

eNewsletter

Thursday 6 February 2020



Dear Parents and Caregivers ,

We have started the year in earnest with our first full week of the new school year and as I have walked around school this week, I have been really amazed at how settled the children have been in returning to school. They seem to have quickly settled back into the routines of school and even our newest children at St Mary's, our Foundation students, appear to settled into the new year really quickly.

This year, one of our major focus areas is to improve our communication with parents and caregivers and also with the wider community. Over the last twelve months our school has been working with an internationally respected consultant in this area, Tony Dalton, who works in many schools across Victoria but also in Canada and Scotland.

Tony will be working with us again throughout this year to help us reflect on our current communication strategies and identify areas where further improvement can be made. We recognise the critical importance of effective communication between the school and home. We also recognise that at times, our communication has been an area in which we need to improve.

This year there will be a number of strategies we will introduce not only communicate more effectively but engage parents more in their children's education. Georgie Peel, our Wellbeing and Community Engagement leader has already started a Facebook page that parents and caregivers can use to find out about what is going on at school. Georgie, Eliza Griffiths and Jess McMahon will also be working with the staff to implement Seesaw. Seesaw is a secure online platform that parents can use to see what their children are learning at school. Seesaw has been very successfully used in a large number of schools across Australia and we hope it will enable our parents to get a better understanding of what their children are doing at school.

Another development is that our teachers have made a commitment to walk the children out to the hub to be dismissed at the end of the day. We are hoping that parents will get into the habit of coming into the hub to collect their children as this will give them a chance to catch up with teachers for an informal chat.

I appreciate that parents are often very busy and that your time is precious. However, I am urging our parent community to make an effort this year to support and participate in our school community team. This group of mums have done an amazing job in fundraising and supporting our school community over the last few years but they are few in number and they really need your help. As the old saying goes, '*many hands make light work*', and our school would be significantly impacted without them. If you think you can help, even in a small way, please talk to Jess Marsh, Meg Harrington or Natalee Louder (community@smararat.catholic.edu.au) or come and ask Jess or Jane in the office, myself or Georgie. We need you and would welcome your assistance.

God Bless,
Bill

IMPORTANT NOTE: Coronavirus Alert

We have been instructed by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria to inform parents and caregivers that any child who has been in mainland China on or after February 1 2020 should not attend school for 14 days after the date they left China.

TERM 1

DATES

FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY
Opening Mass at 9.30am

WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRAURY
Foundation Rest Day

FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY
Assembly @ 2.40pm
Middle Learning Community

TUESDAY 18 FEBRUARY
Joint SAC/Community Meeting
@ 6pm

WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRAURY
Foundation Rest Day

WEDNESDAY 26 FEBRAURY
Foundation Rest Day
Ash Wednesday

THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY
Student Free Day—Staff PD
school closed

FRIDAY 28 FEBRUARY
Student Free Day—Staff PD
school closed

THURSDAY 5 MARCH
School Photos

FRIDAY 6 MARCH
Assembly @ 2.40pm
Senior Learning Community

MONDAY 9 MARCH
Labour Day Public Holiday

WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH
Foundation at school
No more rest days for the remainder of Term

FRIDAY 13 MARCH
Assembly @ 2.40pm
Junior Learning Community

FRIADAY 20 MARCH
Athletics Carnival

FRIDAY 27 MARCH
Last Day of Term 1



**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**
to the following
students who
celebrate their
birthdays this week:

**Justin C
Izabelle B
Sienna H
Alexander J**

FROM THE OFFICE

ANNUAL PRIVACY REMINDER

Our school collects, uses, discloses and stores student and parent personal information for standard school functions or where permitted by law, as stated in the school's privacy policy.

Please take the time to remind yourself of the school collection's statement, attached in this newsletter.

For more information about privacy, please see St Mary's Parish Primary School Privacy Policy which is available on our website at www.smararat.catholic.edu.au

OFFICE HOURS

The St Mary's School Office is open from 8.30am until 4.00pm
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
Tuesdays 8.30am—3.30pm.

FEES

Fee statements have been set home this week. We encourage families to use direct debits which can be fortnightly, monthly, termly or yearly payments. Please call in to the office to fill in a direct debit form if you haven't done so already—this form needs to be completed and returned to the office asap.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP POINTS

Students are able to enter the school grounds via the ramp and the double gates on Moore Street. The gates will be opened at 8.30am and children will be supervised in the yard from this time.

At the end of each day, class teachers will walk the students out to the Davey Hub. Parents are able to meet children either in the Davey Hub or out on the grass/decked areas. We would like to remind all parents to be especially careful when dropping off and picking up your children. Please **refrain from double parking** in Moore Street and take care when backing out of car spaces to ensure the safety of all children.

