Welcome to
St. Mary’s
Primary School
Hamilton

Thank you for selecting St Mary’s Primary School for your child’s primary education.
We look forward to our partnership in their learning journey.

Jo-Anne Bond
Principal
Starting school!
The 2017 school year for all children will begin on Friday 3rd February at 8.55am.

St Mary’s School endeavours to offer a balanced curriculum where each child is encouraged to develop to their full potential in a caring and supportive environment. Underpinning everything that happens in our school is our commitment to making the presence of Christ obvious to everyone who enters. We promote this in the way the children treat each other, in their relationships with staff and in the atmosphere of respect, co-operation and friendship which permeates throughout our daily activities. Our school expectations of all members of our community are to always do your best and to follow the example of Jesus’ love for each of us by treating others the way you would like to be treated.

ALL PREP CHILDREN WILL ATTEND FULL DAYS AT SCHOOL EVERY DAY EXCEPT WEDNESDAYS (TEST DAYS). THESE REST DAYS WILL LAST UNTIL THE END OF TERM 1.

Numeracy Interviews
Staff conduct individual Numeracy Interviews with each child which involve one-to-one activities that enable our teachers to plan teaching and learning activities accurately for the needs of each student. Prep students will be allocated a time slot on one of their rest days to come in to school to enable their teacher to work with them in this area. You will be advised of your appointment day and time once school returns next year.

Literacy Testing
Individual Literacy assessments are also conducted with each child from Prep to Year 6. The information teachers gain from this testing informs teaching programs and allows staff to work in a more targeted way. Prep children will be allocated times to attend this testing on Wednesday 1st or Thursday 2nd February.

Things to remember over the holidays

Children need to bring to school:

- a library bag
- a water bottle
- an easy to open/close lunchbox, preferably with an attached lid
- a ribbon/key ring on the school bag for easy identification

Please make sure that all items & clothing are clearly labelled.
Try to break in new shoes over the holidays.
NO LACE UP school shoes or sneakers (velcro, boots & buckles are preferred please).
Classroom requirements (books, pencils etc) will be available for collection on Wednesday 1st or Thursday 2nd February. These are purchased by the school and covered by your student fee. You are asked to label and cover books as per instructions provided.
Beginning School

As the time gets closer to starting school, there are a number of things that parents can do to help their child settle into school. Here are some ideas:

- Help your child to know the difference between their fruit snack, first lunch and second lunch. Show them what you will pack for these times and discuss how much you expect them to eat at these times. Do not over pack the lunchbox. Healthy foods are encouraged at all times. Due to nut allergies of other children please do not include nuts or peanut butter in lunch boxes.

Recommendations:
- 1 small piece of fresh/dried fruit or vegetables for fruit time
- 1-2 snacks/fruit/sandwich for recess
- 1 sandwich/small snack/fruit for lunch
- An easy to manage drink bottle. Water only is allowed in the classroom drink bottle.
- Make sure your child can unwrap their sandwich. If cling wrap is difficult, pack the sandwich in an air-tight container.
- Make sure your child knows where you will meet them at the end of the day.
- Make sure they know who will collect them from school.
- If your child is insecure, it is important that they are met on time.
- If there are any changes to the usual method of travelling home from school please inform the school via letter, e-mail or phone call early on the day concerned.
- Toilets – discuss toilet protocol (washing hands, closing the toilet door, flushing the toilet, leaving the toilet area clean after use etc.)
- Make sure your child knows how to put on/take off their jumper.
- Pack spare underwear in your child’s school bag in case of a toileting accident.
- Show your child where the label on their clothing is located.
- Talk about your child’s teacher and the excitement of beginning school.
- Pass on to your child a positive attitude towards learning and the experience of school.

Most importantly of all, enjoy this holiday time with your children. Be prepared and try your best to have your children prepared too.
Good luck.
Religious Education

Religious Education is the foundation of everything we do at St. Mary’s School. It is the basis for our school and classroom behaviours and informs the topics we cover. Formally, children are taught Religion for at least 2½ hours a week.

