

St Gerard's Newsletter

Term 1, Week 3

13 February 2026



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



Being Respectful is How We Let Our Light Shine

Loving God,

Thank you for reminding us that we are called to be salt and light in our world. Help us to let our light shine each day at school.

Teach us to be respectful in our learning spaces —

to use kind words,
to look after our classrooms,
and to help one another learn and grow.

May the good choices we make show others your love,
so that through what we say and do,
we bring light, joy and hope to our school community.

We ask this through Jesus, our Light and our Guide.

Amen.

SALT & LIGHT

MATTHEW 5:13-16



@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,

We are certainly back into the rhythm of school life and our children have settled quickly back into our routines.

One thing that we have noticed is that we have children **arriving after 8.55am**. This can impact a child's learning as they have not had time to organise themselves, socialise, be settled and the first learning session for the day has started. While no one intends to be late and sometimes there are factors out of our control, **I do ask that we focus on getting our children to school on time**. We will continue to monitor this and present some data in this newsletter in the coming weeks. I thank you in advance for your efforts and support.

Information about our first **3 Way Conversations** was sent out via email. These sessions will occur next Tuesday 17 February and are an opportunity to get the 3 main stakeholders in your child's learning (child, family and school) together at the start of the year. These are 10 minute meetings to share information and clarify any questions about classroom structures and organisation. **You may choose to have a face-to-face meeting or via Google Meet.**

Please note: Families involved in Program Support Group Meetings (PSG's) do not have to have a 3 Way Conversation but may if they wish.

Our **Annual School Athletics Day** is fast approaching and will take place on **Friday 27 February**. This is always a wonderful day where our children get to display their sporting talents, develop our School Spirit and enjoy being off-site as a whole school. Families are more than welcome to come and be part of the day and if there is anyone who would be able to assist with setting up/ packing up or helping with some of the events please contact myself via email principal@sgdendenongnth.catholic.edu.au (P) 9791 7553 or Seesaw. Please look out for a permission form which will be sent home on Monday.

I wish to inform our school community that **Mrs Dorothy Stack will be on leave from Monday 16 February** for a few weeks. During this time some of Dorothy's leadership responsibilities will be undertaken by other staff members. **Mrs Gwen O'Brien will assume the responsibilities for Learning Diversity and Religious Education and Ms Nicole Fernandez will assume the leadership responsibilities for Daily Organisation and Timetabling.** I have full confidence in these 2 leaders to maintain these important aspects of our school. Please feel free to contact Gwen, Nicole or myself if you have any questions or concerns regarding any of these areas.

Mrs Gwen O'Brien – gobrien@sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au

Ms Nicole Fernandez – nfernandez@sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au

Mr Paul Cowan – principal@sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au

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.**

Update: We are still in the process of establishing a new online permission platform as **Operoo has ceased operations in Australia**. This is progressing but is taking time. We will 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>

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.

Wellbeing

Walk or Wheel to School Week

Thursday, 19th February
2026



Thursday, 19th February is a Ride to School Day. Students are encouraged to walk or ride to school from home or from a nearby drop off point. If your child doesn't normally walk to school, you could do this together.

Students who ride are given a sticker and the class who has the most students riding or walking get to keep our Ride to School trophy in their classroom for that month.

Students can ride bikes, skateboards or scooters.

They must wear a helmet at all times.

Upon arrival at school, students must hop off their bike or scooter and lock up their bike or scooter in our bike parking area (in front of the Performing Arts Centre).

Wellbeing



How are nutrition and mental health linked?

Healthy eating helps children and young people cope more effectively with stress, better manage their emotions and get a good sleep – all of which assist learning.

Most research about nutrition and mental health has focused on adults. We know that good nutrition is associated with better mental health outcomes, whereas a poor diet is associated with a greater risk of depression and anxiety. However, emerging research that focuses on children and young people has also found a relationship between unhealthy diets and poorer mental health outcomes.

