

St Gerard's Newsletter

Term 1, Week 4 20 February 2026



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



Ash Wednesday: choosing love, kindness and God's way.



Dear God,

As we begin this season of Lent,
help us to remember to be kind,
to forgive others,
and to follow the example of
Jesus.

May the ashes on our forehead
remind us
to make good choices and
grow closer to You.

Amen



@st.gerards3175

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71 Gladstone Road, Dandenong North 3175



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

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

We have had another week with a variety of learning experiences for our children and marked the start of our Church Season of Lent.

There has been plenty of excitement outside the Year 1/2 classrooms as we have **watched the hatching of eggs and the arrival of several chicks**. While this is part of the Year 1/2 Inquiry Unit it has certainly extended to all children (and staff)! Families are more than welcome to come and see the 'newest members of our school community' either before or after school.

On Tuesday there was a distinct smell of Pancakes throughout the school as classes engaged in **Shrove (Pancake) Tuesday**. In addition to pancakes we **also had the first of our Subway Lunch Days** for the year. We also had the first of our **3 Way Conversations** for the year which provides an opportunity to get the 3 main stakeholders in your child's learning (child, family and school) together at the start of the year. **If you have not been involved in a PSG meeting or were not involved in a 3 Way Conversation please contact your child's classroom teacher to arrange a time to meet**. It is a vital aspect of learning to have a strong connection between school and home.

As a school we **attended the parish Ash Wednesday mass**. Lent is a time for **Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving** which are key aspects of our faith. It was wonderful to be able to celebrate this important day with the St Gerard's Parish and for our children to experience and celebrate with the wider faith community.

Our first gathering with the **Parish Legion of Mary** took place on Thursday which saw a number of children join this group to **pray the Rosary together**. This occurs twice a term and is another way to strengthen our link with the parish and live out our faith. Children are welcome and encouraged to attend these gatherings and I would like to thank Mrs O'Brien for accompanying the children.

On Thursday we also had our first **Walk/ Ride to School Day** for 2026. It has been wonderful to see a growing number of children (and families) walking or riding to school on a regular basis. These days highlight the importance of being active and some exercise before a day of learning can have a positive impact.

As I highlighted last week, we have noticed that there are a number of 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 for your efforts and support so far as there appears to have been an improvement since last week**.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

cont'd

A reminder that **Mrs Dorothy Stack will be on leave 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

Looking to next week, a reminder that we have our **Year 3 Reconciliation Family Workshop on Tuesday 24 February at 6.30pm in the Library.** All those children wishing to celebrate this Sacrament of Healing are asked to attend this gathering with their family.

Our **Annual School Athletics Day** will take place next **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@sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au (P) 9791 7553 or Seesaw. **Please make sure that the permission form is returned to school by next Monday 23 February.**

Lastly, our **AFL AUSKICK and SUPERKICK programs start next Wednesday 25 February on our oval from 3.30pm – 4.30pm.** It is important that if your child wishes to participate that they have been registered online. Please see the information in this newsletter and our Community Notice Boards located in the courtyard.

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

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

Ash Wednesday

(Wednesday 18 Feb 2026)

This Lent, our school community is invited to be a part of something incredible. Once again, we are called to stand hand in hand with thousands of others across the country and *Unite Against Poverty* by supporting Caritas Australia's Project Compassion.

Last year, our school was a part of a nationwide movement that raised over \$10 million to bring opportunity and change to vulnerable communities across the world. This year, with your support, we hope to have an even greater impact.

By taking home a Project Compassion donation box this year, you'll be answering the Gospels' call to care for our global family and walk alongside the most vulnerable. Your generosity will enable Caritas Australia to provide life-changing support to communities facing poverty, food insecurity, lack of education and water shortages, while building resilience against future challenges.

Together, through faith and action, we can bring hope and opportunity to those most in need.



Please donate today.

You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes or by scanning the QR code to donate online.

You can also donate:

Online at: projectcompassion.org.au

By phone at: 1800 024 413

Thank you for standing with us, as we *Unite Against Poverty this Lent*.

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.

