

St Gerard's Newsletter

Term 1, Week 2

06 February 2026



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



At our Give Me 5 Picnic, wellbeing begins with being together — connection is our superpower.

Give Me 5 Prayer

Loving God,
thank you for the gift of our families
and our school community.

Thank you for our Give Me 5 evening —
for the time shared,
the food enjoyed
and the connections made.

Help us continue to look out for one another,
to include, encourage
and show kindness each day.

May what we shared together
continue to strengthen our wellbeing
and our sense of belonging.

Amen.



@st.gerards3175

Principal - Mr Paul Cowan
principal@sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au
71 Gladstone Road, Dandenong North 3175



<https://www.facebook.com/stgerardsps>

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

Here we are at the end of our first full week of school for the year.

This week saw all our 'regular' programs such as Italian, P.E., Visual Art and Performing Arts commence. We also had our **first Before School Reading on Wednesday morning and our first Before School Skipping on Thursday morning**. Families are more than welcome to come **from 8.30am on Wednesdays and Thursdays and start the day by reading and exercising together**.

In addition to these 'regular' programs we had some very significant events this week.

Last night (Thursday) we had our **Give Me 5 Family Night** which was a fantastic way to start the year and bring our whole school community together. Congratulations and thank you to all our 'class teams' for your efforts. Your creations will look wonderful in our recently upgraded garden space outside our Prep - Year 3/4 classrooms. Our Give Me 5 principles of *Be Spirit Filled, Be Cooperative, Be Respectful, Be Positive and Be Your Best* were certainly on display. I would like to thank **Ms Nicole Fernandez for her leadership, organisation and coordination** and all our staff for their support.

Today we celebrated our **Beginning of School Year Mass in the church** and it was wonderful to see families come and join us. This Mass fills us with optimism for the year ahead and is the first time we celebrated our faith together as a whole school in 2026. As part of this celebration, **our Year 6 Student Leadership Badges and Hats were blessed and they were then presented at our School Assembly**. We know that these children will have a positive impact on St Gerard's throughout 2026 as they share their gifts, talents and enthusiasm while developing their leadership skills. Congratulations to all our Student Leaders, we are all very proud of you!

Now that we are all getting back into familiar routines, a reminder **that our school gates are opened at 8.40am each morning. If children arrive or are dropped at school before this time there is a genuine safety concern as they are unsupervised and outside the school grounds**. Also when it is raining there is no shelter. Therefore I am asking families to drop their children off after 8.40am or wait with them until the gates are opened.

At the end of the day I am requesting families in cars to reduce the traffic congestion in McNab Court. **Families that arrive before 3.25pm are asked to park in the carpark. Joining the drop off/ pick up line, particularly just before the pedestrian crossing, creates a backlog of cars down the laneway and prevents families from parking in the car park, which causes issues and frustration. Please note that the pedestrian gate from McNab Court will be opened every afternoon to assist with our end of day dismissal. Also, the driveway from Gladstone Road is an EXIT only.** We are asking that families **enter the car park via McNab Court and the speed limit in the laneway and carpark is 5 km/h.** I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Cont'd

For the safety of all our children and their families we ask that you refrain from walking in front of and in between cars. **We are asking that families please use the Pedestrian Crossing to access the carpark so that they are not walking near the cars leaving the pick up zone. Children and families can also leave the school site safely by walking along the side of the Church.** In addition to the safety aspect, this is a good opportunity to model crossing roads safely. Last year we introduced some additional visual reminders and the children will be reminded of this in class.

A reminder to those families who have children with a **Medical Management Plan** that if there are changes to any aspect of the plan you need to **contact the School Office**. **It is vital that the information we have here at school is current and accurate and that the plan is not out of date.**

Communication between the school and families is an important aspect of a child's learning and helps to build our school community. Seesaw is the online platform used to link classrooms and families. All Seesaw accounts have been rolled over to our 2026 classes and accounts established for our new students. I am asking that families please check that in addition to your child's account there is a family/ parent account for each child. If there is an issue please contact your child's classroom teacher(s).

We are still in the process of establishing a new online permission platform as **Operoo has ceased operations in Australia**. This is progressing and we are hoping to have information for families as soon as possible.

