



St Gerard's Primary School

NEWSLETTER

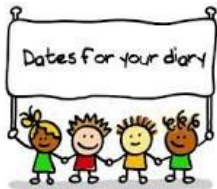


Term 4 Week 10

www.sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au

03 97917553

11 December 2020



**LAST
DAY OF
SCHOOL**

Grade 6

Tuesday, 15 Dec

3:30 finish

Prep - 5

Wednesday, 16 Dec

3:30 finish



Uniform Shop 2021

The uniform shop will be open on:

Wed, 27 January, 9am - 12pm

Thurs, 28 January, 8:30 - 10:00

Then Monday mornings

8:30 - 10:00



A Carols Programme has been sent home with each student today so that families may sing along with our Carols Christmas Concert. The video link is:
[Christmas Carols Concert](#)

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

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Families,

As we come to the end of the last full week of the school year we are certainly finishing full of activities.

This week we were able to **welcome our 2021 Prep students** and their families for a modified orientation. We are thrilled to have some new families join our school community and we look forward to welcoming them next year. It is also wonderful to see some of our existing families bring their next child to start their education with us. There was a wonderful moment when our Year 6 students crossed paths with our 2021 Prep parents. This was a reminder of how quickly time goes by!

Our Year 6 students have had five **Bike Education** sessions this week and it has been wonderful to see them out riding around our playground and oval. I would like to thank Mrs Wilson for her coordination of this program and we look forward to extending this further next year.

Today (Friday) we will be sending home a booklet to each family and a **link to our Christmas Carols event** for this year. We are hoping that families will be able to gather together and enjoy the presentation at a time that suits them. I would like to thank Mrs Stack for her coordination of this event and all the staff, students and families that have contributed to spreading some Christmas cheer.

Also today, your child will bring home their **Semester 2 School Report**. Please take the time to **read and discuss it with your child(ren) making sure to celebrate the successes and set goals** for 2021. I would like to congratulate all our children for their hard work throughout the second half of the year which involved both Remote and Onsite Learning. Included in the report is your child(rens) **class and teacher for next year**. Significant time and consideration is taken to ensure that all our students are provided with the right conditions to learn. This type of change can produce a range of emotions in children. Next Monday, they will spend some time with their 2021 class and teacher which will help with this transition to next year.

The class structure for next year is as follows:

Class	Teacher(s)
Prep B	Mrs Leanne Bruno
1/2FP	Ms Nicole Fernandez and Mrs Judy Peres
1/2L	Mrs Mary-Jane Lewis
3/4S	Ms Melinda Sono
3/4C	Mrs Sabina Castello
5/6TV	Mrs Shantelle Theodore and Mrs Julie Verhoosel
5/6O	Mrs Gwen O'Brien

This Sunday is the **Third Sunday of Advent** and in John's Gospel we hear John the Baptist state:

'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.' This presents John as a witness to speak for the 'Light', something we should all try to do.

Next Tuesday we will be **farewelling our Year 6 students**. As part of this significant milestone, the staff and students will be forming a **'guard of honour'** at the end of the day starting at the PAC and finishing at the school gates. Families are more than welcome to continue this guard of honour from the gates to the carpark area or recognise these young people with a clap and cheer as they exit our school for the last time as students.

Finally, we will send out a Newsletter next Wednesday with some dates and information for 2021.

God bless.

Paul Cowan - Principal

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Important Dates for Term 4

Christmas Event (remote)

Friday, 11th December



Shout and sing
for joy, city of Zion,
because the holy
one of Israel is
great among you.
- ISAIAH 12:6

WELLBEING NEWS



Students who display the expectations present on the school Matrix are rewarded with a raffle ticket from their classroom teacher. Once a month the raffle tickets from each class are collected and drawn during the Friday assembly.

The raffle tickets were drawn on the 4th of December and the following lucky winners had a special picnic with Mr Cowan on Monday 14th December:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Sajin (Prep C) | 4. Anton (3/4S) |
| 2. Lemilo (1/2FP) | 5. Ella. T (3/4S) |
| 3. Malakai (Prep C) | 6. Charlie (5/6 VT) |

WALK AROUND AUSTRALIA

In term 4 students are challenged to get fit by using a map of Australia to track the distance they have covered when they walk around the walking track. Classes are timetabled to walk around the track for 15 minutes per day.

We have currently walked 22,143 laps of the oval which converts to 5535 km. Our whole school has now walked from Melbourne to Karratha which is a city in the Pilbara

Have a look
at the red
sticker dots
below to see
how far we
have walked
so far!!



FRESH EGGS



FOR SALE

St Gerard's would like to offer parents 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 \$5 per dozen.