Ride to School

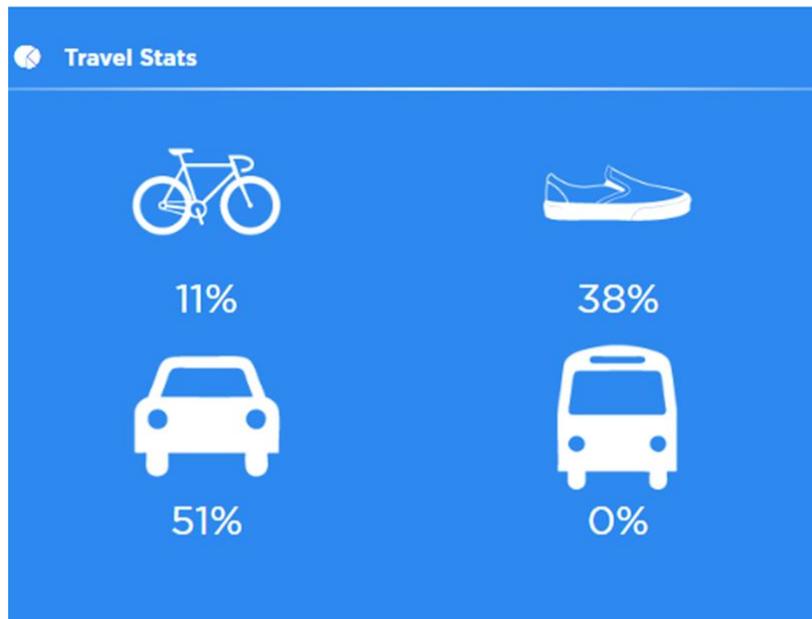
A big thank you to all the families who participated in Ride to School Day on Thursday 19th February. Congratulations to 1/2S who had the most students walking, scooting and riding to school!!

Well done to:

1st place- 1/2S with 76% riding, scooting or walking

2nd place- 5/6O with 66% riding, scooting or walking

3rd place- 3/4WL with 50% riding, scooting or walking



Wellbeing



What's resilience?

Resilience refers to the ability to manage everyday stressors and challenges.

Resilience enables people to shift back along the mental health continuum towards good mental health. A child or young person's ability to be resilient can depend upon many things and can change depending upon their situation. Importantly, specific situations or events that one child or young person may find challenging, another may not. Learn more about how you can help [build resilience in children](#).

A child or young person who is resilient might:

- be optimistic
- use positive self-talk for encouragement
- have a positive sense of self
- identify and express their feelings and thoughts
- not hide away from strong feelings
- have helpful, age-appropriate strategies to manage their emotions when upset
- rearrange their plans to work around an unexpected situation
- have a sense of agency or responsibility
- keep on trying if something doesn't work out and use their judgment about when to stop
- hold a sense of purpose or hope for the future
- actively ask for help if they need it
- feel a sense of attachment to family, their learning community and to learning.

Wellbeing

Give Me Five Week

Next week our Give Me 5 whole school focus is to be Cooperative in the playground. You can do this by following directions, moving safely, playing fairly, sharing and using equipment safely and accepting rules. Students who are being cooperative in the playground will be rewarded with a silver wristband.

St. Gerard's Give Me 5 Whole School Matrix



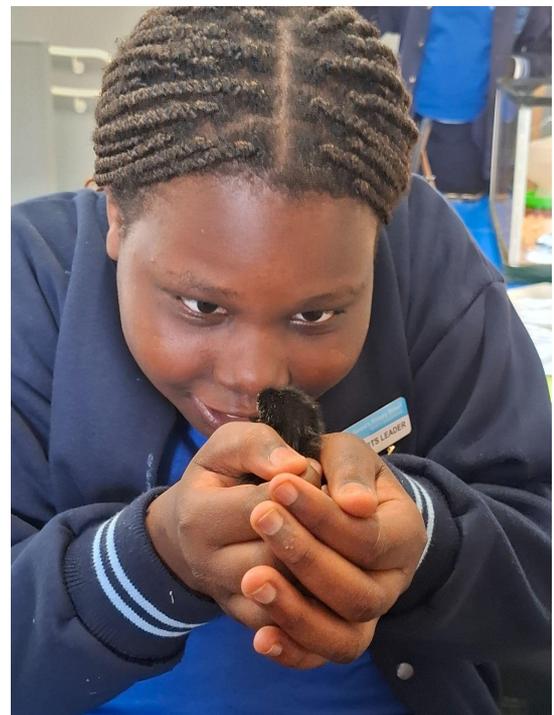
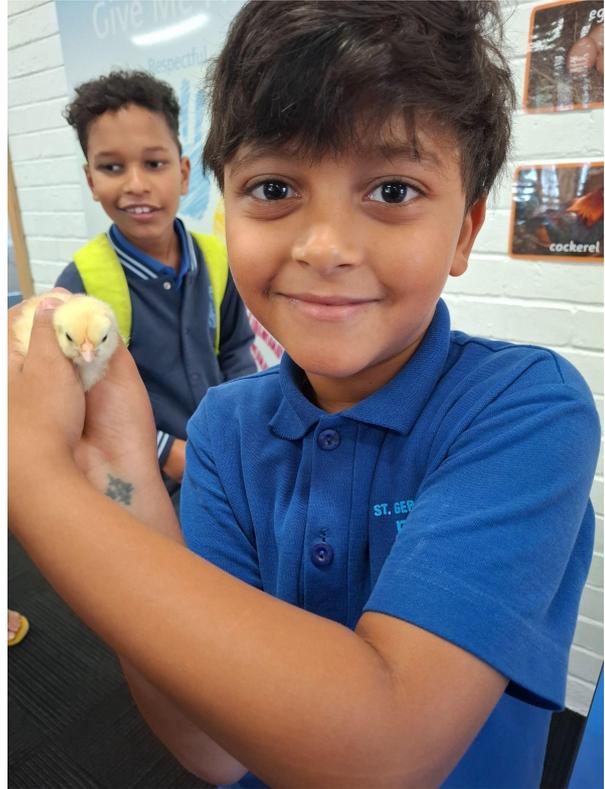
Principle	Learning Areas	Corridors	Toilets	Playground/Sandpit
Be Respectful	Speak appropriately and use manners Care for property Take turns Whole body listening Greet people by name	Speak appropriately and use manners Care for property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the area neat and tidy 	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

