

# St Gerard's Newsletter

Term 1, Week 1

30 January 2026



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools



Loving God,

As we begin a new school year at St.

Gerard's,

bless our community of learners.

Help us to be kind, patient and respectful,  
and to use our gifts to serve others.

May our school be a place of welcome,  
where Your love is seen in all we do.

We ask this through Jesus, our teacher and  
friend.

Amen.



@st.gerards3175

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



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

# PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2026 school year!

I hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas holiday and are ready for an exciting year full of rich learning opportunities. It was great to see so many smiling faces on Wednesday morning (both students and adults).

A special welcome to our new families who are now part of our school community. In addition to our Foundation (Prep) students, we have a number of children who have joined us at other year levels.

Our Classroom Structure for 2026 is as follows:

Class	Teacher(s)
Foundation (Prep) B	Mrs Leanne Bruno
1/2FB	Ms Nicole Fernandez and Mrs Louise Brown
1/2S	Mrs Malki Subasinghe
3/4S	Ms Melinda Sono and Mrs Shantelle Theodore
3/4W	Mrs Tessa Wilson and Miss Rosie Leonardi
5/6T	Mrs Nadia Te
5/6O	Mrs Gwen O'Brien and Mr Trevis Jayasinghe
Italian Specialist	Mr Fabio Giaccaria
Performing Arts Specialist/ Librarian	Ms Stephanie Adrien
Visual Arts Specialist	Mrs Shantelle Theodore
Physical Education Specialist	Ms Lauren Boyle

These first 3 days have made up our **Give Me 5 Week** which has given our children and staff the chance to establish routines, get to know each other better and experience our **Give Me 5 principles of Be Spirit Filled, Be Respectful, Be Cooperative, Be Positive and Be Your Best**. The children have participated in a **KABOOM!** morning of activities, an **AFL clinic**, and a **School Disco** to get to know each other through a range of different activities.

# PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Cont'd

It has been wonderful to see the engagement of our children and staff throughout these experiences. I would like to thank **Ms Nicole Fernandez for her leadership, organisation and coordination** of this very special week which has ensured a positive start to the year.

We also have our [\*\*Give Me 5 Family Night next Thursday 5 February from 6.00pm – 8.00pm\*\*](#). This promises to be a wonderful night when our school community will come together for the first time in 2026. Please see the attached flyer. I look forward to seeing you all there.

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.

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).

# PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Cont'd

We are also in the process of establishing a new online permission platform as [Operoo has ceased operations in Australia](#). We are hoping to have information for families next week so that the transition process is smooth.

Lastly, an invitation is extended to all our families to join us at our **Beginning of School Year Mass which will be celebrated next Friday 6 February at 12.00 noon in the church**. As part of this whole school gathering, our Year 6 Student Leadership hats and badges will be blessed. They will then be presented with these items at our Whole School Assembly on the same day (Friday 6 February) at 2.40pm in the PAC. I hope you are all able to join us.

This first week has set us up for what promises to be a wonderful year at St Gerard's.

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

Beginning of the Year Mass: 6th February, 12:00

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

*The Passion*

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

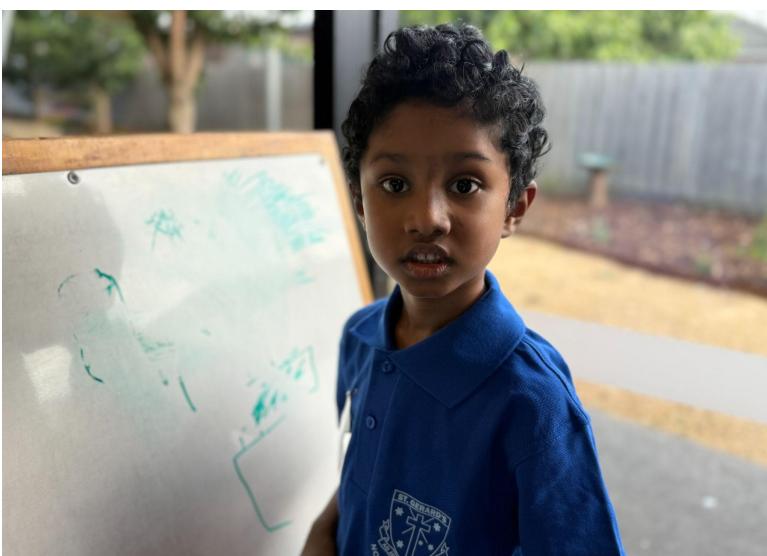
We warmly invite you to join us for one of the most significant events in our school year, The Passion. This special Holy Week presentation is a much-loved tradition at our school, where every child participates in retelling the story of Jesus' final days.

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.

