creates the conditions required for effective teaching and learning

The ultimate aim of classroom management is not simply compliance. It is to establish an orderly and inclusive learning environment in which students increasingly demonstrate positive learning behaviours independently.

HOW ARE BEHAVIOUR NORMS TAUGHT?

Behaviour norms, routines and rules are taught using the same evidence-informed instructional principles used to teach curriculum content. They are explicitly explained, modelled, practised, checked and reinforced. Teachers at SMM:

1. **Identify the required behaviour** — clearly describe what students need to do and explain how the behaviour supports learning, safety, respect or belonging.
2. **Break the behaviour into steps** — present routines as a clear sequence — for example, an entry routine may include entering calmly, putting belongings away, collecting materials, sitting in the assigned place and beginning the displayed task.
3. **Model the routine** — demonstration of exactly what the behaviour looks and sounds like. Where helpful, contrasting a correct example with a non-example.

4. **Provide guided practice** — students are repeatedly provided opportunities to practise the routine.
5. **Check for understanding** — students explain, demonstrate or rehearse the routine so the teacher can confirm that it has been understood.
6. **Give immediate and specific feedback** — teachers reinforce correct behaviour by identifying exactly what the student did and linking it to the school or classroom expectation.
7. **Correct errors promptly and calmly** — when a norm is not followed, teachers respond in the moment by reminding, reteaching or rehearsing the expected behaviour. This correction is brief, respectful and focused on learning the correct process.
8. **Model the expectations consistently** — adults demonstrate the same behaviours they expect from students. Expectations are easier to understand and follow when adult actions align with classroom and school norms.

Example of specific feedback: *"I noticed the way you began the task immediately and had all your materials ready. That demonstrates responsibility and helps everyone learn. Thank you."*

WHEN SHOULD BEHAVIOUR NORMS BE TAUGHT?

Behaviour norms should be taught proactively, not only after misbehaviour occurs. They should be explicitly taught:

- At the beginning of the school year
- When a new class, group or subject begins
- Before introducing a new activity or learning routine
- Before situations in which the routine will be required
- After holidays or extended breaks
- When classroom data or observations show that a routine is becoming inconsistent
- When new students or staff join the class
- Following changes to the classroom environment or timetable
- Whenever students demonstrate that they require further modelling or practice

Norms are reinforced throughout every lesson. Teachers acknowledge correct use as it occurs and respond immediately when expectations are not followed. Some routines require intensive initial teaching, while others will only need brief reminders and periodic rehearsal to remain automatic.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

This approach is demonstrated by all classroom teachers, specialist teachers, learning support officers, casual relief teachers, school leaders, and any adult responsible for supervising or supporting students.

It applies to all of our students, not only students who display challenging behaviour. Every student benefits from clear, predictable and consistently taught expectations. Some students may require additional modelling, visual supports, prompts, practice or individual adjustments to access the same expectations successfully.

KEY DISTINCTION

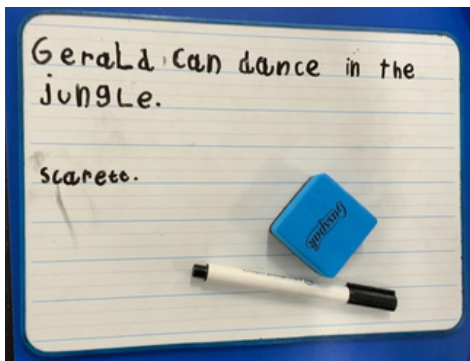
Norms	The shared behaviours and values that shape classroom culture, such as listening respectfully or contributing to learning.
Routines	The specific steps students follow in recurring situations, such as entering the classroom, using mini-whiteboards or transitioning between activities.
Rules	Clear boundaries required for learning, order and safety.

Foundation

Welcome back to Term 3!

In Writing, our Foundation students have been exploring our class text, *Giraffes Can't Dance*, while developing their sentence-writing skills. We have been learning the difference between a fragment and a complete sentence, remembering that every sentence needs a noun (who or what) and a verb (the action).

Students have enjoyed identifying and correcting fragments by turning them into complete sentences. Many have also challenged themselves to make their writing even more interesting by adding adjectives to describe people, animals and objects.