INQUIRY YR 1/2

There has been plenty of excitement outside the Year 1/2 classrooms as we have watched the hatching of eggs and welcomed several adorable chicks into our school!

While this experience is part of the Year 1/2 Inquiry Unit, it has certainly captured the interest and enthusiasm of all students — and staff as well!

Families are warmly invited to visit before or after school to meet the “newest members of our school community.” We look forward to sharing this special experience with you.



INQUIRY YR 1/2



ADOPTING CHICKS

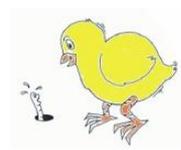
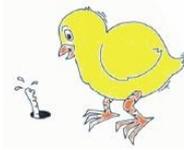
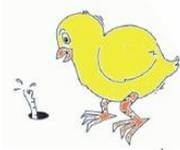
Henny Penny Hatching asks any families considering adopting chicks, particularly those who have limited experience in keeping and raising chickens, to read and consider the following before they take chicks home:

- Do your local council regulations allow you to keep poultry on your property?
- Will your backyard be suitable when the chicks grow into adult chickens?
- Remember that 50% of the chicks will be roosters. Are you able to, and prepared to, keep roosters on your property?
- Will your chickens co-exist happily with any pets you may already have?
- Will your neighbours mind having chickens living next door?
- Who will look after your chickens when you go on holiday?
- Chickens will produce eggs for 2-3 years but they can live for 10 years and more. Are you prepared to look after them for their entire lifespan?
- Click on [Gardening Australia](#) for more information regarding keeping chickens as pets.
- Chickens are flock birds. You will need to take 2 or more chicks home in order for them to be naturally content. Are you prepared to keep 2 or more adult chickens?



When you take your chicks home you will need to provide a suitable brooding area, a small drinker, a feeder, and a desk lamp, which you can suspend over the area for warmth. However, when the chicks develop their feathers, at about 8 weeks, they will need to be housed outside. You should gradually reduce the heat source in the weeks leading up to this. Once you have moved your chickens outside, they will need shelter, nesting boxes with straw or shavings, and perches (which can be made from tree branches). There are a number of excellent coops on the market. Some of these can even be moved around the backyard (see [Useful Information](#)).

INQUIRY YR 1/2



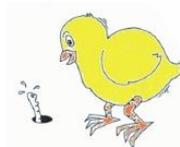
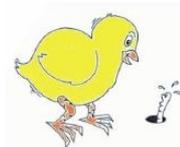
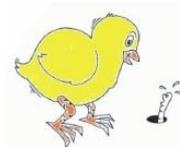
ADOPTING CHICKS

IF YOU WISH TO ADOPT CHICKENS, PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME & PHONE NUMBER ON THE LIST BELOW.

- There is no cost to adopt the chickens.
- We are unable to tell if the chickens are hens or roosters at this age.
- You must adopt at least 2 chickens, as they get very lonely by themselves.
- Take Home Packs are available to purchase for \$40, the pack will assist you in setting up & taking care of your new baby chicks - please make contact with the person in charge of the program at your facility to order & arrange your take home pack.
- Chickens can be taken to their new home on the Thursday afternoon prior to us arriving Friday to pack up the program - providing you don't require a take home pack.

NAME	PHONE NUMBER	# of Chicks	Take home pack Y or N

If anyone misses out on adopting chicks and would like to go on our adoption waiting list or if you have any other questions, please contact
Jess from Henny Penny Hatching on 0407 888 278



Garden Club

Garden Club Update

This week in Garden Club, students eagerly got to work caring for our much loved veggie garden and chicken coop.

Out in the garden, they carried out important maintenance tasks to keep everything thriving. The lemon, finger lime, and orange trees were carefully watered, ensuring they stay healthy and continue to grow strong. It was wonderful to see students taking such pride in nurturing our fruit trees and understanding the importance of regular care.

