

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 2018 school year for all children will begin on
Thursday 1st 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 (REST DAYS).
THESE REST DAYS WILL LAST UNTIL THE END OF TERM 1.

Testing – finding out each child's strengths and challenges!

- 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.
- 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 students will be allocated times to attend Numeracy and Literacy testing on Tuesday 30th or Wednesday 31st January. You will receive a letter indicating your appointment time towards the end of the year and a reminder mid-January. You do not need to attend this activity with your child but are welcome to wait until they are finished.
- Preps will be allocated a time slot on one of their rest days to come in to school to complete their testing. You will be advised of your appointment day and time once school returns next year.

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 Tuesday 30th or Wednesday 31st January. 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 potential nut allergies of other children please do not include nuts/peanut butter/Nutella 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 the OLSEL (Oral Language Supporting Early Literacy) initiative. 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 a 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 parents require a Working with Children Check. You can apply for a card on the Department of Justice website, select the volunteer option and list St Mary's Primary School. Please present your card at our front office to be included on our register.

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

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.

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.*