Dear Parents, Carers, Staff, Students and Friends,

There has been a very calm and exciting atmosphere around the school this week as students have settled into routines and their learning programs. The Preps seem like they have all been here for some time – the benefits of a good transition process. Staff are very energised and working hard to ensure that children and their families have a great start to the year.

It has also been wonderful during the week to catch up with many parents at the beginning and end of the school day as they drop off and pick up. Your presence gives our school a great buzz and your support of your children adds to the joy our vocation as educators brings to our lives. I look forward to working closely with you all to provide the best we can as a team for all of our students and families.

A very warm welcome to the students and families who have begun their school journey with us this year. We hope that the St Mary’s community is able to provide you with a positive educational experience. I have been impressed with the welcome other students have provided for our newcomers – they have displayed great enthusiasm and warmth.

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**IMPORTANT DATES**

**FEBRUARY**

- Sun 12th: School mass @ 10.30 – open air mass at school followed by a social picnic. BYO lunch, chairs and water.
- Mon 13th: AFL footy clinic Gr 5/6s
- Wed 15th: Parent Information Night @ 6.30pm
- Thurs 16th: Sacramental parent meeting @ 7.00pm
- Wed 22nd: Hockey Clinic
  - School Council meeting @ 7.00pm
- Mon 27th: Learning Conversations

**MARCH**

- Wed 1st: Ash Wednesday mass @ 10.00am
  - Learning Conversations
- Fri 3rd: Athletics Day
- Mon 6th: Caritas Leaders day – Gr 5/6s
- Wed 8th: Division swimming
- Thurs 9th: Gr 3/4 mass @ 10.00am
- Mon 13th: Public holiday
- Thurs 16th: District athletics
- Fri 17th: Learning Walk 9.30 – 10.30am
  - PSG meetings
- Thurs 23rd: Gr 5/6 mass @ 10.00am
- Fri 31st: Holy Week liturgy @ 11.30am
  - End of term 1
  - Early finish @ 2.15pm

**APRIL**

- Tues 18th: Start of term 2

**Advance notice:**

- Fri 12th May: Mother’s Day High Tea
- Fri 21st July: Grandparents’ Day
- Tues 25th July: School photos
- Fri 1st Sept: Fathers & Footy Day
There has been a very positive buzz throughout the school over the past week which demonstrates the enthusiasm and excitement of a new school year. The way this energy takes shape over the next few weeks will be vital in shaping the attitude to learning and growing throughout the year. My hope for the year is that students, staff and parents take every opportunity for growth available to them, not only for individual gain but also for the benefit of our school community.

Please remember that I am always more than happy to assist with any queries, concerns, ideas or just to be a listening ear. You are always welcome to contact me by phone at school or call in for a chat. If you would like to use e-mail to make a suitable time that would be great otherwise ring the front office to check my diary. The door is always open!

Thanks for a great week!
God bless you! ☺

Jo-Anne

Attachments to this week’s Newsletter –
- Family Fee Assistance Scheme
- CSEF – Camps and School Excursions Fund
- Travelling to and from school
- Uniform pricelist
- canteen pricelist

School Rules
This year we continue with our three main school rules:

Respect your school
Do your best
Help others to succeed

During our day, and in all that we do, we try to remember these rules and make choices that support our expectation to ‘treat others the way you would like to be treated’.

School Mass
As a Catholic community it is fitting that we begin our school year with the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist together. In doing so we are able to give thanks for the many blessings provided for us in the world of education and learning and to ask God for guidance and energy to make the most of all that we have been provided with.

- All students are expected to attend our whole school mass and be actively involved in the celebration.

- Mass to celebrate the start of the school year will be held on Sunday 12th February at 10.30am at the school.
- We are able to use the Monivae carpark on this day so please try and park in this area if possible to make space available in our school carpark for parishioners who will be visiting.
- An open air celebration will be followed by a BYO picnic lunch for all families and friends.
- Students are required to wear their correct school summer uniform and sit with their class during the mass.
- Please BYO chairs and picnic lunch for your family.
- Please note that, in accordance with new child safety standards, only non-alcoholic drinks are permitted.
- Student leaders will be presented with their badges during mass.

Student testing
Holidays were finally over when students undertook their Literacy testing last week. The data that we gain from this testing, as well as the Numeracy Interview at the end of last year, is invaluable in assisting the teachers to plan their programs in order to gain maximum teaching and learning from class time. Thanks for your support of these two programs by having your child attend punctually.

