ST MARGARET MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 17, Term 4, Week 4 2026

Special Announcements

Monday 2nd November - Student-Free Day
Tuesday 3rd November - Melbourne Cup Day (No School)
Monday 16th November - 3/4 Purple Assembly

Principal's Message

Dear Families,
I have a small confession to make: I'm writing this week's newsletter as a frog! Why? How come?

After our Foundation Information Morning last Tuesday, I walked out with our 2027 Foundation children, each proudly holding the star magic wand they'd just made. I asked one little girl if she might give her wand a wave and send a blessing my way. She gave it a very decisive zap in my direction and announced, "There you are. Now you're a frog." Her mum was mortified. I was delighted. Honestly, who else gets to go to work, get zapped with a magic wand and turned into a frog?

Love your neighbour
In last Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 22:34-40), Jesus was asked which commandment matters most. He kept it simple: love God, and love your neighbour as yourself.
At school, loving our neighbour usually shows up in small things. Noticing who's on their own at lunch. Checking in on a friend who's had a rough morning. Asking "How are you going?" and actually waiting for the answer.

This month, Pope Leo has asked us to pray for people going through a hard time with their mental health, and for the families, friends and carers who walk beside them. He hopes the Church can be a place where everyone is welcome. May St Margaret Mary's keep growing as that kind of place: somewhere it's okay not to be okay, where we look out for one another, and where every child and every family knows they belong.

Principal's Message

Year 3 Reconciliation

Today our Year 3s celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. It's a beautiful reminder that we all get things wrong sometimes, and that God's love always offers a fresh start. (Worth remembering at home too, especially around the dinner table!)

Thank you to Miss Hutchins, Mr Radford and Mr Mitchell for preparing the children so thoughtfully, and to our families for all the conversations and prayers at home. Please keep our Year 3s in your prayers today.

Welcome, Foundation 2027

Frog incident aside, our first formal Foundation Information Morning was a real success. The children met Miss Horwood, next year's Foundation teacher, while parents had a cuppa, a chat and the first of three information sessions. At SMM we don't just enrol a child, we enrol the whole family, and it was lovely to see those connections already starting.

Our kinder visits are also under way. Spending time with the children in their kinder rooms, and talking with the educators who know them best, means every Foundation student can start 2027 feeling known, settled and ready to go.

On air at SMM

Late last term, a group of our senior students came to my office with a pitch: an SMM podcast. I loved the idea, and it reminded me of an incursion I used to run as a classroom teacher. So I got back in touch with John from Radio Awareness for Kids, and this week our Years 3 to 6 have been learning all things radio: scripting and descriptive writing, voice and clarity, pacing, and how to keep an audience listening. It's been a fantastic literacy experience, and the perfect launch pad for our podcast team. Watch (or listen to) this space!

Class placements for 2027

We're now finalising class lists for 2027, which will soon be submitted to MACS. Thank you to those who have already been in touch. If there's a wellbeing, friendship or learning consideration you'd like us to know about, please email me as soon as possible at

cmccambridge@smmspotswood.catholic.edu.au

We don't take requests for particular teachers. Every email is read carefully and considered, but it can't guarantee a particular outcome, as we balance what's best for each child and each class.

Principal's Message

Fundraising Social Group

The FSG team met online and in person in the staffroom this week to celebrate a successful year of connection and fundraising for the direct benefit of every child. We offer a hybrid model of attendance so that we may assist all families to be included in this great group.

The FSG is not just about fundraising but most importantly about providing an opportunity to build a strong connection with your child's school.

This year's funds made the whole school Production possible. Without the efforts of Cara alongside James our community leader, we would have required a parent levy to make this brilliant event happen for our students and community.

We are seeking the email addresses of all parents who are happy to be a part of the group communications with the intention of building our team of helpers. Being on the FSG may be as simple as turning up once a term to share a beverage, a chat and offer some practical help or resources. Please email your contact details to me so that I may set up the group email for 2027 and it provides me with a list of who we have available to support our children and community.

We are planning on purchasing keyboards for our music lessons at SMM. We are also planning on a whole school art show for next year. Some of the FSG members will be called on to give practical help with setting up the art gallery displays for example. Part of the parent levy communicated recently in our fees will support the building of these specialist initiatives and resources. The community has always been very much in favour of keyboard lessons. Is there any limit to Mrs Wilson's talents? Mrs McGuirk's vision? Mr Tasca's love of all things STEM and Mr Mitchell's passion for true sportsmanship and participation!