All proceeds from the sale of the eggs will go towards purchasing food for our feathered friends.

Please email Nicole Fernandez on nfernandez@sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au, if you would like to purchase some eggs.

What causes stress?

People experience stress for many reasons.

One of the most common reasons is sudden or unexpected change, but even positive changes can be stressful. Expected changes – such as a child or young person starting early learning service or school, or changing between schools – can be also stressful.



Stress can be a response to a single event or might be prolonged, cumulative stress. Overwhelming stress impacts our physical and mental health, relationships, learning and development, and capacity to fulfil our roles (for example, parenting, working or studying).

Changes can happen in many aspects of a person's life at the same time, including shifts in their:

- physical environment (such as moving house or starting a new job)
- social environment (starting at a new school, feeling isolated after moving somewhere new, feeling they can't control or influence their environment)
- economic circumstances (such as an unexpected financial loss, large expense or job loss).

It's important to remember that **stress is not anxiety** – [an anxiety condition](#) is when someone:

- has anxious feelings which are consistently very intense
- have feelings that persist well after the stressful event has passed
- are so distressed that it interferes with their capacity to learn, socialise and do everyday things.

Everyday stress and coping skills

Children and young people develop coping skills through exposure to manageable amounts of stress. Overcoming small stresses helps them with all the challenges they'll meet. Some everyday stresses for children and young people include:

- morning routines and getting ready for their early learning service or school
- feeling uncertain about others' expectations
- friendship or relationship difficulties
- bullying
- worries about fitting in or being different
- managing school work, especially around exam time
- juggling after-school employment with study
- feeling over-scheduled with multiple tasks or commitments
- feeling time-pressured
- experiencing physiological changes in their bodies
- tension within families (such as changes in family relationships or make-up, family illness or financial problems)
- interaction with social media.

Gardening Lesson



This week 1/2FP enjoyed their Gardening lesson. The students learned about the following concepts in the garden this week:

- composting
- worm farming
- harvesting (how to carefully harvest zucchinis)
- weeding
- how to look after chickens
- ways to fix broody chickens

Have a look at some of the fun we had in the garden today!



WELLBEING NEWS CONT'D



Mrs Wilson has been taking the students through bike ed training this week. Vic Roads Bike Education have lent bikes to the school for our students to learn about road and bike safety.

FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Wellbeing support for students over school holidays

It's been a big year and this guide provides tips and resources for parents, carers and families to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care over the school holidays. This includes services to reach out to if more support is needed.

Actions that support positive mental health

Encourage your young person to:

- Exercise and eat healthily to boost their mood
- Prioritise sleep to support mental and emotional wellbeing
- Explore relaxation techniques and coping strategies
- Stay in touch and catch up with friends and loved ones
- Make time to do things they enjoy
- Practice positive self-talk, and remind them they are not alone
- Seek professional help if needed.¹

The Department have developed wellbeing activities and conversation starters for parents and carers of [primary school-aged children](#) and [secondary school-aged children](#).

Feeling it: [mindfulness resources and activities for senior secondary students](#). Smiling Mind gives tips on self-care, understanding and managing emotions, being mindful, being kind to yourself, navigating uncertainty and preparing for change.

Signs a child or young person may need mental health support

In some cases, these actions will not be enough to support positive mental health.

Keep an eye out and seek professional help for changes that last two or more weeks such as:

- Loss of interest or involvement in activities normally enjoyed
- Feeling 'low', unusually stressed or worried
- Ordinary things get harder
- Being easily irritated or angry
- Taking more dangerous risks, like using alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawal or feeling overwhelmed
- Difficulties with concentration and motivation
- Having a lot of negative thoughts
- Changing in sleeping and eating.^{2 3}

Young people supporting each other

Young people are **most likely to turn to each other for support** before seeking out an adult or service provider.

Young people can support each other by:

- contacting 000 if a friend needs urgent assistance or is at risk of harming themselves or others
- reaching out to a friend, offering support and letting them know you care
- letting their friend know they may need to tell a trusted adult about their concerns.