Important Dates!
Please make sure that you keep up to date with school activities by placing relevant dates on your home calendar. This helps everyone to be prepared and supportive of each other. These dates are included and updated on the newsletter each week.

Consent Forms
Parental Consent Forms were posted to you during the holidays – yellow paper! The Parental Consent Form is completed and signed at the start of each school year. It provides permission for students to participate in activities outside of the school where it is possible to walk, as well as other permissions. This note does not cover activities that involve bus travel or those that carry a higher risk factor – such as swimming. The form also ensures that we have current information for each student. Please note that you can include up to three children on each form. Family Summary Reports and green Bus Forms were also included in the mail out. Spare forms are available from the Office. A big thank you to those families who have already returned their forms.

Please return these forms to school no later than Friday 17th February.
Family Buddies
If you are an existing family and would be interested in being a ‘Buddy Family’ to a new St Mary’s family could you please let Jo-Anne know? This role has a focus of welcoming new members to our school community and checking to see if they need any support with information or school events. A great way to contribute to our community!

Private Tutoring
There are several families currently looking for tutors to support their children’s academic learning. If you are interested, or know of anyone who is, please let Jo-Anne know. Note that these arrangements are made between the parent and tutor, we only pass on contact details.

A few reminders!
Please be aware of the following information regarding bell times and supervision. It is important that you support us in our daily routine so that we can ensure the safety of all students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>Organisation time</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.55–11.00</td>
<td>Learning time (fruit time @ approx. 10.00am)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00–11.20</td>
<td>Play time</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.20–11.30</td>
<td>Eating time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It is important that all students have a sufficient and healthy snack at this time. This food should sustain children and give their brain energy for the next period of learning. The challenge is not to send food that is high in sugar and preservatives as these do not provide our brain and body with the correct nourishment for optimal learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.30–1.30</td>
<td>Learning time</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.30–1.40</td>
<td>Eating time</td>
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Students will have another eating time which may be a smaller version of their main lunch meal for the day. Again it is important that students do not have food that is high in sugar and preservatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.40–2.20</td>
<td>Play time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.20–3.15</td>
<td>Learning time</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>Dismissal bell</td>
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- Supervision is provided by members of staff for students from 8.30am until 3.30pm.
- **Students should not arrive at school before 8.30am.**
- At least two teachers are on duty at recess and lunch times.
- No child is to leave school before the dismissal bell unless permission has been granted. In these circumstances the student/s need to be signed out in the register at the Office.
- **Uniform:** All students are to wear their correct school uniform each day. The uniform shop is open every second Monday after school. Orders can also be placed at the front office with payment (EFTPOS available). If a student is not able to wear their uniform a note addressed to their classroom teacher is required.
  - Please remember that jewellery is not part of our uniform with the exception of a watch and small stud/sleeper earrings.
  - Nail polish and temporary tattoos are not to be worn.
  - Long hair is to be tied back at all times and ribbons and other hair decorations and earrings should be in the school colours.
  - All students must have a school hat each day in terms 1 and 4. Our policy is ‘no hat – no play’.

Your assistance and support of our uniform policy is greatly appreciated.

- **Student absences:** A note of explanation is required each time a child is absent from school. It is a legal requirement of teachers to keep an accurate roll of student attendance. You can find a sheet of absent slips on the website or report an absence via e-mail/phone call/Skoolbag app/note to the Office.

Learning Conversations
Our Learning Conversations (Parent/Teacher Interviews) are scheduled for Monday 27th February and Wednesday 1st March.

Timetables will be available at the front office from next Monday 13th February for you to indicate your preferred times for conversations with your child’s classroom teacher. If you can’t make it in to school to put your name down please ring the office on 5551 9000 or send an e-mail to office@smhHamilton.catholic.edu.au

Thanks for helping us make the Learning Conversations’ timetable more streamlined. We value this time with parents and carers, and wish to make them accessible to all families. Please note that if you haven’t had a chance to nominate your preferred time by Monday 20th February we will slot you into the remaining time slots.

Information Night
Parents are invited to attend our Parent Information Night on Wednesday 15th February.

- A parent session for all families will begin at 6.30pm. This session will relate to child safety and general school information.
- Classroom sessions will be held in the classrooms and presented to parents twice on the night – 7.00pm and 7.30pm. Teachers will present information on content to be taught during the
year, housekeeping news about their classroom and things you need to be aware of as your children journey through the school year.