Next, the group headed to the chicken coop, where there was plenty to do! Students collected fresh eggs, changed the chickens' water, and topped up their food. They worked responsibly and confidently, showing great teamwork and care for our feathered friends.

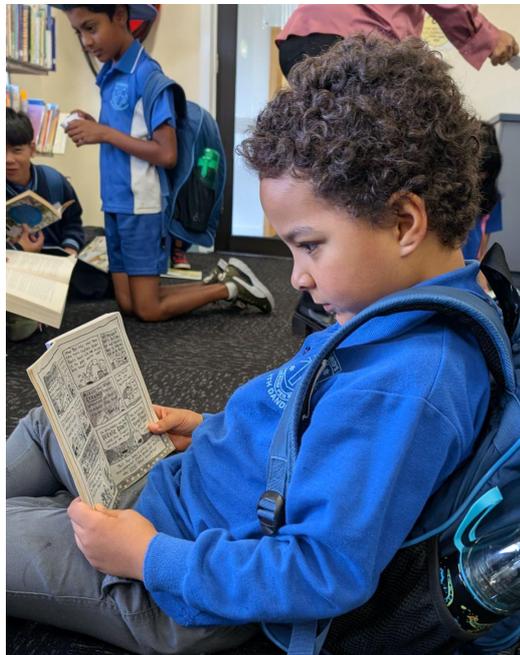
There was also an extra challenge this week one of our hens has gone broody! The students have been learning about what this means and worked hard to gently encourage her to change her behaviour. We're hopeful their efforts will do the trick!

Well done to all our Garden Club members for their enthusiasm and dedication. Our garden and chickens are certainly in very good hands!



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.]



Library



LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



Week 34, February 2026

Exploring New Worlds at the Library, Together!

Come join us at the library, where there's more than just reading books! Engage in our library club and explore a world of knowledge, creativity, and community. Whether it's through interactive sessions, engaging discussions, or collaborative projects, there's something for everyone to enjoy and learn.

LIBRARY CLUB UPDATES

This week at Library Club, students enjoyed an exciting Puzzle Race Competition. Working in pairs, students demonstrated fantastic teamwork as they raced to complete their puzzles as quickly as possible. There was a very close finish between a senior and junior pairing, keeping everyone on the edge of their seats.

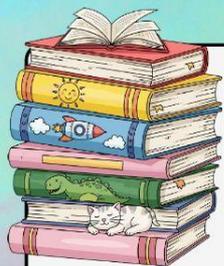
A big congratulations to Ameya and Grace, a junior pairing who took out the competition, completing their puzzle in an impressive 5 minutes and 50 seconds. A special mention also goes to our senior pairing, Sophia and Azalea, who were very close runners-up and showed wonderful teamwork and determination throughout the challenge. Well done to all students for demonstrating excellent collaboration, perseverance, and positive attitudes while working together to solve their puzzles. Borrowing has now begun for Term 1. Miss Adrién will be checking for any overdue books every two weeks until the end of term. From now on, students are asked to bring a separate library bag (book bag) on their allocated library day when borrowing books. This helps keep food and drinks away from library books, supports students in building responsibility for returning books on time, and helps prevent damage so everyone can continue to enjoy them. Thank you for your ongoing support in caring for our school library resources.



Miss Stephanie Adrién



Library



LIBRARY CLUB



Week 4, February 2026



Miss Stephanie Adrien



Skipping

THURSDAY SKIPPING



STARTS AT 8:30 AM
EVERY THURSDAY



Important Dates

2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

Term 1, 2026 Dates

February

- 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

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

Important Dates

Term 1, 2026 Dates

- 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.

Any families who hold a current Health Care Card are asked to please provide a copy to the school office.

This will ensure you receive the MACS Concession on your school fees.

Please note, this must be a valid Centrelink Health Care Card. Private health insurance cards or Medicare cards are not eligible.



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Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

MAZENOD
COLLEGE

Where every *talent*
finds its place.

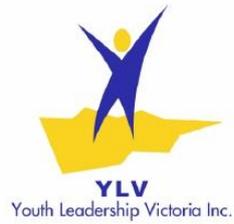
OPEN DAY: WED 4TH MARCH 2026
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

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



BOOK A TOUR

Important Notes



ST GERARD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

SERVICE CONTACT:
0402 192 685 (Marina) | area1@ylv.com.au



SERVICE HOURS

COST

Before School Care
6:45AM – 8:45AM

\$30/\$35
PERMANENT/CASUAL

After School Care
3:30PM – 6:30PM

\$35/\$40
PERMANENT/CASUAL

Pupil-Free Day
7:00AM – 6:00PM

\$83

fees effective 02 Mar 2026

ylv.com.au

Important Information



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

- CHUDIER Yr 6



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.