Lastly, please see the information contained in this Newsletter regarding our AFL AUSKICK and SUPERKICK programs.

God bless.

Paul Cowan
PRINCIPAL



Religious

Key Dates

Sacraments 2026

First Reconciliation:

- Tuesday, 24th February, 2026 First Reconciliation Family Workshop, 6:30pm
- Thursday, 12th March, 2026 First Reconciliation Reflection Day, students may wear casual
- Thursday, 19th March, 2026 First Reconciliation at 6.30pm
- Friday, 20th March, 2026, 2:50 pm First Reconciliation Assembly

First Communion:

- Sunday, 14th June, 2026, First Communion, 10:30am

Confirmation:

- Saturday, 16th May, 2026 Confirmation, 5:30pm

Whole School Mass

Ash Wednesday: 18th February, 9:15

Level Mass

Yrs: Foundation, 5/6O & 5/6T	Thursday 5th March, 9:15am
Yrs 3/4ST & 3/4WL	Thursday 12th March, 9:15am
Yrs 1/2FB & 1/2S	Thursday 19th March, 9:15am

Reconciliation

Year 4S & 4W:	Thursday, 26th Feb at 10:15
Years 5/6O & 5/6T:	Thursday 12th March, 10:15am

Other Important Dates for Religion

17th Feb	Shrove Tuesday and Subway
17th March:	Wear a Touch of Green with school uniform for St Patrick's Day
TBA:	Delegation of Yr 6 leaders attend St. Patrick's Day Mass at Cathedral
31st March	<i>The Passion</i>
17th April:	Holy Thursday
18th April:	Good Friday Day of Fast and Abstinence
19th April:	Holy Saturday
20th April:	Easter Sunday

Religious News

CARITAS AUSTRALIA PROJECT COMPASSION

Project Compassion

Caritas Australia's annual Lenten campaign brings Australians together in the global fight against poverty, promoting justice and upholding the dignity of all. On Ash Wednesday, Project Compassion boxes will be distributed to every class, with each class given a fundraising target to work towards throughout Lent.

The class that raises the most money will be rewarded with a free dress day. Regular updates on each class's progress will be shared at school assemblies by the Social Justice Leadership Team, so everyone can see how their efforts are making a difference.

Altar Servers

Altar Server practice resumed on Wednesday 29 January and will continue every Thursday evening at 5:30 pm at St Gerard's Church. To be eligible to serve, children must have received their First Communion.

This is a wonderful opportunity for young members of our parish to take part in the liturgy and learn the responsibilities of altar service.

For further information about practice times or eligibility, please contact the parish office on **9792 4422**.



Religious News

An Invitation to Bring Mary Home

We invite families to take the Our Lady statue into their home for a week as a special way to deepen family prayer time. Each family will receive a brochure with simple instructions for praying the Rosary, as well as a set of rosary beads. If you would like to take the Our Lady statue home, please let Mrs Stack know.



Lunchtime Rosary

The Legion of Mary Group is teaming up with the school to lead Rosary prayer sessions during lunch breaks. These will take place during the first lunch on Tuesdays in Weeks 4 and 8 of each term.

The Passion

We warmly invite you to join us for one of the most significant events in our school year, The Passion. This special Holy Week presentation is a much-loved tradition at our school, where every child participates in retelling the story of Jesus' final days.

Through *The Passion*, we journey with Jesus to the cross and reflect on the emotions of Holy Week, from joy to sorrow, as we prepare our hearts for Easter.

Please join us on Tuesday 31st March at 2:00pm in the school hall. We understand this may require time away from work, and we truly appreciate your support in being part of this important community event.

We look forward to sharing this meaningful experience with you.

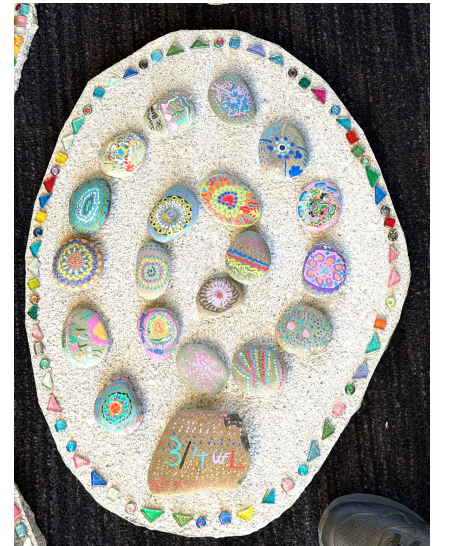
Give Me 5 Picnic



Give Me 5 Picnic



Give Me 5 Picnic



Wellbeing



What's self-regulation?