Wishing you a brilliant long weekend and may you always back a winner in whatever form that may take!

Please keep an eye on nforma and our school calendar. November is upon us! Hang on to your hat as Christmas fast approaches!

Take care,

Colleen

Important Dates

TERM 4, 2026 DATES

Fri 30th Oct	Sacrament of Reconciliation 2:15pm
Mon 2nd Nov	Student Free Day
Tue 3rd Nov	Melbourne Cup Day - No School
Wed 11th Nov	Remembrance Day
Mon 16th Nov	Assembly 3/4 Purple
Fri 27th Nov	Student Free Day
Mon 30th Nov	Assembly - 2 Yellow
Fri 4th Dec	Year 6 Graduation
Mon 7th Dec	Year 6 Big Day Out
Thu 10th Dec	End of Year Mass
Thu 10th Dec	Christmas Concert
Mon 14th Dec	Assembly 5/6 Red
Tue 15th Dec	Last day of term - 12:00pm finish

Week 4 Awards

FB	**Sofia** - For applying herself to her learning and showing wonderful growth in her reading and writing skills. Your hard work, persistence and effort are shining through. Congratulations on all your achievements Sofia!
1G	**Isabella Z** - For modelling responsibility to her peers across all aspects of her school day. Isabella your reading and writing is a reflection of the effort you make every day. Well done!
2Y	**Mika N** - For demonstrating excellence consistently across all aspects of school life. You take care in completing all tasks with care and creativity to demonstrate your understanding. Keep it up!
3/4O	**Mars V** - For demonstrating respect through her positive attitude and thoughtful interactions towards others throughout all learning experiences. Well done, Mars!
3/4P	**Ruby** - For being a wonderful role model who consistently demonstrates our school values and provides fantastic support to the classroom through her kindness, care and positive attitude. Well done!
5L	**Jacob H** - For showing Integrity by making thoughtful choices, producing quality work and taking responsibility for your learning. Keep up your wonderful effort! **Evie W** - For demonstrating Integrity by making positive choices, staying focused and continuing to try when tasks are challenging. You approach difficult tasks with a positive attitude and keep working towards your goals.
5/6R	**Luka B** - For displaying the value of Integrity by reverently serving at Mass and showing dedication to his important role within our Church community.



SRC

Student Representative Council News

Our Student Representative Council (SRC) has been busy sharing ideas to make St Margaret Mary's an even better place for our school community!

At our recent meeting, students discussed a range of exciting initiatives, including a school clean-up day, suggested by Jenson in Grade 3, to help keep our school grounds clean and tidy. We also explored the idea of introducing a Nude Food Day to encourage students to reduce packaging and make more environmentally friendly choices.

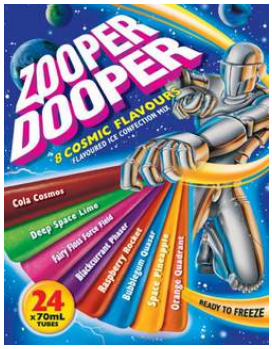
Ariella and Evelyn will be preparing a proposal for Mrs McCambridge about their idea for a school gardening club, which would give students the opportunity to get involved in gardening and caring for our environment.

Looking ahead to next year, the SRC also discussed some exciting possibilities, including a school fete and a colour fun run! It is wonderful to see our student leaders sharing their ideas, thinking creatively and looking for ways to make a positive difference at SMM. We look forward to seeing how these ideas develop!

Student Report

In our recent SRC meeting, Ariella and Evelyn have suggested a gardening club for the school on Friday. The gardening club will be hosted by Ariella's mum, Catherine. Mars and Jenson explained their theory of bags on wheels. The bags will hopefully change the students' mind about the heaviness of bags. Cynthia and Asher recommended different gifts for the fathers day stall. The fathers day stall will be better and more like the mothers day stall in terms of items.

Ruby M - 3/4 Purple



Message from the Wellbeing Leaders...

Hello parents,

We are requesting for more icy poles for sale during lunch times. We appreciate if you could drop them by the office soon thank you in advance.