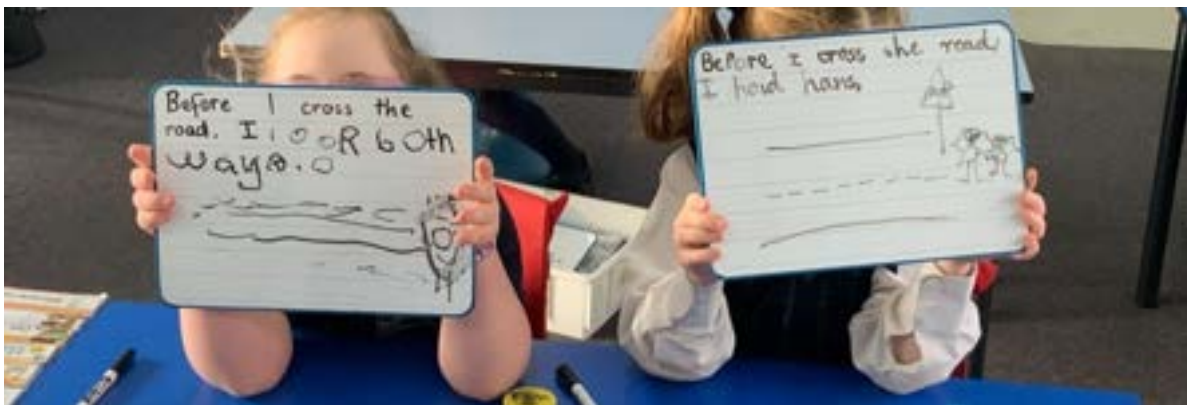


To bring the story to life, students created their own Gerald the Giraffe puppets and enthusiastically retold the story through actions, helping them build confidence with story sequencing and oral language. Along the way, we have explored exciting new vocabulary, including words such as elegant and miracle, discussing their meanings and using them in conversation and writing.



Year 1

1 Green has had a wonderful start to Term 3, jumping right into rich, engaging learning experiences! In English, the students are working on developing their writing fluency, a focus across St Margaret Mary's this semester. This fortnight, 1 Green has worked on extending their vocabulary, reviewing their sentences and identifying areas for growth. The students have also written sentences using the focus topics 'before' and 'after', developing logical sequencing skills. This daily routine has already promoted growth in the students' handwriting automaticity and writing stamina, strengthened decoding and phonics knowledge and reinforced sentence structure. In UFLI, 1 Green has worked on distinguishing between open and closed syllables, with the students eager to spot the phonemic patterns within their day-to-day.



In Maths, our focus over the past fortnight has been on measuring the length of objects. The students have been supported to use informal units (such as paper clips, glue sticks, and erasers) to measure the horizontal and vertical length of various classroom objects. 1 Green has developed their concrete conceptual understanding of what measurement actually is, ready to explore universal standard units later on.



Year 2

This term has got off to a flying start in 2 Yellow.

We have begun our days with Writing Fluency Blast following the I do, we do, you do process and exploring fragments, sentences and various other vocabulary aspects to improve our writing skills and stamina.



We are learning to use a dictionary as a team game. Miss Thompson calls out a word, we have to work in pairs/teams to find the word the fastest and read the definition using our knowledge of alphabetical order.

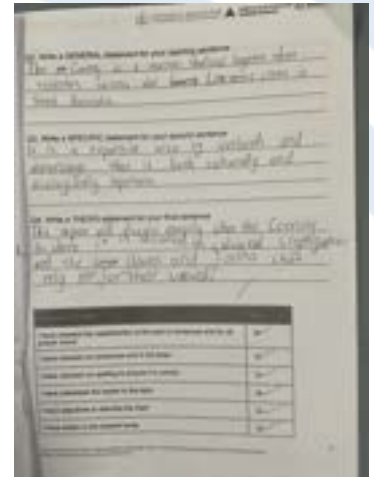


In Maths, we began doubling, halving and skip counting to begin our unit on Multiplication and Division. We were able to demonstrate these skills through drawing dots, using manipulatives and writing the simple equations.



Years 3 and 4

It has been a wonderful start to Term 3 in 3/4 Orange, with students settling back into routines and embracing their learning with enthusiasm. In Literacy, we have begun reading our new class novel, *Storm Boy*, and started learning how to write an information report, focusing on organising facts into clear and informative sections.



In Mathematics, we have launched a new unit on multiplication and division, with a particular focus on solving worded problems using a range of strategies.