# Welcome Foundation 2026



# Wellbeing

## GIVE ME 5 NIGHT

**Thursday, 5th February 2026  
6 - 8 pm**



**Please bring your own picnic  
and picnic rug.**

# Wellbeing

St Gerard's School  
71 Gladstone Road,  
Dandenong North Vic 3175  
Phone: 9791 7553  
Fax: 9793 7633



## COME AND JOIN US FOR OUR... GIVE ME FIVE FAMILY NIGHT / GARDEN MANDELA COMPETITION!

Dear St Gerard's Families,

Each year, students spend the first week of school exploring our *Give Me 5* values:

- Be Respectful
- Be Cooperative
- Be Your Best
- Be Positive
- Be Spirit Filled

On **Thursday 5th February 2026**, your family is invited to come and join us for a *Give Me 5* Family Evening. We will begin the evening at **6:00 pm** with a picnic on the oval. **Please pack some food for your family to enjoy and bring a picnic rug to sit on.**

The intention of the evening is to work together as a team to create a nature mandala, which will be a joint project representing all the families in our class, using the materials supplied.

### **Bonus Points!**

The class team with the highest family attendance on the night will receive bonus points towards the competition.

### **Itinerary for the evening:**

- 6:00 pm – Picnic on the oval
- 6:30 pm – Welcome (Mr Cowan)
- 6:40 pm – Competition rules explained
- 6:40 pm – 7:30 pm – Create the nature mandala
- 7:30 pm – Class discussion/gallery walk
- 8:00 pm – Evening concludes

Winners will be announced in the school newsletter!

Kind regards,

Nicole Fernandez

Wellbeing Leader



# Wellbeing



## DID YOU KNOW? Facts from the Be You website

### How do decision-making skills develop?

**Children and young people's decision-making is strongly influenced by the expectations and values they learn from those around them.**

This occurs when they:

- observe others (particularly those close to them)
- hear about and discuss values
- have opportunities to make choices and experience their consequences.

Young children regularly choose how they'll behave, which toys or games they'd like to play with, which books they would like to read, or which television shows they want to watch. As they get older, children make bigger decisions that often involve their family, friends and schoolwork. The kinds of choices children and young people make affect their wellbeing, relationships and success.

Young children have some skills for making decisions, but they don't yet have the experience to understand complex adult situations. As their brain grows, a child is more able to hold things in their mind and remember what they've learned. They also improve the way they manage their thinking and feelings, control impulsive behaviour, think about time and plan ahead, and evaluate long-term versus short-term goals. All these skills help children become better at taking action and keeping things on track.

## Give Me Five Week

Each year, during the first week of school, every grade explores our Give Me 5 values:

- Be Respectful
- Be Cooperative
- Be Your Best
- Be Positive
- Be Spirit Filled



We focus on these values because relationships are so important. We know that we learn best in classrooms where everyone is respectful, cooperative, positive, and doing their best, while trying to follow God's guidance. Making good choices in the classroom and on the playground helps us learn and be happy at school.

# Wellbeing

## Incursions during Give Me 5 Week

This week, students enjoyed a range of exciting activities, including an AFL clinic, a whole-school KABOOM incursion, and a disco.

A big thank you to AFL Australia, KABOOM Sports, and Little and Trivial Events for providing these amazing opportunities for our students.

**Have a look at some of the fun we had!**



# Wellbeing



# Wellbeing



# Important Dates

2026

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### Term 1, 2026 Dates

#### February

- 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 Prep Rest Day
- 4th Library Club at Lunchtime
- 5th Before School Skipping in the Courtyard from 8:30am
- 5th Garden Club at Lunchtime
- 5th Give Me 5 Family Night/Picnic 6.00pm– 8.00pm
- 6th Beginning of the School Year Mass in the Church at 12.00pm
- 6th Whole School Assembly in PAC at 2.40pm
- 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.

## Pick-up From After-School

Parents are asked to please be prompt when picking up your child/ren after-school. If a ride is not here when school concludes, the student may be sent to aftercare instead of the office. Please remember school aftercare does have a cost involved and time will begin accruing at the end of the school day. If a student's ride has run into an unexpected delay, please call the main office to let them know.

**St Gerard's YLVOSH**

**Program Information**  
Service Phone Number: 0402 192 685



**OPERATING TIMES**

**Before School Care**  
Hours:  
**6:45am - 8:45am**

**After School Care**  
Hours:  
**3:30pm - 6:30pm**

**Pupil Free Days:**  
**7:00am - 6:00pm**

**Vacation Care:**  
**7:00am - 6:00pm**

**Prices**

**Before School Care**  
(Permanent) \$15.00  
(Casual) \$20.00  
After Max CCS: \$2.89

**After School Care**  
(Permanent) \$20.00  
(Casual) \$25.00  
After Max CCS: \$3.16

**Pupil Free Day and Vacation Care**  
(Permanent) \$65.00  
(Casual): \$72.50  
After Max CCS: \$6.50

\* MAX CCS REBATE FIGURES ARE PROVIDED AS APPROXIMATES AND MAY VARY

**YLV.COM.AU**

# 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> February email to [jferraro@sqdandenongnths.catholic.edu.au](mailto:jferraro@sqdandenongnths.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.

• ARISSE	Foundation
• LAYLA	Yr 4
• JACOB	Yr 3
• DEKOTA	Year 6



## COMMUNITY NOTICE

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



### 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.