Julia Foott

Learning Diversity Leader

Teaching & Learning
Around the Rooms

Teaching & Learning

Dear Families,
What a busy and joyful fortnight it has been at St Margaret Mary's! Our students have been celebrating together at Mass and Assembly, we warmly welcomed our 2027 Foundation families for their first transition session, and our teachers have been working hard behind the scenes to keep strengthening learning in every classroom. Here are some of the highlights.

Celebrating Our Community

Assembly hosted by 1 Green (Monday 19 October)
A big thank you to 1 Green, who led our whole-school Assembly with confidence and enthusiasm. It is always wonderful to see our younger students take the lead in front of the school community. Well done, 1 Green!

Foundation Class Mass (Tuesday 27 October, 9:15am)
Our Foundation students gathered for their Class Mass this week. It was lovely to see our youngest learners participating so reverently, and we thank the families who were able to join us in prayer.

Welcome, 2027 Foundation Families!
On Tuesday 27 October we held our first Foundation Transition session. It was a delight to welcome our newest students and their families into the school. Thank you to our Foundation team for making everyone feel so at home. Transition is all about helping children feel safe, settled and excited to start school, and we look forward to seeing everyone again at our next session.
Next transition session:

Teaching & Learning

Learning at SMM

Our teachers are committed to using teaching approaches that research tells us make the biggest difference for children. Over the past fortnight, staff professional learning has focused on:

• Word origins in literacy – learning how words are built from meaningful parts (such as prefixes, suffixes and root words) helps children read, spell and understand new vocabulary.

• Guided practice in mathematics – after a teacher clearly models a new skill, students practise it together with plenty of support and feedback before working independently. This helps every child build confidence and accuracy.

• Using assessment information – teachers have been looking closely at what students know and can do, so they can plan the right next steps for each child.

• Maths learning walks – teachers are visiting each other's classrooms to observe and learn from one another. This is a powerful way for our staff to share great practice.

During Week 3 we held Program Support Group (PSG) meetings with a number of our families. These meetings bring together families, teachers and our learning Diversity Leader to celebrate progress and plan the best next steps for students. Thank you to all the families who attended. Your partnership makes a real difference.

Thank you, as always, for your wonderful support of our school community. We hope you enjoy the long weekend with your families.

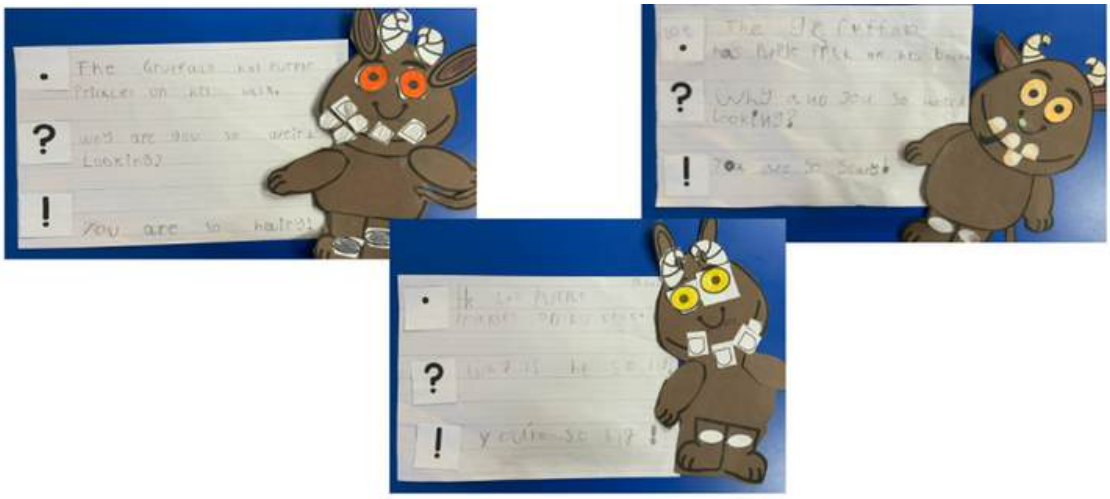
Warm regards,

Paul Smith

Paul Smith
Deputy Principal/Director of Inclusive Teaching & Learning

Foundation

In Writing, we have been learning to identify the differences between statements, questions and exclamations. We have been practising writing complete sentences that include capital letters, nouns, verbs and the correct punctuation to match each sentence type. After reading our class book, The Gruffalo, students had fun creating their own statements, questions and exclamations about the characters and events in the story. This was a wonderful opportunity to apply our understanding of sentence structure and punctuation in a meaningful and engaging way!