In SEL, students have been developing their teamwork and problem-solving skills, learning how to work collaboratively to overcome challenges. In Religion, we have been learning about The Last Supper as we prepare our Year 4 students for the Sacrament of the Eucharist. In Core Knowledge, we have begun exploring the fascinating world of the Vikings, discovering what life was like during the Viking Age and the impact they had on history. It has been a fantastic start to the term, and we look forward to another exciting fortnight of learning ahead!

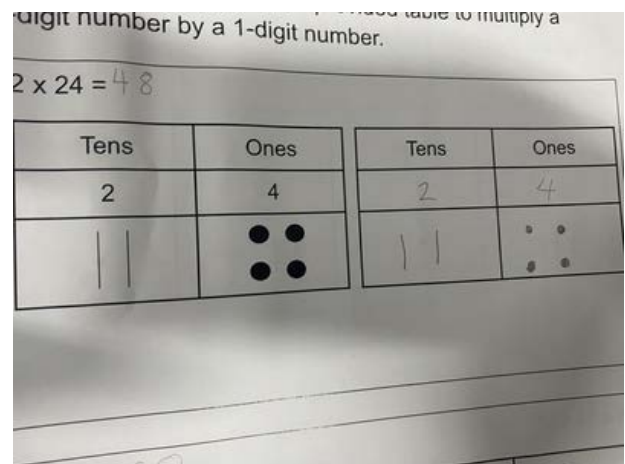
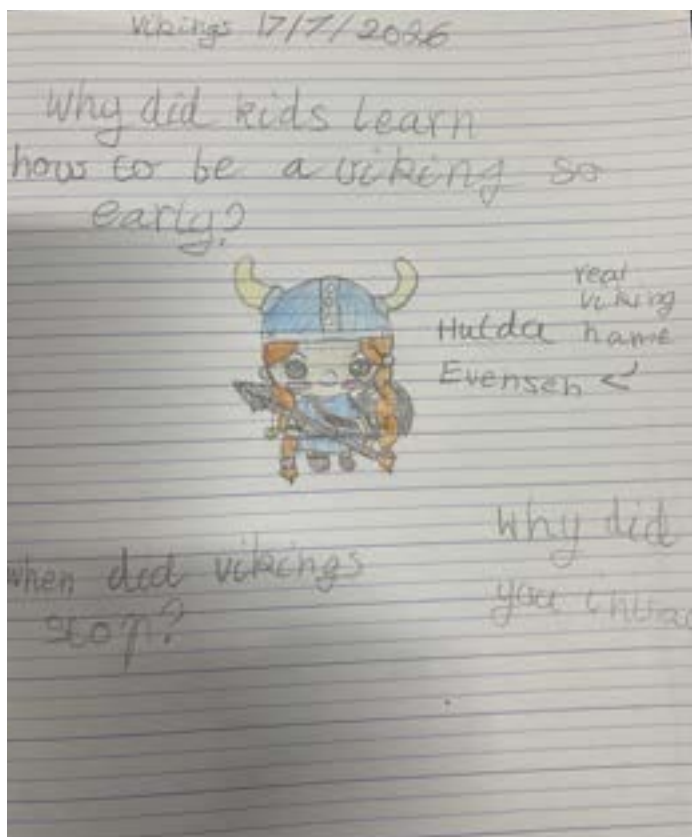


Years 3 and 4

3/4 Purple have continued to engage enthusiastically in their learning across all curriculum areas.

In Mathematics, students have been developing their understanding of multiplication and division by using place value to solve two-digit problems involving tens and ones, with some students extending their learning to work with numbers in the hundreds. Next week, we begin our new unit on angles. In Literacy, the class has thoroughly enjoyed our new class novel, *Storm Boy*, which includes writing an information report about the Coorong in South Australia.

In Religion, students have been learning about the Eucharist and its significance within the Catholic faith. Our new Core Knowledge History unit on the Vikings has also been a highlight, with students eager to learn about Viking life, exploration and culture. A reminder to families that students in Grades 3-6 will be attending the Royal Botanic Gardens on Friday, 7 August, to participate in the *Connecting to Country* program. We look forward to this exciting learning opportunity.



Year 5

This fortnight in 5 Lime, we have settled back into learning and established positive classroom routines for the term ahead. Students have embraced new learning opportunities across all subject areas while also beginning rehearsals for our upcoming school production. There has been plenty of excitement as they started learning their dances, and we look forward to watching their confidence grow over the coming weeks.

