

St Mary's Primary School  
Mooroopna



Parent Information Handbook  
2023

## ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

# 2023

### **Democratic Principles of St Mary's**

The programs of, and teaching in, St Mary's School must support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to: Elected Government. The rule of law. Equal Rights for all before the law. Freedom of Religion. Freedom of speech and association. The values of openness & tolerance.

#### **OUR EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

##### **Students:**

- Participation in all school activities, including those of a spiritual nature.
- Respect for each other as demonstrated by the use of good manners, appropriate dress (including the correct wearing of school uniform), and compliance with school rules and regulations as set by the School Board, and by the principal and staff.
- Pride in their personal contribution to the community.
- Loyalty to the school community.

##### **Parents:**

- Encouragement, understanding and support for the school's programs.
- Active participation in the life of the school and participation in a wide range of voluntary activities.
- Co-operation with other members of the school and parish community.
- Acceptance and active support of the Catholic ethos of the school community.
- Participation in the child's spiritual and pastoral education processes.
- The fulfilment of all financial obligations to the school community.
- A respectful attitude towards the privacy and wellbeing of other children and their families.

##### **Staff:**

- Commitment to the Catholic faith and ethos.
- Loyalty to the school/parish community.
- Integrity and professionalism.
- An overriding personal commitment to each individual child under their care.
- Sensitivity to the needs of families and parents.
- Commitment to professional and personal development.
- Commitment to school and personal 'review and development'.

## **ACCIDENTS**

Accidents and injuries, deemed serious by a First Aid trained staff member, are recorded in the First Aid Register situated in the Sick Bay. The teacher on playground duty or the one who was first informed of the incident, records the details in the First Aid Register. Sick or injured children's parents are notified by the Administration personnel.

## **AFTER SCHOOL SUPERVISION**

The bus duty teacher is required to move as quickly as possible to the bus stops at the front of the school and on Toolamba Rd. The teachers will check students' names off as children board the Bus. Bus children wait with the duty teacher for their buses. The school is not responsible for children who miss the bus and it is suggested that if a child is not capable of making their own way to the bus, that they are picked up by their parents.

Parents are encouraged to collect children from outside the classrooms at the end of the day.

Children whose parents are using the car park roundabout move to the waiting area outside the Marian Centre, where they are met by a duty teacher. This teacher will then instruct children to get in their parents' cars as each car draws level with the gate. Students using the Hall St car park roundabout must also follow the teacher's instructions.

Parents who use the longer term carpark are to meet their children in the courtyard areas of the school. No child is allowed to enter the longer term car park without adult supervision.

Students walking home via Toolamba Road are to exit the school grounds via the path between the oval and the carpark fence. Children walking to the traffic light crossing on the corner of Toolamba Rd and McLennan St are required to use the pedestrian crossing at the Church/Marian Centre exit, where a teacher will supervise.

Students exiting via Emma Street supervised by a teacher at the gate.

Children who have not been collected after ten minutes are taken to the bus duty teacher at the bus shelter at the front of the school to be supervised until a parent/carer arrives.

Children remaining after the last bus are taken to the school office to wait for their parents.

## **AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

Stepping Stones runs after school care at Mooroopna Primary School. Children who attend get on Bus 31 at the bus stop on Toolamba Rd. Their contact number is 1300 665 699. They also provide school holiday care as well. Places are limited.

TheirCare runs before and after school care at Mooroopna Park Primary School. Children who attend get on Bus 2 at the bus stop on Toolamba Rd. Their contact number is 1300 072 410.

Children must have correct money with them for the bus fare. A teacher will mark their names off on a list at the bus stop.

## **ASSEMBLY**

Assembly will take place in the Marian Centre each Monday at 2:30pm. Classes will be rostered for an Assembly Prayer. Assembly is an opportunity for the Principal to talk to the children, and to acknowledge children's achievements through weekly awards. One of our Student Leadership Teams conducts the Assembly.

## **ATTENDANCE RECORDS ETC.**

The attendance roll is a legal requirement and must be completed daily and accurately by the teacher. It is to be marked twice daily, morning and afternoon on SIMON (school administration software). The Principal is notified if any child is absent regularly. The total number of absences for each child is reported on the June and December written reports. Parents of children who miss more than 10 days of school per semester, are contacted by the Principal via an official school letter explaining the significance of absenteeism.