In Prep, the children explore topics covering: themselves, families, signs of love, friendship, Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas. They participate in daily prayer, classroom liturgies, parish masses and other events throughout the year.

In particular they are taught the Sign of the Cross, the Hail Mary, the Our Father, a morning and afternoon prayer and our school prayer.

By enrolling your child at St Mary’s you have agreed to support the work of the school and parish in providing a faith based education for all students. This involves participating and attending celebrations held throughout the school year.

- Each term we hold a school mass to enable us to gather with our parish community and share in the Eucharist.
- Each class has at least one mass during the term and parents and friends are invited to join these occasions.
- We also encourage children and their families to attend weekend masses on a regular basis. Mass is held each Saturday at 6.00pm and Sunday at 10.30am. There is a children’s liturgy group which occurs on Sunday mornings during mass.
- Each family enrolling at St Mary’s is asked to make contact with our Parish Priest, Fr Paddy Mugavin, before the start of the school year. This allows Fr Paddy to greet your family and welcome you to our school and parish community.

Literacy

For the first two hours of each day the children will be engaged in uninterrupted literacy time.

During the first hour, the children will begin in a whole class group to closely work with text in a large book and enjoy a story together. Following this they move into small groups for literacy activities that are designed to focus on areas of need, specific to each group. While the children work on these activities the teacher takes small focus groups, using specialized teaching strategies to enhance their reading. The whole class then comes together to share their learning experiences.

The second hour is writing time. The teacher models the writing process for the children, as a proficient writer. Students are then involved in independent writing tasks. The teacher works with a small focus group to address specific needs and then roves around the whole class to observe and assist students. A share time completes the writing hour. Supporting our Literacy program and other key learning areas is an initiative that started in 2015, OLSEL (Oral Language Supporting Early Literacy). This includes strategies which focus on developing vocabulary, phonological awareness, sentence structure and story grammar.

Parent assistance is vital for the success of the literacy block and we encourage you to become involved. It is a rewarding experience.

The children will take home a book each night to ‘read’ or ‘share’. Please support us and your child by hearing him/her for about 10 minutes each night and by helping to learn word lists.

Children’s reading is promoted by parents reading to them and by making it a pleasurable experience.
**Handwriting**

We teach ‘Victorian Modern Cursive’ handwriting. Most of the first part of the year is spent developing children’s ability with hand and finger co-ordination. We start with tracing and copying patterns, cutting with scissors, tearing paper, pasting and working with play dough and colouring activities. Then we progress to letter formation. A laminated writing board will be sent home with your child to practise letter formation. The dot indicates the starting point for each letter.

**Writing**

Children progress through various stages of development in their writing:
- scribble
- invented letters
- strings of conventional letters
- groups of letters
- an awareness of sound/symbol relationships
- successfully writing messages independently

Encourage your child to write at home and progress naturally through the stages and ask them to read what has been written – even if it doesn’t make sense to you!

**Numeracy**

The main emphasis in the Prep Year is on number and the use of concrete materials to represent number calculations (e.g. Count out 20 teddies, order the digits 5, 7, 9 from smallest to largest and count forwards or backwards from a given number).

Children participate in informal measurement activities to explore weight, volume, length, mass, time and money.

**Integrated – Inquiry Studies**

This area of the curriculum involves studies of science, health, social science, environment and technology. These areas are combined to create large units of work that incorporate skills from all subject areas.

The units are based on the children’s experiences and are designed to promote individual inquiry. As the year progresses we often join with the Grade 1/2 children for our units of work which is a great opportunity for the Prep students to begin to extend their learning interactions with others in the school.

**Physical Education**

Once a week children will need to wear their sports uniform and shoes to school. With our specialist PE teacher, they will participate in a variety of physical activities such as athletics, ball handling, dance, games, bat/ball skills and general fitness training. Please ensure that sneakers have either manageable laces or Velcro.

Students will be allocated to one of our four House groups – Fatima (green), Lourdes (blue), Rosaria (red) and Loreto (yellow). Your Prep child will need to have a coloured t-shirt/ polo shirt for their allocated house.