In Literacy, we have been introduced to our new class novel, *Once* by Morris Gleitzman. Before beginning the novel, students explored the historical context of World War II and the Holocaust to develop their background knowledge and understanding of the events that shaped the story. Set in Nazi-occupied Poland, *Once* follows Felix, a young Jewish boy who leaves the orphanage where he has been living to search for his parents. Students have engaged thoughtfully with the opening chapters, making predictions, asking questions, and discussing the experiences of the characters, while beginning to develop empathy and an understanding of this significant period in history.



In Core Knowledge, we have begun exploring the concepts of wants, needs, and scarcity. Students have been considering how limited resources influence the choices made by individuals and communities, while making connections to real-world examples.

In Religious Education, we have begun our unit exploring the Road to Sainthood. Students are learning about the lives of inspiring saints and reflecting on the values they demonstrated, while considering how these qualities can be applied in our own daily lives. They have enthusiastically begun creating their Saint showcase booklets, which they will use to record their learning and discoveries throughout the term.

Years 5 and 6

We've had a great start to Term 3 and have settled back into our learning routines quickly. This term, our class has begun reading *Once* by Morris Gleitzman. Before starting the novel, students explored the historical context to build their background knowledge and make informed predictions about the story. They also completed a research scavenger hunt to learn more about the Holocaust and the setting of the novel, helping them develop a deeper understanding of the events and themes they will encounter throughout our novel study.



We have also kicked off preparations for this year's school production! Students have been enjoying weekly rehearsals with our fantastic instructors, Kyle and Millie. This week, they learnt their first dance to "Men in Black", and there was plenty of enthusiasm and energy on display. We're looking forward to watching their confidence grow as they continue learning and practising throughout the term.



Performing Arts

Excitement is building for our upcoming school production, *A Night at the Museum*, on **Thursday 27 August!** There will be two performances on the day: a matinee at **1:30pm** and an evening performance at **6:00pm**.

Rehearsals are well underway, with students working with Kinect Performing Arts every Tuesday and Friday to learn and polish their songs, dances and performance routines. Our main cast have also been working hard learning their lines, developing their characters and practising their scenes in preparation for the big day.

Please keep an eye out for an important nForma note that will need to be read and actioned. This will include information about the running of the day, performance times, student permission and opportunities for parent volunteers to assist.

Costume lists for each year level were sent via your child's teacher on Seesaw last term and will be sent out again as a reminder. We appreciate families beginning to organise these costumes in preparation for the performance.

We are looking forward to seeing all of our students' hard work come together on stage!



Alicia Wilson
Performing Arts Teacher

Unbox the Magic of Reading at the SMM Scholastic Book Fair!

Get ready, readers! The Scholastic Book Fair is coming to our school from Monday, 27th July to Friday, 31st July.

It's the ultimate pop-up celebration of reading, packed with hundreds of fun, exciting, and inspiring books for all ages—from popular picture books and early readers to the latest graphic novels, middle-grade adventures, and STEM kits!

Key Details

- When: Monday, 27th July – Friday, 31st July
- Where: Main Hall
- Opening Hours:
 - Morning Session: 8:30 AM – 8:45 AM
 - Afternoon Session: 3:15 PM – 3:30 PM
- Payment Methods: Card/Tap and Pay

Why Visit the Book Fair?

- Spark a Passion for Reading: Finding a book kids want to read is the first step to building a lifelong reading habit.
- Support Our School: Every single purchase earns rewards for our school, allowing us to add exciting new resources and books directly to our school library.
- Great Choice & Variety: Something for every interest, reading level, and budget!

Pro Tip for Parents: Students will have a chance to browse the fair during their class time and fill out a Wishlist to bring home! You can pay for these books online via the Scholastic LOOP payment portal or come visit the fair together during open hours.

Mark your calendars and come explore the magic of books with us! We can't wait to see you there.



Lucy McCarthy
Literacy Enhancement Leader

Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHiPS) News

This week's topic is: Children's Wellbeing Continuum-Social

Social skills don't develop automatically. Children are keen observers, so what we model will always override what we say. When social issues happen at school, it's an opportunity for children to learn to navigate developmental hurdles and build their relationship skills.