Having these types of conversations can be difficult for young people. Information for young people on how to support a friend is available on the headspace website: [How to help a friend going through a tough time](#)



1 headspace – a parents guide to school issues and stress <https://headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/parents-guide-how-for-managing-stress-and-problems-at-school/>
 2 headspace 'mental health and you' poster <https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Mental-Health-Posters-modified.pdf>
 3 headspace – how to talk to your children about mental health <https://headspace.org.au/inside/>



Mental health support

- **Your local GP**
- **headspace Counselling:** Victorian Government secondary school students, including those who have just finished schooling, can access counselling services from headspace. During the holidays, students can self-refer by calling their [local headspace centre](#).
- **ehedspace:** 1800 650 890
www.headspace.org.au/ehedspace
- **Kids Helpline:** 1800 551 800
www.kidshelpline.com.au
- **Lifeline:** 13 1114
www.lifeline.org.au
- **Beyond Blue:** 1300 224 636
www.beyondblue.org.au
- **Head to Help:** 1800 595 212
www.headtohelp.org.au
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467
www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- [Family violence information and support services](#)
- **Contacting 000** for urgent assistance

Family violence support and resources

- **Safe Steps:** 1800 015 188
www.safesteps.org.au
- **1800RESPECT:** 1800 737 732
www.1800respect.org.au
- **What's okay at home:**
www.woah.org.au
- [Family violence support](#)

Eastern Victoria bushfires: first anniversary

We are also approaching the first anniversary for some communities who experienced last Summer's Eastern Victoria bushfires. The anniversary may trigger worry or anxiety levels in children and young people that are similar to what they experienced during the event.

For more information on supporting children and young people during this time:

- **Emerging Minds:** [Traumatic events: anniversaries and other triggers](#)
- **Trauma and Grief Network:** [Understanding and managing anniversary reactions](#)

Self-harm and suicide prevention resources

- [Getting a mental health care plan](#) (ReachOut)
- [What you need to know about self-harm](#) (headspace)
- [How to help when someone is suicidal](#) (SANE Australia)

headspace parent seminars on understanding mental health

- Local headspace centres are running seminars over the school holidays to strengthen parents understanding of mental health and build skills and strategies to support mental health. For further information about dates contact: headspaceschools@headspace.org.au
- headspace National has partnered with the Department of Education and Training to deliver two parent and carer twilight webinars to discuss:
 - o supporting young people – Notice, Ask, Connect (Thursday 10 December 2020. [Information and registration here](#))
 - o supporting young people transitioning from primary to secondary school (Tuesday 15 December 2020. [Information and registration here](#)).

Mental health resources

- **Mental Health Toolkit:** contains resources for students, parents and carers to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care including:
 - o [Raising Learners Podcast Series](#): providing expert advice/information to parents/carers on topics including how to keep your child safe online
 - o [Understanding mental health – fact sheet](#) (Orygen)
 - o [Learn how to handle tough times](#) (headspace)
 - o [Get into life \(to keep your headspace healthy\)](#) (headspace)
- [Supporting your young person during the holidays](#) (headspace)



We proclaim a crucified Christ

1Cor 1:23

9 December 2020

*Parents of children in Catholic Schools
Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne*

Dear Parents,

As the days rush by towards Christmas, may I write in thanks for the tremendous love and care you have given your families in such a hard year.

Many of us are joyful at the simple prospect of 2020 being over!

For parents in Catholic schools, I am grateful for the collaboration between our incredible teachers and principals and yourselves, in guiding your children through long days and weeks of learning from home, with all the ups and downs of the lockdown situations.

For a number, some heartbreak and loss has been mingled with other challenges, as well as distance from loved ones. My own prayer has been for you and your families, and I am trusting that in the time ahead the Holy Spirit will bring fresh joy and encouragement, and some well-deserved rest.

As the year comes to a close, may I also bring to your attention a significant change that has been taking place in the background this year, in which principals and parish priests have been acutely involved: the creation of a new company, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS), to govern Catholic schools in Melbourne as of 1 January 2021.

For you, as parents, you will notice no real change in your Catholic schools. It will be largely 'business as usual' as the year begins and students find their way into a new grade and new challenges. However, the day-to-day business of Catholic schools will not alter as such.

In fact, the Constitution for MACS makes it crystal clear that the parish and the school, especially through leaders such as the parish priest, principal, and the School Advisory Council, will have a responsibility to collaborate and continue to build up Catholic schools as the faith-filled, generous learning communities that they are.

If you would like to learn more, please consult the material at the following website, which has been available throughout the year as this work has developed:

<https://governance.melbourne>

For my part, the change from Catholic Education Melbourne to MACS has been the fruit of much hard work, in which the legacy of Catholic education is being upheld with gratitude for the past and much hope for the future.

Let us work together in the time ahead to continue to provide the best, the very safest, and the most generous learning environment we can for students and their families.

Catholic schools are a fruit of the Gospel and I give thanks to the Lord Jesus and his faithful disciples in Melbourne for building such schools, filled with so many gifts and diversity.

May we celebrate the birth of the Lord this coming Christmas, filled with gratitude, blessed with some time away from it all, and sharing that manifold joy with one another for which Catholic faith has always been so famous.

With appreciation, and blessings on you and your family.

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Comensoli', with a small cross symbol to the left of the name.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne