Principal’s Message

Dear Parents

Welcome to the beginning of the 2016 school year at St Mary’s. It’s great to be back!! I hope that you had a peaceful and happy time with your family over Christmas and the New Year.

Welcome to Our New Families

We especially welcome all the new students and families to St Mary’s School. We hope that you quickly feel a strong sense of belonging. Our Prep children have settled in extremely well and the only tears seen were from some of the parents!

The school year has commenced very smoothly thanks to the good preparation of all staff and the co-operation of the students. We are currently in the midst of 2 SWELL weeks (Student Wellbeing) with many class and school activities relating to student goals, school rules and protocols, SEL competencies and values education.

Welcome Back to Mrs Faye Canty

A big welcome back to Mrs Faye Canty, who has returned after taking a year’s leave to complete a Master of Education at Monash University.

Welcome

A big welcome to Mrs Kathy Gottliebsen, who has been appointed as the new parish Pastoral Associate and will also work closely with our school. We also welcome Britt Watkins, our new School Counsellor, who will work every Tuesday along with Frances Thurgood who will work every Monday and Thursday. Please see the attached 2016 Staff List for full details of staff placements this year.

Beginning of the Year School Mass - this Sunday @ 5.30pm

The Beginning of the Year School Mass will be held this Sunday 7th February at the special time of 5.30pm in the School Auditorium. All families are expected to attend this special Mass to mark the beginning of our school year. During the Mass all Staff will take part in the Ceremony of Commissioning. The Year 6 students will also be commissioned as student leaders of our school and will receive their leadership hat and all classes will present their 2016 class prayer cloth. Please come along to celebrate the beginning of the school year and to ask for God’s blessings on all our families, the School and Parish.

Community Get Togethers

All year levels have organised ‘Community Get Togethers’ over the next few weeks. The purpose of each gathering is to enable parents, students and teachers to meet and get to know each other better in a relaxed and social atmosphere. Drinks and snacks will be provided.

The dates are as follows:

- Wednesday 3rd February - Prep Family BBQ  6pm - 8pm
- Thursday 4th February - Year 5/6 Get Together  3.30pm - 5pm
- Thursday 11th February - Year 1/2 Get Together  3.30pm– 5pm
- Friday 12th February - Year 3/4 Get Together  3.30pm - 5pm

After School Sport

Extra-curricula activities:

Every Monday:
Year Prep, 1, 2
Every Wednesday:
Years 3 - 6

Birthdays:

4th Angel
4th Ominidu
6th Prabhnoor
7th Atong
Free After School Sports Activities Begin Next Week:
The Active After School Sports program will continue to run this year from 3.30pm to 4.30pm on
- Mondays (Prep, Year 1 and 2) and
- Wednesdays (Year 3, 4, 5, and 6)
The program begins next Monday February 8th and Wednesday February 10th. Please note both After
School Hours programs are free and provide a great opportunity for your child to be involved in an ex-
tra curricula activity that keeps them fit and involved in sporting activities.

Parent Teacher Meet and Greet / 3 Way Conversations - Monday 15th February
The school is holding Parent Teacher Meet and Greet / 3 Way Conversations on Monday 15th February,
in the School Auditorium. A notice will be sent home this week. Please book online as soon as possible in
order for you to have an appointment. The children will be dismissed at 12.30pm on this day.

Parking
Please remember the bus bay outside the school in New Street should only be used as a drop off and pick
up point for cars. At all times the driver should remain in the car. The maximum time allowed to stay in
the parking bay is 5 minutes. Drivers not following these Council rules risk the chance of receiving a fine
from the Greater City of Dandenong. Under no circumstance should you leave your car unattended in this
area.

Dandenong Tutoring Program
I strongly recommend the Dandenong Tutoring Program, which runs every Saturday morning in the St
Mary’s school Auditorium from 9.30am to 12.30pm for any student in Year 3, 4, 5 and 6. It is also
available to high school students from Year 7 to Year 12. This program attracts many students from 64
local schools in Dandenong and neighbouring suburbs and is a free service offered by the St Vincent de
Paul Society. The volunteer tutors are experienced and skilful in working with school children from Year
3 to Year 12. The tutors work with either 1, 2 or 3 children at a time and assist children in many areas
including support for their homework and improving literacy and numeracy skills. Any child attending
this program would find it very helpful.
We are so lucky to have this service operating out of our school premises and I highly recommend it to
our school community. Enrolment forms are available at the school office or you can just come along at
9.30am on a Saturday morning and ask to speak to the Program Coordinator, Maddie.

Together with the Staff of St Mary's I look forward to serving the families and children of our wonderful
School Community over what will be an exciting, and I’m sure fulfilling, 2016 school year.

See you all on Sunday @5.30pm at the Beginning of School Year Mass and Staff commissioning and as
well at the Grade level ‘Community Get Togethers’ over the next 2 weeks.

Have a great week
Greg White, Principal

Volunteers needed!
Do you have any spare time on a Monday to come and help us in the kitchen?
Or on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday to help in the garden?
Please contact the Office or Cristina Gostimir for more information.
cgostimir@smdandenong.catholic.edu.au
Learning Circles
Every Thursday
Beginning in Week 4
3.25pm - 3.45pm
In the Family Space

Come along with your family and share ideas for learning at home!

FREE giveaways each week!!
Education In Faith

Welcome back to another wonderful year in 2016. This year we will focus as a school community on ‘The Year of Mercy’.

To begin our school year you are invited to attend the Beginning of the Year School Mass. If your child is receiving a Sacrament (Eucharist or Confirmation or Reconciliation) this year, this will also be their presentation Mass. This is a great way to begin our school year as a faith community. All families of all faiths are invited to attend.

**When:** Sunday 7th February, 5:30pm

**Where:** St. Mary’s School Auditorium

Looking forward to see all families at this Mass.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

**CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)**

School camps provide children with inspiring experiences in the great outdoors, excursions encourage a deeper understanding of how the world works and sports teach teamwork, discipline and leadership. All are part of a healthy curriculum. CSEF will be provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

**If you hold a valid means-tested concession card** or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible for CSEF. A special consideration category also exists for asylum seeker and refugee families.

The allowance is paid to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of your child. The annual CSEF amount per student is:

- **$125 for primary school students**
- **$225 for secondary school students.**

**How to Apply**

We will be sending home application forms this week. They need to be completed and returned to the Office by the end of Term 1.