Junior Primary (Prep to Year 2)

Cooperative group interactions are encouraged, and students need the following skills:

- **Turn-Taking & Sharing:** Learning to wait patiently for a turn and share the equipment or resources for games.
- **Following Multi-Step Instructions:** Hearing, remembering, and acting, e.g. how to play a game
- **Recognising Emotional or Body Language Cues,** e.g., understanding basic facial expressions and feelings in their peers so they can respond appropriately
- **Understanding Personal Space:** Learning to respect others' physical boundaries and keeping hands to oneself, e.g. asking permission to use a belonging, not sitting too close or 'squeezing in between'

Upper Primary (Years 3 to 6)

As social dynamics become more subtle, greater self-awareness and social awareness are key.

- **Active Listening:** Focusing fully on what a peer says without interrupting or thinking of a response, e.g. paraphrasing, clarifying and summarising
- **Conflict Resolution:** Using words and problem-solving to negotiate disagreements calmly rather than reacting aggressively or withdrawing.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Having coping skills or ways to manage frustration or annoyance when a game or social situation doesn't go their way.
- **Inclusivity & Empathy:** Noticing when a peer is having difficulty and proactively taking positive action

Kath Novak
MHiPS Leader

How you can help your child develop social skills at home

"Tell me, and I'll forget; show me, and I may remember; involve me, and I'll understand"

This is the best way to master a new skill, so practising social skills in context regularly at home is ideal. Name the skill your child uses and reinforce it with positive comments.

- Play Games with rules: Board and card games teach turn-taking and rule-following.
- Model resilience when losing a game. Giving children experiences of losing helps them to understand that things may not go their way.
- Guess the emotion via charades. Older children can be encouraged to widen their emotional vocabulary to express the degree of feeling, e.g. 'happy' vs 'ecstatic'/'thrilled'
- Learning how to congratulate and encourage others is foundational to good sportsmanship. Discuss how following game rules supports fairness & a team approach.
- Monitor the skills mentioned during playdates or interactions with others, to see if you can offer your child support, feedback or guidance
- Create a "speaker's turn" routine: Model and practice active listening during family meals. Teach children to focus on the speaker and wait their turn rather than interrupting.
- To 'scaffold' children's understanding of social skills, use and discuss social stories, scripts, movies, or role plays: For younger children, practice phrases like, "Do you want to play my game?" For older children, practice compromise scripts like, "Let's try your idea/game first, and then mine."
- Teach fair ways to select who goes first, e.g. rock paper scissors
- Normalise disagreements as learning opportunities: When there's a disagreement, build perspective-taking and problem-solving skills, e.g. "What do you think your friend was feeling?" or "What is a different way you could handle that next time?"
- Social Emotional Homework! Partner with your child's teacher: Ask if there are specific social skills they notice that you could help to develop, practise and reinforce at home

Just as we teach the academic curriculum, so too we need to teach social skills in context to help them thrive both inside and outside of the classroom and beyond.

Thanks for working in partnership with us to support your child's mental health and wellbeing at SMM!

Kath Novak
MHiPS Leader

Upcoming Events



YOU'RE INVITED TO
Grandparents Day
at St Margaret Mary's

TUESDAY 28 JULY
9:00am - 11:00am

9:00am Mass
Join us for a special mass.

10:15am Class Activity
Spend time doing classroom activities with your grandchild.

10:45am Morning Tea & Book Fair
Join us for morning tea, and the Book Fair in the school hall.
Every book purchased for our School Library will include a personalised dedication. Librarian's gratitude is spread far and wide.



First Holy COMMUNION
2026

Please save these dates to your calendar

Parent Information Evening
Wednesday 5th August, 6:30pm
St Margaret Mary's Primary School

First Mass
Saturday 22nd August, 5:30pm
St Margaret Mary's Church

Second Mass
Sunday 23rd August, 10:00am
Sacred Heart Church



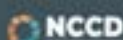
Foundation 2027

IMPORTANT DATES

Optional Foundation 2027 Drop Ins
9:15am - 10:15am
Thursday 15th August
Wednesday 26th August
Thursday 3rd September

Foundation 2027 Transition Mornings
9:30am - 10:30am
Tuesday 27th October
Tuesday 10th November
Tuesday 24th November

Parent Information



FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CARERS

WHAT IS THE NCCD?

The National Curriculum Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) takes place every year.