In Mathematics, we have been revising our understanding of position and direction through a range of fun, hands-on activities. We practised giving and following directions by hiding tiny ducks around the school and guiding our partners to find them using positional language such as above, underneath, between, beside and behind. We then explored using Bee-Bots to develop our directional skills. Working in small groups, students took turns programming their Bee-Bots using numbered instructions, such as 'move forward two steps', 'turn right' and 'move backwards five steps'. These activities encouraged students to use mathematical language, follow instructions, problem-solve and work cooperatively with their peers.



Year 1

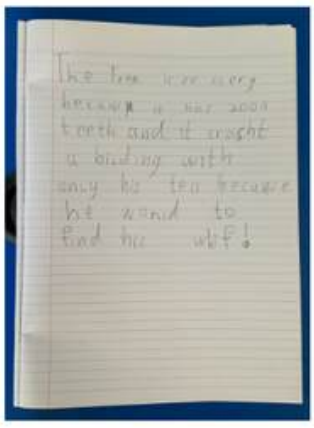
In Mathematics, the students have explored that all events have a duration and can be sequenced over a length of time. They have unpacked the concepts of weeks, months and years, learning to recall the days in a week and all 12 months. We have discussed broader concepts including decades and centuries, and transferred this across the curriculum to our Core Knowledge unit, identifying how long ago Australia was settled. Students were given a foundational understanding of analog clock features, telling time to the hour and skip counting by fives with the minute hand.






In Literacy, the students have explored our focus text Looking After Country with Fire, a picture book that explores the practice of cultural burning from a First Nations perspective. The students have written responses to the text across four sentence types: statements (information), commands (instructions), questions and exclamations.



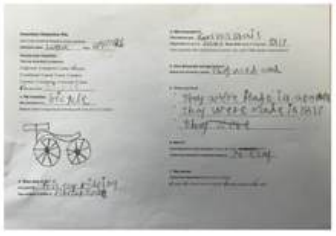


These concepts have been transferred across to our daily writing fluency, with students responding to images from media with the appropriate sentence type.

Year 2

It has been a busy and productive fortnight in 2 Yellow! Here's a look at what we've been learning.

We loved reading The Most Magnificent Thing, which connected perfectly with our Core Knowledge topic of Great Inventions. Using a teacher-provided template and the iPads, students researched a great invention and the person or people who invented it. It was wonderful to see them become little investigators, uncovering how everyday items came to be.





Writing - Our writing focus has been on procedures. Students have been practising using first, next and finally to sequence the steps in their sentences, helping their instructions flow clearly and logically.

Spelling - We have been revising our long a, e and i sounds, along with bossy e and double vowel teams. It's all coming back to us now, and we are seeing great confidence with these tricky patterns.

Maths -We are finishing up our unit on fractions. Students have been finding halves, quarters and eighths of collections, time, mass, shapes and more. During Number Blast, we have been building our multiplication fluency by working together in pairs.







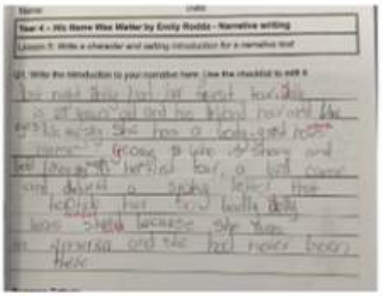
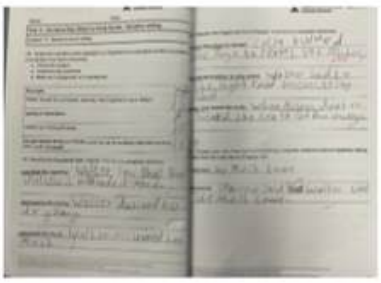
Social and Emotional Learning - In SEL, we explored gender roles and the idea that everyone can do anything. We talked about how gender should not play a role in rules or in how things are done. Students shared thoughtful ideas and showed real respect for one another.

Religion - We have been exploring the story of the Good Samaritan and what it teaches us about kindness and helping others. Students also completed a Picasso-style colouring activity, and the results were wonderfully creative.