Poor nutrition has been associated with:

- externalising behaviour (such as hyperactivity, aggression, disobedience)
- symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- poor concentration and tiredness, which interfere with learning
- immune system function, which is also linked to mental health
- delayed brain development – high-fat, high-sugar diets can affect proteins in the body that are important for brain development
- iron deficiency, which has been linked to cognitive function impairments associated with learning and memory
- nutrient deficiencies, which have been associated with mental health conditions including depression and anxiety (we know that fruits and vegetables, grains, fish, lean red meats and olive oils are rich in important nutrients such as folate, magnesium, vitamins and zinc which all impact on body and brain functions, including mood regulation).

Dietary habits aren't always a choice

'Food insecurity' – where people don't have enough food due to because of things such as unemployment and poverty – is also a problem for many families in Australia. Food insecurity can result in poorer academic performance, time off from school, stress, depression, anxiety, aggression, and difficulty getting along with others. Food insecurity can result in:

- psychological stress – high levels of ongoing stress have been related to depression and delayed brain development
- poorer academic performance
- time off from school
- anxiety
- aggression
- difficulty getting along with others.

The good news is that improving what you eat can lead to improvements in your mental health, so it's never too late to encourage healthier eating patterns.

Wellbeing

Give Me Five Week

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.

The raffle tickets will be drawn during next week's whole school assembly.



St. Gerard's Give Me 5 Whole School Matrix

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

Student Representative Council

The Student Representative Council (SRC) is made up of a group of students who are passionate about supporting their peers by sharing ideas that benefit the whole school community. The SRC also keeps students informed about important matters that affect the student body.

Voting for the 2026 Semester One SRC representatives will take place in students' classrooms. Each class will vote for their chosen representatives, and the successful students will be announced in next week's newsletter.

We look forward to congratulating the newly elected representatives and sharing their names with our school community soon.



Garden Club

Garden Club Update

This week in Garden Club, our wonderful students got their hands dirty and made a big difference around the school grounds. They began by cleaning out the chicken coop, making sure our feathered friends have a fresh and tidy home.

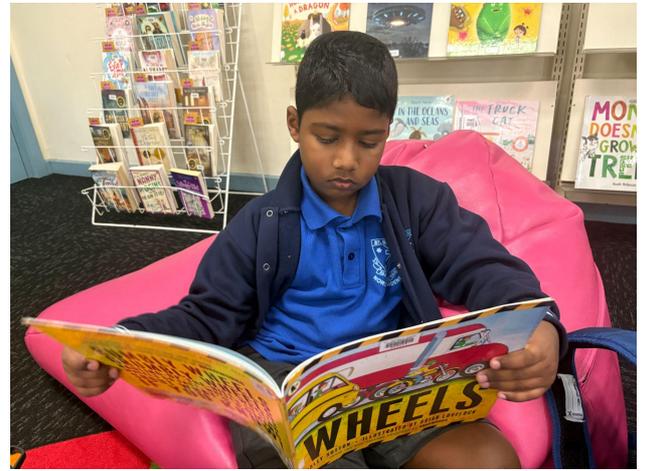
Afterwards, the group headed over to the Wurundjeri Way garden, where they topped up the bird baths and carefully weeded in between the native plants to help them thrive.

A big thank you to all the students who gave up their lunchtime to care for God's world. You are setting a fantastic example of stewardship and showing great commitment to looking after our environment. Well done!



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.]



Skipping

THURSDAY SKIPPING



Skipping

THURSDAY SKIPPING



STARTS AT 8:30AM
EVERY THURSDAY



Important Dates

2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

Term 1, 2026 Dates

February

- 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.vic.edu.au

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

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 Information



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

- VARA Yr 6
- DIORA Foundation
- LUCIA Yr 1



Sorry we forgot
LAST WEEK -

Happy Birthday
Khaimera Yr 3



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.