These groupings earn points for positive behaviour during the week and the Sr Kathleen Memorial Cup is presented to the house with the most points at the end of the year.
Library
The Prep children participate in one hour session per week with our teacher librarian. During this time they are introduced to the routine of the school library and have the opportunity to borrow library books. All students require a library bag which helps in maintaining books and instilling proper care for resources.

The Arts
In Art, children are given experiences such as drawing, painting, clay modelling, construction, printing and textiles. The children gain an appreciation for various art works and are exposed to different mediums. Where possible, art activities are integrated with our current unit of work to bring together learning across different subject areas and therefore reinforcing concepts.

Our music program is used to teach the children a variety of action songs and dances. Concepts such as rhythm and beat are taught as well as an appreciation for different musical instruments and moods of music. All students participate in a Music and Drama lesson each week with one of our specialist teachers.

Parent Helpers
As parents you are an important part of the learning process. There are many activities that occur at school in which you can be involved. Your involvement is crucial in forming a wonderful relationship between home and school for students, staff and yourselves.
We welcome parent helpers in all aspects of our school program eg: Literacy block, Numeracy hour, PE program, excursions etc.
All parent helpers require a Working with Children Check. You can apply for a card on the Department of Justice website, select the volunteer option.

Prep & Gr. 6 Buddy Program
The Buddy program involves the Prep students being allocated a Grade 6 buddy who assists them in settling into the routines of school. The buddies are involved in coming together to eat their recess and lunch during the first few weeks of the year, sharing books together and completing some classroom activities. Each term we all get together for a buddy activity, such as visiting Sheepvention or having Melbourne Cup fun. Many children form year long relationships with their buddy that assists in developing confidence and social skills at school.

School Nurse
The school nurse will visit during the Prep year. During this visit the school nurse focuses on issues such as hearing, motor skills and co-ordination. Prior to this visit a questionnaire is sent home for parents to complete and return.
The following items need to be purchased at the school office. These will be required by each student and will be used beyond the Prep year:
- My Macquarie Word Book $7.00
- Large sized desk calculator $13.00

_It is important that these items are purchased from school and not from elsewhere to ensure the correct one is available for your child to use._

- Due to issues that arise between children and with learning time, students are not permitted to bring toys to school to play with during break times or in the classroom.
- Parent Information nights are held by each class in the school in Term 1. This meeting further informs parents of the culture of the classroom, teaching and learning in the classroom and ways you can assist your child’s education.
- Student absences need to be documented with a note immediately after the absence.
- Please remember to share your child’s Kindergarten Transition Report with us so we can best support your child’s transition to school.

NB: Due to bus timetables, school finishes at 2.15pm on the last day of each term.

### 2017 SCHOOL TERM DATES

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<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Mon 30th January</th>
<th>Fri 31st March</th>
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<td>Easter Sun 16th April</td>
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<td>Term 2</td>
<td>Tues 18th April</td>
<td>Fri 30th June</td>
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<td>Term 3</td>
<td>Mon 17th July</td>
<td>Fri 22nd September</td>
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<td>Term 4</td>
<td>Mon 9th October</td>
<td>Thurs 22nd December</td>
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### SCHOOL HOURS

**MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday to Friday</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.55am</td>
<td>11.00am</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30am</td>
<td>1.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.20pm</td>
<td>3.15pm</td>
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- School opens at 8.30am. The first bell for the day is at 8.45am to remind students and teachers that it is time to organise ourselves for a day of teaching and learning. Students move to their classrooms and ensure that they are ready to start working when the bell rings at 8.55am.
- Supervision is provided by members of staff for students from 8.30am until 3.30pm.
- 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.
St Mary's Primary School

Prayer

This is our school,
Let peace be found here,
May the rooms be full of happiness.
Let love be here,
Love of one another,
Love of all people,
Love of life,
And love of God.
Let us remember:
It takes many hands to build a house,
And many hearts to make a school.
Amen.