The NCCD is a collection that counts:

- the number of school students receiving an adjustment or 'help' due to disability
- the level of adjustment they are receiving to access education on the same basis as other students.

Students are counted in the NCCD if they receive ongoing adjustments at school due to disability. This 'help' allows them to access education on the same basis as a child without disability. The NCCD uses the definition of disability in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Schools provide this information to education authorities.

Go to [What is a reasonable adjustment?](#) below to learn about adjustments.

WHY IS THIS DATA BEING COLLECTED?

All schools in Australia must collect information about students with disability.

The NCCD:

- ensures that the information collected is transparent, consistent and reliable
- provides better information that improves understanding of students with disability
- allows parents, guardians, carers, teachers, principals, education authorities and government to better support students with disability.

Student with disability loading

Funding from the Australian Government for students with disability is based on the NCCD through the student with disability loading.

Students with disability who are counted in the top three levels of the NCCD (severe, substantial and supplementary) attract the loading. Funding is based on a per-student amount at each of the three levels of additional support. The amount of the loading reflects the level of support students with disability need to participate fully in school, with higher funding for those who need higher levels of support.

Australian Government recurrent school funding is provided as a lump sum to school authorities including state and territory governments, who can then distribute the funding to their member schools according to their own needs-based arrangements.

The Government expects schools and school systems to transfer their funding from all sources (in Australian Government, state and territory and private) and prioritise their spending to meet the educational needs of all of their students, including students with disability.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE NCCD FOR STUDENTS?

The information collected by the NCCD helps teachers, principals, education authorities and governments to better support students with disability at school.

The NCCD encourages schools to review their learning and support systems and processes. This helps schools to continually improve education outcomes for all students.

WHAT MUST SCHOOLS DO FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY?

All students have the right to a quality learning experience at school.

Students with disability must be able to take part in education without discrimination and on the same basis as other students. To ensure this, schools must make reasonable adjustments if needed for students with disability. Educators, students, parents, guardians, carers and others (eg health professionals) must work together to ensure that students with disability can take part in education.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* describe schools' responsibilities.

WHAT IS A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT?

An adjustment is an action to help a student with disability take part in education on the same basis as other students.

Adjustments can be made across the whole school (eg ramps into school buildings). They can be in the classroom (eg adapting teaching methods). They can also be for individual student need (eg providing personal care support).

The school assesses the needs of each student with disability. The school provides adjustments in consultation with the student and/or their parents, guardians, and carers.

Schools must make reasonable adjustments if needed. The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* define 'reasonable adjustment' as an adjustment that balances the interests of all parties affected.

WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE NCCD?

The definition of disability for the NCCD is based on the broad definition under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

The following students are examples of those who may be included in the NCCD if they need monitoring and adjustments:

- students with learning difficulties (such as dyslexia)
- students with chronic health conditions (such as epilepsy or diabetes).

WHO COLLECTS INFORMATION FOR THE NCCD?

Schools identify which students will be counted in the NCCD. They base their decisions on the following:

- adjustments provided for the student (after consultation with the student and/or their parents, guardians and carers)
- the school team's observations and professional judgements
- any medical or other professional diagnoses
- other relevant information.

School principals must ensure that information for the NCCD is accurate.

WHAT INFORMATION IS COLLECTED?

A student is counted in the NCCD if they receive reasonable adjustments at school due to disability.

Each year, schools collect the following information about the student, including:

- their year of schooling
- the level of adjustment received
- the broad type of disability.

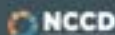
For students who have more than one disability, the school uses professional judgement to choose one category of disability. They choose the category that most affects the student's access to education and for which adjustments are being provided.

A high-level summary of the NCCD data is available to all Australian state and territory governments to improve policies and programs for students with disability.

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HOW IS THIS DATA USED?

The NCCD data informs funding and work by schools and sectors. It ensures that support for students with disability becomes routine in the day-to-day practice of schools. The NCCD also supports students in the following ways:

- The NCCD helps schools better understand their legislative obligations and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.
- Schools focus on the individual adjustments that support students with disability. This encourages them to reflect on students' needs and to better support students.
- The NCCD facilitates a collaborative and coordinated approach to supporting students with disability. It also encourages improvements in school documentation.
- The NCCD improves communication about students' needs between schools, parents, guardians, carers and the community.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) annually publishes high-level, non-identifying NCCD data.

WHEN DOES THE NCCD TAKE PLACE?