Years 3 and 4

3/4 Orange

It has been another fortnight full of learning and exciting experiences in 3/4 Orange! In Literacy, we have continued reading His Name Was Walter while learning about different parts of sentences, including subjects and predicates. We have also begun exploring narrative writing and learning how to create engaging stories. In Mathematics, we have started a new unit on data, learning how to create and interpret frequency tables and column graphs to represent information.



In Religion, we have been preparing our Year 3 students for their upcoming Sacrament of Reconciliation by exploring the parables of The Lost Son and Zacchaeus the Tax Collector. We have discussed how Jesus showed forgiveness and how the characters worked towards reconciliation. In History, we have continued our exploration of the Age of Exploration, learning about the journeys of Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus.

A highlight of our fortnight was our radio awareness incursion, where we had the exciting opportunity to create and record our very own radio shows! We have certainly packed a lot into the past two weeks and look forward to continuing our learning throughout the rest of the term.





Years 3 and 4

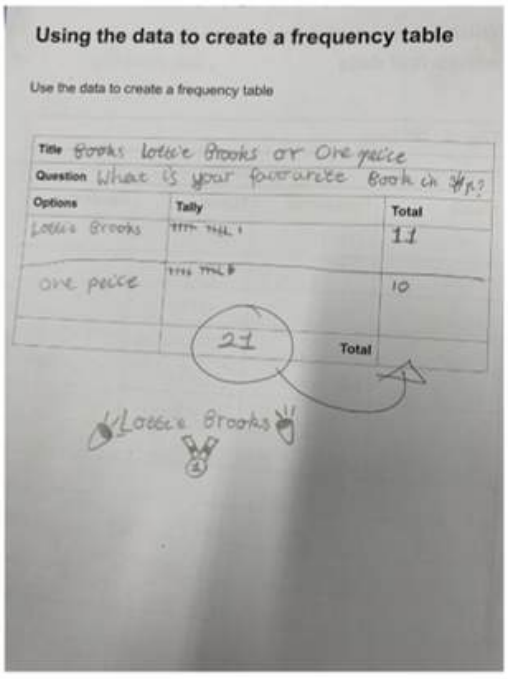
3/4 Purple

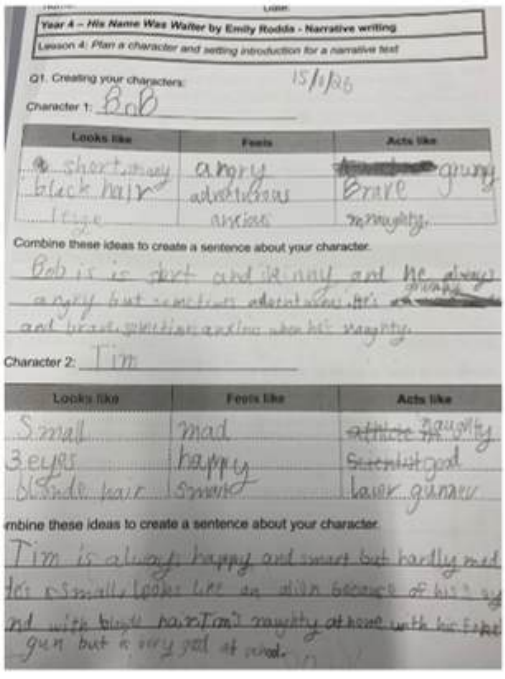
3/4 Purple have continued to engage enthusiastically in their learning across all curriculum areas. In Literacy, students are thoroughly enjoying our class text My Name Was Walter, which is providing inspiration and ideas for their own narrative writing.

In Mathematics, we have begun exploring data, learning about numerical and categorical data and how information can be collected, organised and represented.

Our Core Knowledge unit on the Age of Explorers has also continued to capture students' interest as we investigate the journeys, discoveries and experiences of different explorers, alongside learning about Indigenous communities. This learning will form the basis of our upcoming class assembly, where we hope to share our growing knowledge with the school community.

Finally, a big congratulations to the students who participated in their Reconciliation. It was a special milestone, and we are very proud of their efforts. A heartfelt thank you to Mr Mitchell for his wonderful support in organising and preparing the students at the church.