## BEFORE SCHOOL SUPERVISION

Children are supervised at school from 8:00 am. Children who arrive from that time are to go immediately to a designated classroom area where they can be supervised until 8:30am when they will be taken to the yard area by the duty teacher. Under no circumstances is any child to be in the yard prior to 8:30 a.m. If it is necessary for your child to be at school prior to this time on a special occasion it is essential that parents contact the principal to make special arrangements.

## BELL TIMES

8.55am	Start of Day
11.00am – 11.35am	Recess
1.35pm – 2.10pm	Lunchtime
3.20pm	End of Day

## BIKES AND SCOOTERS

Bikes and scooters are not to be ridden in the school grounds at any time. Upon arrival at school, students are to walk with their bikes/scooters to the green bike shelter for storage during the day. The bike shelter will be locked at 9:00am and opened again at the end of the school day. Bikes /scooters are not to be ridden at the front of the school until students have crossed the pedestrian crossing at the Toolamba Road / McLennan Street intersection.

Please note that all children with bikes and scooters **MUST** wear an approved safety helmet and that students under nine years of age are **NOT PERMITTED** to ride to school without adult supervision. Children are encouraged to bring locks to secure bikes and scooters during the day. **Unfortunately the school cannot take responsibility for stolen bikes or scooters.**

## BULLYING

Children are encouraged to understand what bullying is and to report any incidents that happen to either themselves or to others to teaching staff. Bullying audits are also conducted twice a year to identify any bullying behaviour that occurs at school and out of school hours.

Bullying is not tolerated at St Mary's in any form and there are always consequences for this type of behaviour. Once the incident has been dealt with, both the bully and the target work with staff members to prevent it from happening again. A large percentage of children who exhibit bullying behaviour have significant emotional problems and as a Catholic school our aim is to help all children feel better about themselves. We find that this approach is the most successful. Our Family Advice Portal has some links to fact sheets and websites about bullying. The Family Advice Portal can be found via the school newsletter.



When someone says or does something *unintentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's **RUDE.**

When someone says or does something *intentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's **MEAN.**

When someone says or does something *intentionally* hurtful and they *keep doing it* even when you tell them to stop or show them that you're upset—that's **BULLYING.**

## BUS SERVICE

There are a number of buses that service St Mary's and parents are instructed to contact Jacobson's Bus Company (5820 3700) to confirm routes and drop offs. Children's names are marked off as they get on the bus at the end of the day. Children who are not capable or responsible enough to make their way to the bus after school should be picked up by adults until they are capable of doing so.

## CATHOLIC EDUCATION SANDHURST LTD

The Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd is in Bendigo. The Director of Education is Paul Desmond. St Mary's is situated in the Goulburn Valley Deanery of the Diocese and the Education Consultant is Mr. Paul Bissinella.

## CHILDREN LEAVING THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

Once a child has arrived at school the child is not allowed to leave the school grounds under any circumstances, without written permission of the parent. If children are collected during class time, they must be signed out, at the Office, by the child's parent. Visitors are not permitted to go directly to classrooms for any reason. If someone other than a parent is collecting them, parents must notify this beforehand.

## **CLEANING**

Reid Commercial Cleaning is our school cleaning company.

Teachers' requirements for Cleaning:

1. Classroom bins are emptied daily by student monitors
2. Children's belongings must be packed away each night and all papers removed from tables & floors.

### *Playground Cleaning:*

The cleanliness of the school grounds is the responsibility of all children.

Wrapped food must be eaten in the courtyard areas of the school. Children are not permitted to go to other playground areas until all wrapped food is eaten.

## **CLASSROOM CLEANING:**

Whilst classrooms are cleaned once per week, it is the responsibility of the classroom teacher and children to keep the classroom neat and tidy at all times. Carpets and windows are cleaned annually.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY / LOYALTY**

All matters pertaining to the School Policy of St. Mary's and the progress and development of children at this school are to be treated with the strictest confidence.

Discussion between staff members concerning any child's progress is always discreet.

Loyalty and support for each other requires that we respect and appreciate the views and contributions of other members of staff and that we refrain from making negative comments at all times, particularly outside the school community.

Trust and confidence in each other are essential if we are to resemble a truly Christian faith community.

Professionalism requires confidentiality and loyalty. Parents who work in our classrooms are bound by the same ethics. Student academic levels or behaviour should not be discussed among parents.

## **CROSSING ROADS**

Children are to use the monitored school crossings at the intersection of McLennan Street and Toolamba Road. We recommend that children are reminded about the importance of road safety and that teachers and parents discuss this regularly with the children.