The NCCD takes place in August each year.

IS THE NCCD COMPULSORY?

The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* require all schools must collect and submit information each year for the NCCD. This is detailed in the *Australian Education Regulations 2013*. For more information, ask your school principal or the relevant education authority.

HOW IS STUDENTS' PRIVACY PROTECTED?

Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all students is an essential part of the NCCD.

Data is collected within each school. Personal details, such as student names or student identifiers, are not provided to federal education authorities. Learn more about privacy in the *Public Information section*.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact your school if you have questions about the NCCD. You can also visit the [NCCD Portal](#).

There is also a [free e-learning resource](#) about the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

This document must be destroyed as soon as possible after printing.

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Working together for Child Safety

Child Safe Standard 6

"People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice"

As Catholic educators, we have a moral, mission-driven and legal responsibility to uphold and actively promote the wellbeing and safety of every student entrusted in our care. Our commitment to the protection of students involves ensuring families and community members actively participate in promoting and upholding child safety and wellbeing. Our Catholic communities develop, review and update robust systems, processes, and policies that support staff and volunteers to act with professionalism, integrity, and care ensuring child safety and wellbeing are embedded in all aspects of school life.

This newsletter series provides an overview of what the Child Safe Standards are, how they are designed to help keep children and young people safe and what schools governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) are doing to promote and achieve this.

Why is it important that all adults who work with children are suitable and supported?

Everyone who works with or around children has a responsibility to act with integrity, care, and accountability. When staff, volunteers, leaders, and contractors are suitable, supported, and well-informed about child safety, children feel safe, valued, and able to thrive.

Schools can uphold high standards of safety and wellbeing when all adults understand their roles, follow clear expectations, and receive ongoing guidance and supervision. This shared responsibility ensures that children experience consistent, safe, and respectful interactions every day.

Child Safe Standard 6 focuses on ensuring that adults are carefully selected, appropriately trained, and are supported to maintain high standards of child safety. It recognises that responding to not just about roles, but about everyday behaviours, professional conduct, and living out our shared responsibility to protect children.

Working together for Child Safety

MACS CARE
Parent/Carer Newsletter

Working together for Child Safety

Child Safe Standard 6

What does this look like in a school environment?

- Recruiting safely:** We ensure all staff undergo thorough screening, including background checks, reference checks, and interviews, to make sure they are suitable to work with children. As part of this, we ensure that all staff hold and maintain appropriate professional qualifications and registrations, including current Working with Children Check (WWCC) or Victorian Certificate of Teaching (VCT) registration.
- Providing clear expectations:** Everyone is informed about the school's child safety policies and procedures, professional standards, code of conduct, and reporting responsibilities.
- Ongoing support and guidance:** Staff and volunteers receive annual induction, professional learning, mentoring, and supervision to help them maintain safe and respectful practices.
- Accountability in practice:** We encourage adults to speak up if they have concerns, follow clear reporting pathways, and model behaviours that promote children's wellbeing. We also ensure that professional qualifications and registrations are maintained.

How Parents, Carers and Guardians can get involved

Child Safe Standard 6 ensures that all adults are carefully selected, appropriately trained, and supported in keeping children safe.

Families can help by:

- Knowing who works with your child:** Be aware of the staff, volunteers, and other adults involved in your child's learning and care.
- Asking questions:** Check that adults in your child's life have the training and support to maintain child safety standards.
- Staying informed:** Read updates from the school about professional learning and child safety initiatives.
- Partnering with the school:** Share observations, concerns, or ideas that might help all in our community ensure interactions are safe and supportive.

Want to know more?

If you have any questions, it would be best to learn more about how we're supporting child safety, please get in touch.

More information on the Child Safe Standards can be found via the [Department for Education and Training Parent Gateway website](#).

The Victorian Government has clear guidance around ensuring Child Safe Standard 6 is enacted in all schools. Further information about how this standard is supported and reviewed for every school can be found [here](#).

The Federal Government developed a [Child Safe Standards policy](#) and in May 2024 the Federal Government's Department of Education released its updated [Child Safe policy](#).

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Child Safe Standard 7

"Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused."

As Catholic educators, we have a moral, mission-driven and legal responsibility to uphold and actively promote the wellbeing and safety of every student entrusted in our care. Our commitment to the protection of students includes ensuring that children, families and community members can raise complaints and concerns safely, are listened to respectfully, and understand how to access child-focused complaint processes that prioritise children's voices and wellbeing.