SUNSMART POLICY

All students are required to wear a school sun hat during Terms 1 and 4 while playing outside. If your child forgets their hat they will have to play in the Davey Hub. Hats are available from the office for \$10. Please make sure that your child's hat is named!

FEE ASSISTANCE INFORMATION

CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF) FORMS

CSEF forms are now available at the office for all eligible state concessions card holders. Forms need to be returned by Wednesday 19 February. Where an eligible application is received the CSEF benefit is \$125 for primary school students. This benefit will be paid directly to the school and will offset it against the applicable student Fee account, thus reducing the total fees payable. Family Fee Assistance is also available from the school for eligible families (parents/carers holding a HCC/Pension card).

CONVEYANCE ALLOWANCE

2020 Conveyance Allowance forms are now available from the office. These are for Country Bus Travellers that are required to travel more than 4.8km to their nearest bus stop. This does not include town bus travel.

THE
EDUCATION
STATE

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund helps ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government's commitment to breaking the link between a student's background and their outcomes.

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 is 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

ELIGIBILITY

Must be a current health care or pension card holder & in the parents name, not in a students name.



SkoolBag

Don't forget to download our school's SkoolBag app to ensure that you are kept in the loop on:

- * School newsletters
- * Notices
- * Events
- * Cancellations
- * Reminders
- * ...and more!

INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

Just download the "SkoolBag" app on your phone, open the app and add our school!

St. Mary's Catholic Church Mass Times

	Ararat	Lake Bolac*	Glenthompson**
Saturday	6.00pm		
Sunday	10.30am	8.30am	8.30am

* Lake Bolac Mass 1st, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays

** Glenthompson Mass 2nd Sunday

CONTACT US

PHONE: 03 5352 5460

ADDRESS: PO BOX 92, Ararat, VIC 3377

EMAIL: ararat@ballarat.catholic.org.au

WEBSITE: www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

(Download the Church Bulletin from the site above)

PRIEST: Fr Andrew Hayes

adrew.hayes@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Parish Centre

St. Mary's Parish Centre is available for hire Monday-Sunday and is ideal for Conferences, Meetings, and Family celebrations, large or small gatherings. It also boasts an Industrial Kitchen. Ring Joyce at the Parish Office to organise a tour 03 5352 5460. Rates are as low as \$100 for the whole day.



Dear St Mary's Families

HOST FAMILIES NEEDED!

Hosting an exchange student can be a truly rewarding experience for the whole family



Welcome a new family member into your home

HOST FAMILIES NEEDED 2020

- ✓ Experience a foreign culture firsthand
- ✓ Be exposed to a new language at home
- ✓ Rediscover and share the beauty of Australia
- ✓ Develop friendships that last a lifetime

We have a wonderful group of students arriving in May, July and August 2020 for 3, 5 or 10 months and are excitedly waiting to hear news of their host family in Australia.

All students have a wide range of interests and hobbies.

If your family can offer a friendly, supportive and caring home environment, contact us today

1300 135 331 or info@studentexchange.org.au

www.studentexchange.org.au/hosting
experienceiseverything





POP UP CRICKET PROGRAM

SUPPORTED BY **MELBOURNE RENEGADES**



- For kids of all abilities from 5 to 10 years old
- Learn new skills through fun game-based activities and play modified games of cricket
- All equipment provided
- Fun and safe environment

SIGN UP NOW TO GET YOUR CRICKET BLAST PACK!

Includes a ball, drink bottle and drawstring bag



Melbourne Renegades - Junior Blasters Pop Up Program – Ararat

First Session Monday 10th February: 'Free Come & Try' 4:15pm – 5:15pm @ Gordon St Oval

Monday's 4:15pm – 5:15pm @ Gordon St Oval

Dates – Term 1 2019 February: 10th, 17th, 24th (Monday's)

Term 1 2019 March: 2nd, 16th (Monday's)

Program is most suitable for children in Prep, Grade 1, and Grade 2. Cost is \$50 for the 5-week program which includes a Cricket Blast pack! All equipment is provided. So, what are you waiting for, come along and join in all the fun and excitement! For more information contact Melbourne Renegades Participation Officer Joel Quarrell on 0466 853 597 or jquarrell@cricketvictoria.com.au Register online now at playcricket.com.au!

**JOIN THE FUN AT YOUR LOCAL CENTRE
REGISTER AT PLAYCRICKET.COM.AU**

OFFICIAL KIDS
PROGRAM