- This allows families with more than one child to attend two classes. Apologies to those with more than two students. Any information provided as handouts on the night will be available for you.

**Skoolbag App**

Our Skoolbag app is available for download to Apple and android devices! This app is another way you can keep in touch with events, activities and information from school in order to support your children’s learning. Simply search for ‘st mary’s hamilton’ in your app store. If you would like more information or require assistance with this tool please contact the Office.

FAMILY FEE ASSISTANCE:
The Education Maintenance Allowance is no longer funded by the Government. However the Ballarat Diocese has maintained their commitment to continue the Family Fee Assistance Scheme. The scheme offers a tuition fee concession to families who hold a current Centrelink or Veteran Affairs concession card. Please note that students who are holders of Health Care Cards are not eligible.

Families who qualify for the scheme will pay $520 per annum for primary school tuition fees. The discounted fee covers tuition and capital fees only. It does not cover additional charges such as camps, student fees and excursions. Please find attached a brochure which outlines the details of the scheme. An application form needs to be completed and are available at the office. These forms, plus a copy of your current Centrelink card, must be received by Friday 24th February, 2017. If during the year your circumstances change and you become eligible for Centrelink, please come and discuss this with Helen.

Although a family may be eligible to receive a fee discount, families may choose not to apply for the fee discount and pay the full school fee.

CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)
The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) commenced in 2015 for four years and will provide payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions.

Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply. $125 per year is paid for eligible primary school students, with $225 per year paid for eligible secondary school students. A special consideration eligibility category also exists. Payments are made directly to the school and are tied to the student. Application forms are available at the office. Please return these forms, with a copy of your concession card. Completed forms must be returned by Friday 24th February, 2017. If you would like further information please see Helen in the office.

**Parish News**

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<th>MASS TIMES – 2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 6pm</td>
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<td>Sunday 10.30am</td>
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<td>Dunkeld:</td>
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<td>Sunday 8.30am</td>
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<td>Glenthompson:</td>
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<td>Penshurst:</td>
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<td>Sunday 8.30am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macarthur:</td>
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<td>Sunday 8.30am</td>
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2017 Sacramental Program

Families who wish to enroll in the Parish Sacramental Program are invited to attend the first meeting which will be held on Thursday 16th Feb at 7pm in the Dunworth Centre.

The Sacramental program is for everyone who wishes to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion, and so complete their initiation into the Church, which began at Baptism. This invitation goes out to anyone who may have delayed having their child/ren Baptised and now wish to present them for Baptism, as the first sacrament of the initiation process.

Further information and enrolment forms will go out to those for whom I have addresses, but if you know of any Catholic families with children who have not received their sacraments of initiation, then please either give them this information or tell them to contact the Parish Office or call Noreen McLeish on 0438531651 if you have any questions re the sacraments.

Information, including all dates, are on the website.

www.stmaryshamilton.org.au

**Assembly**

Assemblies are held every second Friday starting at 2.40pm.

Our next assembly will be Friday 24th February.
All welcome!
Parents and Friends

UNIFORM SHOP
Opening times:
Every second Monday 3.15 – 3.45pm
Monday 20th February
Purchases can be made by attending the Uniform Shop or by placing an order with payment at the front office. EFTPOS available.

CANTER
Canteen Roster
15/2/17  Volunteer required
22/2/17  Jen Taylor
1/3/17   Volunteer required
Please note that if there are no parent volunteers there will be no lunch orders available on that day. If you would like to volunteer please put your name on the roster at the front office. We urgently need some new faces on our roster for our canteen to continue. Jen Taylor is more than happy to show you the ropes for your first time.

Please note that the canteen is open next Wednesday 15th February (if we can get a parent volunteer) – last week’s newsletter was incorrect.

LINK UP!
A strength of the St Mary’s Community is our ability to look after one another in times of need. On numerous occasions already this year Link Up has assisted families who have experienced loss, illness, sadness and celebration. A gentle knock on the door, friendly face and care package mean a great deal to those who have received assistance.

Thank you to those parents who have already generously provided food for our freezer: lasagne, quiche, cakes, slices, sausage rolls, soup, casseroles …

Food needs to be clearly labelled and dated in disposable containers. You can place it in the freezer in the multi-purpose room yourself, leave at the office or with Terrielynn or Jo-Anne.