Year 5

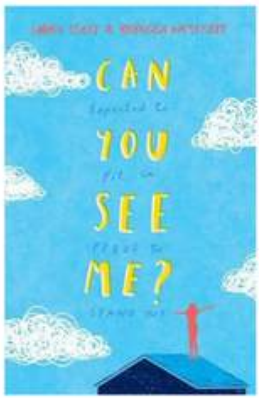
It's been an eventful fortnight in 5 Lime! From celebrating St Margaret Mary's Feast Day to learning about radio and Parliament from those who know them best, students have enjoyed wonderful opportunities to connect with and learn from our wider community.

Here are some highlights shared by students in 5 Lime:
"The Feast Day dance was a highlight for me because we got to see Kyle from Kinect again, and I loved dancing with my mum!" — Maeve
"Our recent radio incursion was really interesting. I enjoyed creating a script and sharing it with my group." — Aston

"Something I've really enjoyed this fortnight has been preparing my application for a leadership role in 2027." — Rex

"A highlight during Literacy has been reading our class novel, *Can You See Me?* by Libby Scott and Rebecca Westcott. I've enjoyed discussing events in the story and making connections to our own lives." — Cynthia







Years 5 and 6

An Exciting Fortnight of Incursions!

We've been very lucky to participate in three exciting and informative incursions over the past fortnight!

We kicked things off with our final Inform & Empower session, where students explored important topics such as artificial intelligence (AI), the influence of social media influencers and recognising online red flags. Throughout the year, these sessions have helped students develop the skills to become safe, responsible and savvy digital citizens.

Next, we enjoyed a Radio Awareness for Kids incursion, where students discovered the fascinating world of radio! We explored the key features of radio programs and learned what makes radio such a unique and valuable form of communication.







Finally, we participated in a virtual Victorian Parliament incursion, where students learned about the processes involved in creating bills and passing laws. This was a fantastic opportunity to bring our Term 4 Core Knowledge unit on democracy to life and deepen our understanding of how our government works.

What a wonderful fortnight of learning beyond the classroom!

Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHiPS)

Topic: Navigating School Transitions

Change is a natural and exciting part of the school journey, but it can also bring a wave of mixed emotions for both children and parents. Whether your child is moving up a grade level (such as moving from Year 2 to Year 3) or preparing for the milestone of moving from Year 6 into Year 7, transitions mark significant developmental shifts.

Why Supporting Transitions Matters

Research shows that positive school transitions are crucial for a child's academic success, social development, and long-term emotional well-being. When children feel supported during times of change, they develop greater resilience and a more positive attitude toward learning. Conversely, unmanaged transition anxiety can temporarily impact a child's self-esteem and engagement. By actively guiding them through these shifts, we help them build a strong foundation of adaptability that will serve them well into adulthood.

Practical Tips for Parents

- Validate their feelings. Acknowledge their nerves and excitement without judgment. Let them know it is entirely normal to feel both at the same time.
- Establish predictable routines. Keep bedtime, morning, and after-school routines consistent. Predictability at home provides safety when school life is changing.
- Talk up the positives. Focus on the exciting aspects of the move, e.g., a new teacher
- Foster independent skills. For younger students, practice organising their school bag. For upcoming Year 7 students, practice reading a timetable or planning their travel route to the new school.
- Keep communication lines open. Ask open-ended questions like, "What are you most curious about next year?" rather than "Are you worried about your new class?"

MHiPS

Upcoming Online Information Sessions & Resources

To support our families, we highly recommend exploring these live virtual events and evidence-based, free digital programs:

- **headspace Parent Masterclasses & Webinars:** The national youth mental health foundation hosts dedicated virtual sessions titled *Transitions: Primary to Secondary School*. They are also currently running live workshops like the **Tuning into Teens Webinar** (focusing on emotionally intelligent parenting during milestone changes). Learn more via the headspace Family Workshops Portal.

- **Victorian Parents Council (#VPCLive):** The VPC regularly coordinates live online expert panels. These interactive evenings bring together clinical child psychologists and educational coordinators to answer live parent Q&As regarding school adjustments and new social hierarchies. View upcoming dates at the VPC Events Page.