## **CURRICULUM**

The Victorian Curriculum is the core planning resource for our school. Parents can view the curriculum at <http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>

## **DROPPING OFF / COLLECTION OF STUDENTS**

Parents are asked to take extreme care when dropping off and collecting students before and after school. Safety of our students is of paramount importance. Children are not permitted to walk in the car park alone. Parents must escort children to and from the car at all times.

All parents are required to exit the school grounds safely in accordance with car park signage.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Staff and students are familiar with the Evacuation Plan that is used. A map of the emergency procedure is on display in all classrooms near the exit door. A practice drill and a review of the drill will be held each term. Children will be exposed to a variety of drill types.

## **EXCURSIONS**

Excursions are generally related to units of work being undertaken in the classrooms. They are seen to be an integral part of the school curriculum. They are invaluable in stimulating the children's interest and are always preceded and followed up by class work relating to the excursion. It is expected therefore that, unless a serious reason prohibits it, all children will normally take part in these activities.

## **FIRST AID**

Yard duty teachers use the First Aid bag supplies to clean minor sores and apply Band-Aids as needed. For incidents requiring more attention, children are sent to the office with a 'Seeking Medical Assistance' card

where they are seen by a staff member. If the injury is warranted serious enough, particularly any head injuries, parents are notified.

It is therefore extremely important that all family contact details are up to date and accurate. If your contact details change, please see office staff as soon as possible. Our sick bay is located next to the school office and children are always supervised when spending time there. An injury report is completed and a copy sent home with the child in the case of a serious injury.

Each classroom has a First Aid kit for minor cuts and abrasions.

### **FLAGPOLE**

Senior students will be given the responsibility of raising and lowering the Australian and Aboriginal flags each day. The flagpole is located in the courtyard area.

### **FOOD**

Morning tea and lunch are eaten inside the classrooms under teacher supervision. Whole nuts, nut products (eg. Peanut Butter or Nutella) and egg are not permitted at school. Please be mindful to send food that is ready to eat and easily accessible. Staff cannot heat up food for the children.

### **FRUIT BREAK**

The children are encouraged to have a snack of either fresh fruit or vegetables during an extra break during the school day. No other snack food is permitted during fruit break.

### **HEAD LICE**

Parents are asked to treat their children at home if they contract head lice. Once the child has been treated they may return to school. When the school is notified that a child has head lice, their class is checked by a staff member (permission is given through the general permission form sent home at the start of the year). If a child is found to have live lice, parents are contacted and the child is sent home for treatment. It is also a school policy that all long hair is tied back to help reduce this problem.

### **HATS**

As a Sunsmart School, staff and students must wear broad brim hats when outside for an activity or during recess and lunch times during Terms One and Four. Children who do not have an appropriate hat are to be seated in a specified shaded area. Sunscreen is provided and teachers provide students with time to apply sunscreen before recess and lunchtime.

Students are also encouraged to wear their hats on sunny days in Terms Two and Three.

### **LOST PROPERTY**

All unclaimed property is to be placed in the Lost Property. Named articles will be returned to students. Unnamed and unclaimed articles will be sent to the St. Vinnies shop at the end of each term with unnamed uniforms going to the second hand uniform shop. Parents are asked to ensure that all school uniforms are clearly labelled.

### **LUNCH ORDERS**

Lunch orders from Subway are available on Fridays. Order forms are available from classroom teachers and the office. Orders are to be handed in on Thursday morning to classroom teachers.

### **MARIAN CENTRE**

Any staff or school groups wishing to book the hall for a function must do so through the school office. The Marian Centre is not available for private hire.

### **MASSES**

Throughout the year all children will be taken to the following School/Parish Masses:

- Beginning Year School Mass
- Ash Wednesday Mass
- Mother's Day Liturgy
- Mass of Compassion
- School Feast Day
- End of Year Mass

## **MEDICATION**

Parents must inform the class teacher if their child brings any medication to school so the Office staff can administer it appropriately.

Medication that has been prescribed by a doctor can be administered with a signed authorisation form. The school cannot administer paracetamol, antihistamines, or any other over the counter medications without a pharmaceutical label detailing students name, and dosage and a signed authority form.

Older children are permitted to take responsibility for their asthma puffers but **all other medications must to be kept in the Sick Bay.**

It is compulsory for all children who have asthma to have an **Asthma Action Plan**. This is required for all children who have the asthma box ticked on the enrolment form even if they rarely suffer from it. Action plans are available from your GP.

Children suffering from any form of Anaphylaxis allergies must also have an action plan which is obtained through your GP. Once you have obtained an action plan a copy must be passed on to the school.

For information regarding children's exclusion from school because of infectious diseases please consult the exclusions list.