Self-regulation is learning about your own feelings and emotions, understanding how and why they happen, recognising them (and those of others), and developing effective ways of managing them.

When children and young people learn to self-manage their emotions, they feel more confident, capable and in control. They have stronger relationships, are more able to pay attention, learn new things and can cope better with the normal stresses and disappointments of daily life.

- **How can you help?**

Children and young people need repeated experiences of having their needs met by a caring adult.

Warm, trusting and responsive care helps children to respond with appropriate emotions, internalise a positive view of themselves and others, and learn appropriate behaviour. Children and young people also develop self-management skills by watching and experiencing how other people manage their emotions. Here are some tips about how you can support the development of self-management in children and young people

Explicitly teach skills

- Talk about ways of managing upsetting situations.
- Help them to develop strategies to use when they're feeling out of control.
- Help them express their emotions in productive ways (for example, by drawing or acting out their feelings).
- Practise mindful breathing with older children and young people.
- Explore the immediate and long-term consequences of actions.
- Promote empathy by talking about emotions and understanding how people will have different reactions to events depending on their circumstances.
- Teach problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Talk about emotions

- Acknowledge and respond to emotional communication.
- Role-model how you manage your own feelings.
- Talk about strategies to manage strong or uncomfortable emotions.

Promote a calm environment

Environment contributes to children and young people's self-management. Promote a calm, welcoming and encouraging environment by:

- providing structure and predictability
- establishing age-appropriate routines and limits
- avoiding competitive experiences for young children
- including relaxation breaks in the day
- encouraging ways to release tension they might be holding in their body
- demonstrating calmness and staying in control of your own feelings and behaviours – self-awareness allows you to maximise your positive interactions with children and young people and better manage situations where they 'push your buttons'.

Wellbeing

Give Me Five Week

On Thursday 5th February, the St Gerard's community came together for our annual Give Me 5 Night, and what a truly special evening it was. The night began with a relaxing family picnic on the oval, accompanied by the beautiful sounds of jazz. A heartfelt thank you to George the Music Man for once again bringing the evening to life with his wonderful music, which added so much to the atmosphere.

The excitement then continued with our class family collaboration competition, where families worked together to create stunning nature mandalas. There was a wonderful buzz in the air, and the creative and collaborative spirit of our community shone through. Each pebble in the mandalas represented a family in our school, symbolising the care, connection, and unity that make St Gerard's so special.

After families and students voted on the mandalas, our judges faced the difficult task of selecting an overall winner. What makes this celebration even more meaningful is that the mandalas will now have a permanent home in our Wurundjeri Garden, serving as a beautiful reminder of our amazing families and the sense of togetherness that defines our community.

A huge thank you to all our families, staff, and students for their energy, creativity, and commitment to making the night so memorable. A special thank you to Mr Cooke for organising all of the materials for the night, which helped make the event run so smoothly. It was a true celebration of community, and the memories created will be treasured for years to come.

And the Winner Is...

A heartfelt thank you to all the families who attended our Give Me 5 Night. It was truly a beautiful evening, filled with a strong sense of community, creativity, and connection. It was wonderful to see families come together to share their gifts and express their creativity through the making of nature mandalas.

Each mandala was a reflection of care, imagination, and spirit, making the judges' decision a challenging one. After much thoughtful deliberation, Foundation B were chosen as the overall winners of the 2026 Give Me 5 Night.

Congratulations to Foundation B for their outstanding creativity and effort, and sincere thanks to all who participated. The mandalas will now hold a special place in our Wurundjeri Garden, standing as a meaningful symbol of unity, gratitude, and the shared spirit of our St Gerard's Community.

A big thank you also goes to all the families who assisted with planning the night, and to our staff for their amazing efforts in bringing this event to life. We look forward to making next year's event even bigger and better. Keep your eyes peeled for the Give Me 5 Family Planning Meeting!