- **Triple P Positive Parenting Programs:** Fully funded by the Victorian Government, families have free access to self-paced interactive modules. These courses specialise in building child resilience, establishing structural routines, and managing behavioural changes. Triple P General online parenting course or Triple P Fear-Less

- **Raising Children Network Guides:** Supported by the Australian Government, their *Webinar Series Archive* features comprehensive, on-demand video toolkits detailing exactly how to manage the social-emotional shifts and independence hurdles children experience moving into new school environments. Access recordings at the Raising Children Network (School Age 5-8 years and Pre-teens 9-11 years)

Thanks for partnering with us to support your child's mental health!

Kath Novak
MHiPS Leader

Literacy/Numeracy

3P Learning Subscription Reminder

We would like to remind all families that our school holds a 3P Learning subscription until the end of the year. These programs are designed to support learning at home and to keep you informed of your child's progress.

At the end of the year, we will review home usage data to determine whether the school will renew the subscription in 2027. Our teachers have also noticed a clear difference in confidence and progress among students who regularly use these programs at home, and we encourage all families to take advantage of this valuable resource.

The programs available to your child are:



Building Reading Fluency at Home

Oral Reading Fluency is the ability to read text accurately, at a natural pace, and with expression. It acts as a bridge to comprehension. When children read smoothly, their brains can focus on understanding the story rather than just sounding out words.
Here is how you can support your child's reading journey at home:

Foundation to Year 2: Building the Blocks

At this stage, children are learning the mechanics of reading.

• Echo Reading: Read a sentence aloud with expression, then have your child "echo" it back to you.

• Choral Reading: Read a favorite, familiar book aloud together at the exact same time to model a steady pace.

• Love the Reread: Reading the same book multiple times is highly encouraged—it directly builds confidence and speed.

Years 3 to 6: Reading for Meaning

Older students are tackling complex language and need to maintain reading stamina.

• Paired Reading: Take turns reading paragraphs. If they stumble, give them 4 seconds, provide the word, and have them reread the sentence.

• Reader's Theatre: Grab a script or poetry book and encourage them to read aloud using dramatic character voices.

• Watch the Speed: Remind them that fluency isn't "speed reading." If they race through, stop and ask: "What just happened in that paragraph?"

Lucy's Local Knowledge

PLAY Interactive Exhibition & Swamp Monsters (Werribee) - Hands-on art exhibition exploring game culture, playfulness, and imagination, tailored to keep kids engaged through interactive displays. 31st October onwards.

Paint In The Dark - Flouro Family Friendly Event (Port Melbourne) - Need a glow up? Something different with the kids? Have fun painting with Fluro paints listening to their favourite songs! Sunday1st Nov @ 2pm.

Lucy McCarthy
Literacy Enhancement Leader

Outside School Hours Care

Newsletter



St Margaret Mary's Primary School- Spotswood

Term 4

A message from the team

On behalf of the team at St Margaret Mary's Primary School MACSEYE OSHC, we would like to extend a warm welcome as we begin the new term. We are excited to announce that this term, our programs are filled with fun and enriching activities, including Halloween week, Children's week, Christmas activities and many more.

We are always eager to hear from families about how we can enhance OSHC experiences. If you have some ideas, please take a minute to jot them down in the parent's comment section of our program book.

As the heat continues, please remember to pack a hat for your child each day to protect them from the sun. If your child has allergies or sensitivities to our sunscreen, we encourage you to provide their own.



Important Dates:

- **Children's Week**

  24th Oct-1st Nov

- **Halloween -31st**

  October

- **Christmas –**

  1st – 15th

  December

Term Dates:

Monday 05th October– Tuesday 15th December2026

The Last day of school OSHC will be available from **12.00pm** onwards

Make a booking!

Experience the fun of MACSEYE's OSHC program at St Margaret Mary's Primary school Spotswood today!

Call our friendly team: 0493975687 or 1300 501 029

Visit us: SMM Spotswood OSHC (7.00am to 9.00 am or 3.15pm to 6.30pm)