## **MESSAGES**

Class time is key learning time and is not to be interrupted. Only messages of an **extremely** important nature will be phoned through to classrooms during class time. The usual method of delivery will be a note sent via office tubs.

## **NAPLAN**

Students in Grades 3 & 5 are required to take part in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The testing takes place in Term 2 and results are available in Term 3.

## **NEWSLETTER**

The school newsletter is released to families every 2 weeks. It is also available on the school's website, through PAM and Simon Everywhere, and through a link on our Facebook page. This newsletter is a major communication link between school and home and contains information of coming events and other matters to be brought to parents' attention.

Please read the newsletter carefully and refer to it as necessary. Contributions from children, teachers and parents are always welcome. The deadline for typing purposes is 11:00 a.m. Tuesday.

Please note that parents wanting to include articles/ notices in the school newsletter are requested to seek permission from the Principal/ Deputy Principal. Items which are promoting individual businesses will not be included.

## **OFFICE TUBS**

- Each class has a class office tub into which all notes etc that need to go to the office are placed.
- The class tubs are sent to the office by 9:30 a.m. and collected by 3:15 p.m. each day.
- Letters, notes, messages for students are placed in the office tubs during the day.

## **PARENT ACCESS MODULE (PAM) & SIMON EVERYWHERE APP**

Parents are able to access student reports, teacher comments and student absences via the online portal PAM. <http://pam.smmooroopna.catholic.edu.au/>. Please call for passwords re-sets.

PAM is also available through the Simon Everywhere app.

## **PARENTS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION**

This group of parents works on a voluntary basis for the school. They organise social and fundraising activities, support families in need and work in many ways to provide better facilities for the school and to improve the educational opportunity of every child in the school. All parents are most welcome to be involved. Suggestions/ideas are always welcome. Meetings are held twice a term.

## **PARENT HELPERS**

Any adults helping classroom teachers are required to have a VOLUNTEER'S Working With Children Check. WWCC's need to be completed online and there is no cost involved in the process. A list of parents with current WWCC is kept at the administration office.

All parent helpers must read the schools' "Parent Helper Guidelines" prior to helping in the classrooms.

## **STUDENT GOAL SETTING MEETINGS**

These are held each term with parents being invited to attend the Term 2 & 3 meetings. Parents are asked to contact the class teacher to organise another appointment time if the given time slots are not suitable.

## **PARENTAL CONTACT WITH CLASS TEACHER**

Because teachers are busy before school hearing children read or preparing for classes, parents needing to discuss issues are asked to make an appointment.

## **PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION**

Teachers are vigilant when supervising the conduct of pupils in the school ground. Duty staff wear a hi vis vest and carry a First Aid bag. Children requiring medical assistance (other than that able to be administered by the yard duty teacher) are sent to the Office to be assessed.

## **PREP ENROLMENTS**

Enrolments of Prep students commence in May of the previous year. Parents are notified about new enrolments through the school newsletter, the parish bulletin, the local newspaper and through the kindergartens.

Interviews for new enrolments will be conducted from June.

Prep Enrolments are only considered where the child turns 5 years of age on or before 30th April of the year of intended commencement at the School.

However, it is required that any child who turns five in the year of commencement will meet with the Principal to determine their readiness.

Parents will need to provide a Birth Certificate, an Immunisation Record and a Certificate of Baptism with their application.

Our Prep transition program takes place early in Term 4.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All members of staff undertake regular training to further their own professional development as well as furthering the school's aims and objectives.

## **PUPIL ABSENCES**

A note prior to the absence, an absentee form (via Pam or Simon Everywhere) or phone call from parents indicating the reason for a student's absence is required. Parents are asked to complete Parent Notified Absence via the Parent Access Module/Simon Everywhere. If a student is absent without a reason a text message is sent to parents/guardians at 10am asking them to contact the school to explain the absence.

Parents and Guardians are able to record a student's absence directly in **Parent Access Module** on the day of the absence. <http://pam.smmooroopna.catholic.edu.au/ParentNotifiedAbsence.aspx> or through the Simon Everywhere app.

A record of attendance is kept on SIMON. All absence notes, absentee forms and records of phone calls are recorded in SIMON. This data is uploaded to the Administration computer daily. All student attendance and absences can be viewed on the **Parent Access Module** and on the Simon Everywhere app.

## **PUPILS' VALUABLES**

The school discourages children from bringing valuables to school. Whilst we will take reasonable measures to find valuables that are lost or misplaced, the ultimate responsibility for the care of these items must rest with the children. Parents are advised to give careful consideration before allowing their children to bring valuables to school.