Wellbeing

Give Me 5 News

Next week our Give Me 5 whole school focus is to be Respectful in all learning areas. You can do this by speaking appropriately and using manners, caring for property, taking turns, showing whole body listening and greeting people by their name. Students who are being Respectful in the learning areas will be rewarded with a raffle ticket.

St. Gerard's Give Me 5 Whole School Matrix



Principle	Learning Areas	Corridors	Toilets	Playground/Sandpit
Be Respectful	Speak appropriately and use manners Care for property Take turns Whole body listening Greet people by name	Speak appropriately and use manners Care for property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the area neat and tidy 	Speak appropriately and use manners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give other users their privacy Care for property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep toilets tidy and flush Wash hands	Speak appropriately and use manners Care for property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place rubbish in the bin Keep sand in the sandpit and bark in the garden Include others Respect everyone's views and space
Be Co-operative	Follow Directions Move safely Stay on task Share with others and help each other	Follow Directions Move safely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk on the left hand side of the corridor to exit and the left hand side to enter 	Follow Directions Move safely Wait for your partner	Follow Directions Move safely Play fairly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept rules Take turns Share and use equipment safely
Be Your Best	Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself Ask for help	Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself Only enter the area with permission	Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself Report problems to a teacher	Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself Try to solve your problems
Be Positive	Never give up			Encourage others
Be Spirit filled	Treat others as you would like to be treated. Pray daily and during meditation	Treat others as you would like to be treated.	Treat others as you would like to be treated.	Treat others as you would like to be treated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say sorry and forgive others Be kind

Reading before School

Reading Before School has started full steam ahead. We had a very good turn out with parents and students reading to each other this week. Children receive a raffle ticket and go into a draw to win a prize. Students are encouraged to attend and read a book by themselves, to each other or with their families.



Important Dates

2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

Term 1, 2026 Dates

February

- 9th Whole School Meditation in PAC at 8.45am
- 10th Art Club at Lunchtime
- 11th Before School Reading in the library from 8:30am
- 11th Prep Rest Day
- 11th Library Club at Lunchtime
- 12th Before School Skipping in the Courtyard from 8:30am
- 12th Garden Club at Lunchtime
- 13th Whole School Assembly in PAC at 2.40pm
- 16th Whole School Meditation in PAC at 8.45am
- 17th Shrove Tuesday and SUBWAY Lunch
- 17th Art Club at Lunchtime
- 17th 3 Way Conversations 2.30pm – 6.30pm
- 18th Before School Reading in the library from 8:30am
- 18th Prep Rest Day
- 18th Ash Wednesday Mass in the church at 9.15am
- 18th Library Club at Lunchtime
- 19th Before School Skipping in the Courtyard from 8:30am
- 19th Rosary with the Parish Legion of Mary
- 19th Garden Club at Lunchtime
- 20th Whole School Assembly in PAC at 2.40pm
- 23rd Whole School Meditation in PAC at 8.45am
- 24th Art Club at Lunchtime
- 24th First Reconciliation Family Workshop at 6:30pm
- 25th Before School Reading in the library from 8:30am
- 25th Prep Rest Day
- 25th Library Club at Lunchtime
- 25th AUSKICK & SUPERKICK Session 1 at 3.30pm
- 26th Before School Skipping in the Courtyard from 8:30am
- 26th Garden Club at Lunchtime
- 27th St. Gerard's Whole School Athletics Day