Email: enrolments@macseye.vic.edu.au | **Website:** www. macseye.vic.edu.au

Upcoming Events

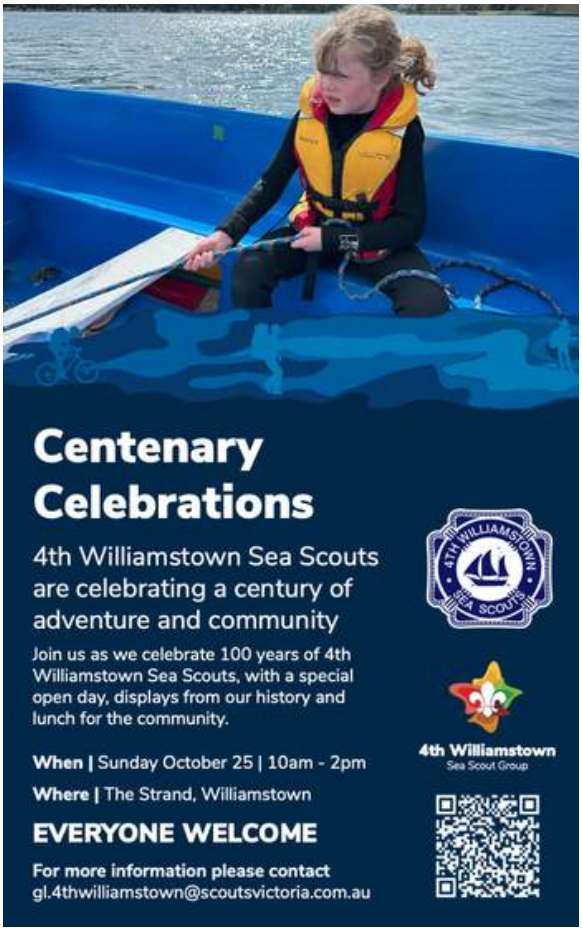




Community News

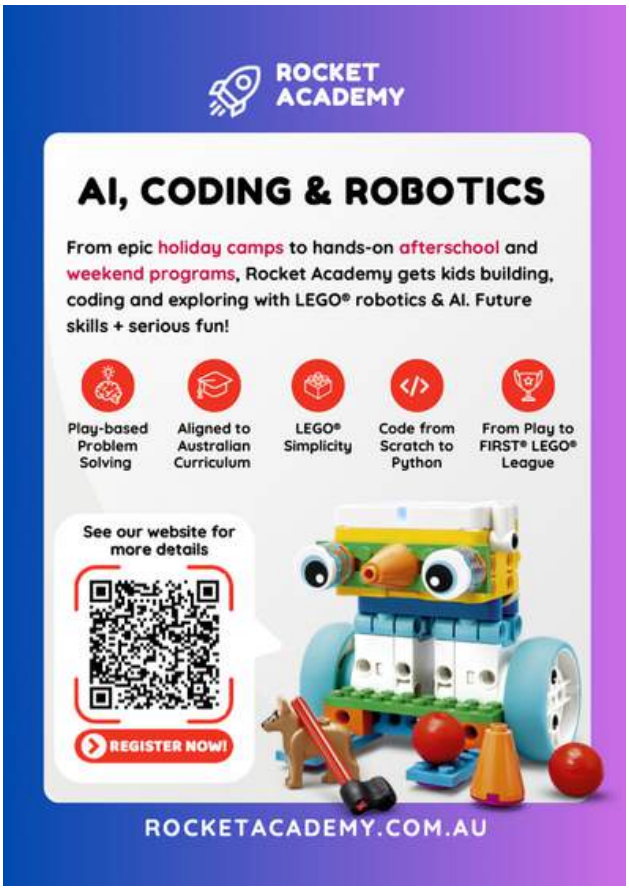








Community News










athleta gymnastics
WATCH THEIR CONFIDENCE GROW
Gymnastics builds so much more than skills. It helps children become stronger, more confident and ready to take on new challenges.
Build strength, balance & coordination
Develop confidence, resilience & independence
Learn new skills while having serious fun
ENROL TODAY & ENJOY YOUR FIRST 2 WEEKS FREE
athleta gymnastics
33C Chambers Road, Altona North VIC 2/2-10 Reservoir Drive, Cooloroo VIC
Ph 9398 0567 athletagymnastics.com.au


AUSTRALIAN GIRLS CHOIR
Is this your daughter?
Girls thrive and have fun while learning to sing, dance and perform.
The AGC inspires excellence and develops future-ready young women.
Join us at our
NOVEMBER OPEN DAY!
AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS



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

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

ST. MARGARET MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL SPOTSWOOD

(03) 9391 3118
181 Hudsons Road, Spotswood VIC 3015

@stmargaretmarysspotswood
St Margaret Mary's Primary School - Spotswood