Our Catholic communities uphold clear, accessible and child-centred policies and procedures for responding to complaints and concerns, supporting staff and volunteers to act promptly, lawfully and with integrity so that child safety and wellbeing are central to every response.

Why Standard 7 matters:

Children and young people have the right to be heard, believed, and responded to when they raise complaints or concerns about their safety or wellbeing. Child Safe Standard 7 recognises that child safety depends not only on preventing harm, but on how organisations listen and respond when concerns arise. Clear, accessible, and child-focused complaint processes help ensure that children feel safe to speak up and that their safety will act in their best interests.

Embedded in our Catholic mission, this standard reflects our responsibility to seek justice, protect dignity, and respond with care and integrity. When complaints and concerns are handled respectfully, promptly, and transparently, schools strengthen trust, accountability, and a culture where children's voices are valued and safeguarded.

The Impact

When complaints and concerns are handled through child-focused, accessible, and culturally safe processes, children and young people:

- Feel safe to raise concerns knowing they will be listened to and taken seriously
- Experience respectful and supportive responses that prioritise their wellbeing and dignity
- Develop trust in adults and confidence that the school will act to protect them
- Are better supported through early identification and response to safety or wellbeing issues
- Learn that speaking up is valued and contributes to safer, fairer school communities

When schools create clear, child-focused processes for taking and responding to complaints and concerns, they honour the sacred dignity and voice of every child. This commitment reflects not just to seek justice and act with care, but to strengthen trust, accountability, and ensure concerns are addressed promptly and respectfully, creating environments where children feel safe, heard, and are supported to flourish.

Working together for Child Safety

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Child Safe Standard 7

What Schools Can Do

- Ensure accessible and child-friendly complaint processes, develop, communicate and regularly review clear complaint handling policies that are easy for children, families, staff, and volunteers to understand and access.
- Listen and respond with care: take all complaints and concerns seriously, respond promptly, and prioritise the safety, wellbeing and voice of the child in every response.
- Support staff to act confidently and lawfully: provide guidance, training, and clear reporting pathways so staff understand their responsibilities, including when and how to escalate concerns.
- Promote a culture of speaking up: encourage children, families, and staff to take concerns without fear, reinforcing that speaking up is a shared responsibility across the community.

Will have questions about Child Safe Standard 7?

Check out the frequently asked questions section on pages 3 – 4 or visit the MACS Care website for comprehensive guidance.

Need further assistance?

Email the Child Safety Team at MACS: childsafety@macs.vic.edu.au

Reflect and Grow: School Staff

- How do our responses to concerns show children that they are listened to and believed?
- How confident are we in exploring and using our complaint handling processes?
- What helps children and families feel safe to raise concerns in our school?
- How do I ensure my responses are safe, respectful, and child-focused?
- How do our Catholic values of justice, dignity, and care guide the way we respond to complaints and concerns?

Working together for Child Safety

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Hobsons Bay City Council is committed to being a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse

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- common medical conditions in children and how to address them
- how to find reliable information about children's health
- where you can get help to manage non-urgent care at home
- when to call Triple Zero (000) and what to expect
- how to give CPR and use a defibrillator

THURSDAY, 20 AUGUST*
Session 1: 10.45am to 11.30am
Session 2: 11.45am to 12.30pm
Albion Meadows Library and Learning centre
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We've timed these sessions to fit perfectly around Storytime and Bubblytime. Secure your spot to learn what first aid skills right before or straight after you enjoy the library programs with your little ones.

Hobsons Bay City Council is committed to being a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse

Parent acknowledges the following People of the land: the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present.

HOBSONS BAY COUNCIL
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Ambulance Victoria

HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL



At St Margaret Mary's, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of our children as a central and fundamental responsibility of all staff of our school.



As a Catholic Community we respect the Yalukit Willam and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, traditional custodians of the land upon which our school resides, and commit ourselves to reconciliation and justice for all in our community and nation.

St Margaret Mary's students are independent life-long learners inspired by Gospel values and empowered with a sense of purpose and responsibility. They confidently engage with others and are equipped with skills to adapt to an ever changing world.

Follow our social media accounts for the latest news and learning from around the school:



@stmargaretmarysspotswood



St Margaret Mary's Primary School - Spotswood



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