Important Dates

Term 1, 2026 Dates

March

- 2nd Whole School Meditation in PAC at 8.45am
- 3rd Art Club at Lunchtime
- 4th Before School Reading in the library from 8:30am
- 4th Library Club at Lunchtime
- 4th AUSKICK & SUPERKICK Session 2 at 3.30pm
- 5th Before School Skipping in the Courtyard from 8:30am
- 5th Garden Club at Lunchtime
- 6th Whole School Assembly in PAC at 2.40pm
- 9th Labour Day Public Holiday
- **10th School Closure Day – Time in Lieu**
- 10th Art Club at Lunchtime
- 11th Before School Reading in the library from 8:30am
- 11th Library Club at Lunchtime
- 11th AUSKICK & SUPERKICK Session 3 at 3.30pm
- 12th First Reconciliation Reflection Day
- 12th Before School Skipping in the Courtyard from 8:30am
- 12th Garden Club at Lunchtime
- 13th Whole School Assembly in PAC at 2.40pm
- 16th Whole School Meditation in PAC at 8.45am
- 17th Art Club at Lunchtime
- 18th Before School Reading in the library from 8:30am
- 18th Library Club at Lunchtime
- 18th AUSKICK & SUPERKICK Session 4 at 3.30pm
- 19th Before School Skipping in the Courtyard from 8:30am
- 19th Rosary with the Parish Legion of Mary
- 19th Garden Club at Lunchtime
- 19th First Reconciliation at 6.30pm
- 20th Harmony Day
- 20th Whole School Assembly in PAC at 2.40pm
- 23rd Whole School Meditation in PAC at 8.45am
- 25th Before School Reading in the library from 8:30am
- 26th Before School Skipping in the Courtyard from 8:30am
- 27th Whole School Assembly in PAC at 2.40pm
- 30th Whole School Meditation in PAC at 8.45am

April

- 1st End of Term 1 at 3.30pm

Important Notes

Medical Plans And Asthma Plans

This is a friendly reminder to provide the school with updated medical and asthma plans for 2024. If your child has asthma or requires other medications, please ensure that Ventolin, a spacer, and any necessary medications are supplied on the first day back to the school office.

All medications will be stored in individually labeled bags in the school office for safekeeping.



OSHC IMPORTANT UPDATE

Important Fee Update – Effective 3rd November, 2025

Dear Parents & Guardians, To continue providing high-quality care and professional staff, Youth Leadership Victoria will be adjusting OSHC fees.

New Fees:

- ✓ Before School Care: Casual \$30 | Permanent \$25
- ✓ After School Care: Casual \$35 | Permanent \$30
- ✓ Vacation Care/Pupil Free Day: \$78
- ✓ Early Finish: 1:30pm \$45 | 2:30pm \$40

We appreciate your support and understanding.
For any questions, please contact **Rita Strachan** 0412 958 601.

Thank you for being part of our OSHC community! 🌟

Please call Marina for further information: 0402 192 685



MAZENOD COLLEGE



Where every *talent* finds its place.

OPEN DAY: WED 4TH MARCH 2026
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

Applications for Year 7, 2028 close Friday, 14th August 2026.



BOOK A TOUR

Important Notes

30 January 2026

2026 Annual Tuition Fee

Dear Families,

I am writing to provide you details of changes in tuition fees for the 2026 academic year.

Any decision to adjust tuition fees is never made lightly, nor without careful and thorough consideration of our students' needs and our school's capacity to provide an education experience that supports every student to flourish. We are also cognisant of the financial pressures that many families have experienced this year.

St Gerard's, too, is facing increasing costs in multiple areas of school operations, including WorkCover premiums, Child Safety compliance, risk management, teacher resources and professional learning, and higher central system costs.

Our tuition fees at St Gerard's are also influenced by the Commonwealth Department of Education's calculation of our community's ability to financially contribute to the operating costs of our school, known as the Capacity to Contribute, or CTC, which is reviewed annually.

School funding is complex, so I have included with this letter a simple school funding "explainer" which I hope will support your understanding of how government funds Catholic (and other non-government) schools and how tuition fees support our school.

To ensure that we can continue to deliver a personalised, high-quality education that is responsive to the diverse interests and academic, social and emotional needs of our students, it is necessary to adjust our fees in 2026.

St Gerard's annual tuition fee for 2026 will be:

<u>Fees per Family -</u>	<u>\$2130.00</u>
---------------------------------	-------------------------

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| • Family fee | \$1448.00 |
| • Capital Levy | \$ 582.00 |
| • Building Maintenance | \$ 100.00 |

<u>LEVIES per student -</u>	<u>\$ 506.00</u>
------------------------------------	-------------------------

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| • Student Levy | \$ 276.00 |
| • Swimming Levy | \$ 100.00 |
| • Excursion Levy | \$ 70.00 |
| • Technology Levy | \$ 60.00 |