We aim to be a community who demonstrates the values of compassion and hope. This is an important and practical way you can actively and positively contribute.

For more information, offers of assistance or to let us know of families who need assistance please call the office.

PASTORAL CARE
Hello everyone and Welcome to 2017, I hope you had a wonderful Christmas break with your family.
My name is Lisa Gonnet I am your child/rens School Pastoral Care worker, my role is to support your child, family and the school community. I work alongside the teaching and wellbeing staff to support where necessary, this may include family separation, grief and loss, social issues including bullying and friendship issues, resilience, anxiety, self-esteem and parenting. I work one on one or run groups as needed. Outside referrals to other relevant agencies can be made, for example to psychologists or counsellors. To access this program either you or your child’s school can complete a referral and a consent form.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to make contact, please note that all meetings with yourself and/or child is confidential.

My phone number is 0400 994 032.

My work day is: 8.30 to 4.30 and is as follows:

Tuesdays  St. Patrick’s, Koroit
Wednesdays St. Joseph’s, Penshurst
Thursdays  St. Joseph’s, Coleraine
Fridays    St. Mary’s, Hamilton.

Have a wonderful week.
Kind regards Lisa Gonnet

BOOKCLUB
The first Bookclub for 2017 went home yesterday. Orders are due back at school on the 15th of February.

THE SPORT CATCH UP
Saturday Morning Netball
Saturday Netball kicks off this Saturday at Pedrina Park for our Under 13 team the St Mary’s Swifts. We wish the team all the best for a great season!

AFL Clinic – Monday 13th February
The Grade 5/6 students will be attending the 2017 AFL Players Clinic with the Western Bulldogs!! Please ensure sports uniform is worn on this day. Permission notes have been sent home and should have been returned. We are looking forward to hopefully seeing Liam Picken, a former St Mary’s student, and some Premiership players!

Hockey Clinic - Wednesday 22nd February
The Grade 1-4 students can look forward to a hockey clinic being held at school on Wednesday 22nd February. Please ensure sports uniform is worn on this day.
Division Swimming - Wednesday 8th March
Division Swimming is being held on Wednesday 8th March at AquaZone in Warrnambool. We will be in contact with the students who have qualified for this event from our school swimming carnival in the coming weeks.

School Athletics – Friday 3rd March
Athletics Day is being held on Friday 3rd March! It will run from 9.30am – 2.30pm. With this wonderful day just around the corner it is very important to remember that Together Everyone Achieves More. Our athletics day cannot happen without our magnificent school community coming together to actively support it. We would love for you to move around and watch your child/children participate. We will have a teacher based at each event and we are asking for helpers to assist move each age group around on the day. All we ask for is for some assistance at the event you are watching, for example you may need to help bring the shot puts back or hold a measuring tape at the long jump, but you will get to watch your aspiring athlete compete at each event.

If you are able to attend and cheer on your child/children please fill in the attached slip to indicate which time you are available and who you will be able to assist. Please return it to school by Friday 17th February. If you are willing to assist for the 7am set-up, be on recording, be based at a specific event or the running track throughout the day please indicate this on the slip. We are looking forward to a brilliant day which brings our school community together! District Athletics will follow on Thursday 16th March.

ATHLETICS DAY HELPER SLIP
(Please return by 17th February)

I will be attending Athletics Day (Friday 3rd March) and will be moving around with my aspiring athletic child/children:
______________________________________________
(please indicate)

I will be attending from: ____________________________
(please indicate a time)

☐ I can help set-up at 7am at Pedrina Park.
☐ I am happy to be based on a specific event: ______________________
(please indicate)

Name: _________________________________

BASKETBALL
St Mary’s Basketball Club seeking players for the upcoming 2016 Summer Season. Urgently require players born 2009 (turning 8 years). Team entries due 12th Feb with season commencing Monday 20th Feb/Friday 24th Feb.
Please contact Club Secretary, Mrs Cheryl Casey on 0458 567 508.

A Documentary Movie about the Appearances of Our Lady to the Community of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Screening for one session (120 seats only) only:
Where: Hamilton Cinema, Brown Street, Hamilton
When: 7.30 pm - Friday 24th February
Tickets: $20 each, and must be pre-bought from either:
Chris Jansen 0407 719 530, or Ted Oliver 5572 2810 or 0417 167 893 or Ann-Marie Wheaton 0418 500 159