School staff are unable to climb on the roof to retrieve balls

## **REPORTS**

Written reports are made available at the end of each semester via the **Parent Access Module**. These indicate each child's progress and the expected level of achievement.



## **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The School Council consists of community members, including the Parish Priest, the Principal, staff members and elected parent members.

The School Council meets twice a term to discuss school improvement and strategic planning. Parents are invited to present any suggestions/comments to the Council via a letter to the School Council Chair.

## **SCHOOL FEES**

See attached sheet for current fee structure. Our school fees go up slightly each year as per the Educational Australian Consumer Price Index (CPI). This is approximately 5% a year.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

School policies are available on the school website or directly from the Principal.

## **SICK CHILDREN**

If children become very sick during class time the Administration Officer is notified and the child is sent to the office where he /she will be assessed and either asked to rest for ten minutes (after which they will either return to class or be sent home) or in the case of severe illness parents will be contacted immediately. **Please note that Administration staff and teachers must respond to the symptoms that children indicate and cannot make assumptions regarding the honesty of the information provided by the student.**

Parents must inform the class teacher if their child brings any medication to school so the Office staff can administer it at the appropriate time. No medications will be administered without written dosage instructions provided by a doctor.

Older children are able to take responsibility for their asthma puffers but all other medications must be kept in the Sick Bay.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS**

Each year the Catholic Education Office allows primary parish schools to hold a number of staff professional development days and are pupil free. Parents are notified of these dates well in advance in our school newsletter.

## **STUDENT MANAGEMENT**

Our aim at St. Mary's is for each student to respect themselves and those around them. They are expected to act responsibly and take responsibility for their actions.

Our positive behaviour program (PBIS) promotes good behaviour and places a great emphasis on acknowledging desirable behaviour. If a student breaches school rules a PBIS slip will be completed and recorded on our data base. After receiving 3 slips, students' parents will be notified via letter and after 6 notifications, a meeting with the student, their parents and class teacher will take place. In the event of a child receiving 9 notifications, a meeting will be arranged with the principal.

Sometimes when children are emotional they may forget specific details of upsetting incidents and the message parents may receive at home might not be entirely accurate. It is very important that if parents do have any concerns about an incident at school that they contact the child's teacher to clarify exactly what has happened.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

St Mary's integrates the use of technology into the curriculum a variety of ways and play a very important role in Teaching and Learning. We have banks of ipads that are utilised in the classrooms each day. Our Gr 5/6 students are part of a 1:1 program where they have their own ipad to use at school and at home. There is a technology levy included in the school fees.

## **TOILET**

Children are encouraged to go to the toilet at break times rather than during class times. Children who need to go during class times are to go in pairs of the same sex.

Girls Toilet: a sanitary bin is installed in a cubicle of the senior girls' toilet.

**UNIFORM**

A concerted effort is made to monitor the students' wearing of correct uniforms. A note from parents is expected for any child out of uniform. Only head bands in the school colours are allowed to be worn. The only jewellery children are permitted to wear are silver or gold studs & sleeper earrings (one per ear) and religious symbols on necklaces. Flat rings such as signet rings are acceptable. Nail polish and tattoos are also not permitted.

School sports uniform can be worn to school on days of sport or physical education.

Please see the attached Uniform Policy regarding this.

**WET WEATHER/HOT WEATHER**

In the event of wet weather or days where the temperature exceeds 34 degrees, the students will stay inside during play times.



## *Vision Statements*

At St Mary's we believe that:

- We are all called to be living witnesses to the Gospel values of love, forgiveness, understanding and respect.
- Every child is given a quality education that provides them with the knowledge, skills and values to make informed decisions as committed contributors to society.
- Each person in our school community is unique and nurtured to achieve their full potential.
- We ensure that children understand our past stories, celebrate the present and build a thriving community and environment.
- We create and maintain a spirit of social justice and selfless giving, making Jesus real in our everyday lives.



### *Identity Statement*

St Mary's children are called to let their light shine as living witnesses to Gospel values.

### *Graduate Outcomes*

We aim that the children who graduate from St Mary's are:

- Compassionate and have a sense of social justice based on Gospel values.
- Filled with faith, hope and love.
- Respectful in their interactions with others, the environment and accountable for their choices.
- Responsible, show initiative and have confidence to take their own path and reach their full potential.
- Inquiring learners willing to take risks, ask questions and problem solve.
- Resilient, optimistic and aspire to reach their dreams.