To show our appreciation, **if payment in full is made by the 27 March 2026, then you will receive a 5% discount off the total fee** (not applicable to those eligible for concessional fee policy)

Payment Options

The School offers the following options to paying your schools fees:

Important Notes

- Direct Debit — **form attached** — payment deducted as selected from February to November 2026
- Credit Card — **Strictly By Term as per form attached** — unless Principal approved

Bank Details

St Gerard's School Account

- BSB- 083 – 347
- AC#- 648 965 067

Concessional School Fee Policy — 2026 - (**Excluding any camp charges**)

- One child family \$810 per annum
- Two child family \$1,240 per annum
- Three plus child family \$1,620 per annum

The following families are encouraged to apply for concessional school fees as outlined in the MACS Concessional School Fee Policy:

- Any family holding a Health Care Card and eligible for Camps, Sports and Excursions (CSEF)
- Any family of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage
- Any family experiencing severe financial hardship
- Any family holding a DVA Gold Card
- Any family identified as refugees and holding an ImmiCard

Families who meet one of the above criteria are required to return the below documentation to the office:

- **Concessional Fee Application Form (attached)**
- **A completed direct debit request service agreement (attached)**
- **A copy of the government concession card (if applicable)**
- **A completed Camps, Sports and Excursions (CSEF) application form (attached - if applicable)**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the fee increase, or wish to discuss your individual circumstances, please do not hesitate to contact me. We remain committed to keeping tuition fees as low and affordable as possible, and to working closely with our community to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Thank you for your understanding. I am grateful for your ongoing support and trust in our school.

Yours sincerely,

Paul COWAN
Principal

Important Notes



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



SCHOOL FEES - METHOD OF PAYMENT FORM

School fees will be invoiced annually (at the beginning of the year) with statements being issued at least once per term. Payment plans are established and organised to ensure you meet your financial obligations to the school.

Payment frequency options are available to suit parents/carers with the aim of having all fees paid by 30th November. Options for payment include, direct debit and credit card.

Please advise the School if you have a Health Care Card as this can reduce your School Fees.

Parents' Name	Account no.
Child's Name:	Year Level:
Address:	

☐

Annual (5% Discount applies if paid by 27th March)

OR

☐

Semester Instalments
(twice per year)
Feb & July

☐

Term Instalments
(4 per year)
Feb, May, Aug, Nov

☐

Monthly Instalments
(10 per year)
Feb – Nov

☐

Fortnightly Instalments
(20 per year)
Feb – Nov

Please return this form by 7ST February email to jferraro@sqdandenongnsh.catholic.edu.au



AUTHORISATION for Payments by Direct Debit from bank account or credit card

Preferred payment date

7th

☐

14th

☐

21st

☐

28th

☐

If this date falls on a weekend or public holiday, payment will be processed on the PRIOR Business Day.

Bank Details for Direct Debit

Account Name

BSB no.

Account no.

Credit Card for Direct Debit

Card no.

Expiry Date:

Cardholder name

I/We authorise St Gerard's to arrange through its own financial institution to debit from my/our nominated account or credit card as specified. I/We acknowledge by the signature/s below that I/we am/are the enrolling parents/guardians and are jointly and individually responsible for payment of all fees and charges.

Mother (or guardian)

Date: __/__/__

Father (or guardian)

Date: __/__/__

It is your responsibility to notify the school in a timely manner of new card expiry dates/details or any new bank account numbers.

Important Information



Happy Birthday to all who have celebrated and will celebrate their birthdays, this week including this weekend and January.

- SAJIN Yr 6
- XAVIER Foundation
- SHAWN Yr 2



COMMUNITY NOTICE

- *Every Day Counts* - Primary School Attendance Information
- AFL Auskick - St Gerard's 5 Week Program
- Springvale Indoor Sports - Indoor Soccer
- Mazenod College - Open Day Information



Chicken Eggs For Sale

- St Gerard's would like to offer families the opportunity to purchase delicious organic eggs laid by our resident flock of chickens.
- You can purchase these eggs from the school office at a cost of \$8 per dozen.
- All proceeds from the sale of the eggs will go towards purchasing food for our feathered friends.
- Please message [Nicole Fernandez](#) via Seesaw if you would like to purchase some eggs.