

St Gerard's Newsletter

Term 1, Week 5 – 27 February 2026



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



Athletics Day

The Season of Lent



PRAY



FAST



GIVE

Dear God,

Thank you for this day of fun and
friendship.

Help us to do our best,
cheer for others,
and play with kindness and fair
spirit.

Keep us safe and joyful as we
run, jump, and play.

Amen.



@st.gerards3175

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



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

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

Here we are at the halfway point of Term 1 which is hard to believe!

Our 2026 **Sacramental Program commenced** with our **Year 3 Reconciliation Family Workshop** on Tuesday evening. It was wonderful to see children and families exploring this important **Sacrament of Healing** together. Please keep these children and their families in your prayers over the coming weeks as they continue their preparation.

The first of our 4 **AUSKICK and SUPERKICK sessions** occurred on Wednesday afternoon with over 25 children participating. It was great to see our children so engaged and eager. These sessions provide the opportunity to develop some AFL and social skills and try a team sport. Hopefully we may see some children join one of the local AFL clubs.

Today (Friday) we had our **Annual Whole School Athletics Day** at Mentone Athletics Track. This was a wonderful day with our students displaying their sporting skills as well as school spirit. It was great to see our children cheer on and support each other. Congratulations to those children that will now represent our school later in the year at inter-school events. **A huge thank you to our staff and congratulations to Ms Lauren Boyle for coordination of the day.**

Looking to next week, we have the first of our **Open Days next Thursday 5 March**. This is an opportunity for prospective families to see all that we offer here at St Gerard's. We have **2 other Open Days planned for Wednesday 11 March and Tuesday 17 March**. If you know families who will be looking for a school in 2027, we would appreciate you letting them know of these dates. They may also arrange another time to visit our school by calling the School Office on 9791 7553 or emailing myself principal@sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au

Lastly, a reminder that the **school will be closed on Monday 9 March** for the Labour Day Public Holiday **and Tuesday 10 March** to acquit Time in Lieu accrued by the staff.

God bless.

Paul Cowan
PRINCIPAL

Religious

Key Dates

Sacraments 2026

First Reconciliation:

- 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

Years 5/6O & 5/6T:	Thursday 12th March, 10:15am
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Other Important Dates for Religion

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

First Week of Lent

(Week beginning Monday 23 Feb)

This Lent, our school community is supporting Caritas Australia's Project Compassion, uniting in faith and action to make a lasting impact for vulnerable communities around the world. In our classrooms, we'll be sharing four inspiring stories of resilience and strength, showing the kind of transformative change that we can play a part in achieving.

We will first be introduced to **Sisilia**, a young student from Tanzania, who often missed classes at school because she had to walk long distances to collect water every day. Thanks to Project Compassion and the support of schools just like ours, her community now has safe, clean water nearby – giving Sisilia more time to learn and chase her dreams of one day becoming a pilot.

We'll also get to know **Monoranjon** from Bangladesh, who is using climate-smart farming to feed his family and build a safer, more sustainable future for his children. We'll meet **Manaini**, a mother of six and a grandmother of two from remote Fiji, who is learning food processing skills to create new income opportunities. And we'll shine a light on **Caritas Jerusalem** staff in Gaza, who have endured displacement, personal loss and danger, yet remain committed to providing life-saving support to those in need.

Watch Caritas Australia's Introduction to Project Compassion film [HERE](#) to be inspired by these stories and learn about the impact your support can have on vulnerable communities around the world.

Our school has the opportunity to be a part of a nationwide movement for change and to pave the way to a brighter future for people and families across the world. We can't do it without you - **will you stand with us?**



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

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



Child Safe Standard 1

“Establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and value”

As Catholic educators, we have a moral, mission-driven and legal responsibility to uphold and actively promote the wellbeing and safety of every student entrusted in our care. Our commitment to the protection of students is enabled in nurturing, respectful and safe communities where the uniqueness and sacred dignity of every young person are celebrated, and they can flourish in their learning and development.

This newsletter series provides an overview of what the Child Safe Standards are, how they are designed to help keep children and young people safe and what school governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) are doing to prioritise and achieve this.

Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Child Safe Standards are a set of 11 minimum requirements that all organisations working with children must meet. These standards are designed to:

- Prevent child abuse and harm
- Make child safety a shared responsibility
- Support the wellbeing of all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children with disabilities
- Promote the participation and empowerment of children and young people

These standards apply to all school staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone working with children in schools.

Our Commitment

Our commitment to the protection of students is enables in nurturing, respectful and safe communities where the uniqueness and sacred dignity of every young person are celebrated, and they can flourish in their learning and development.

This vision is driven by the Gospel message of love, justice and abundance, beautifully reflected in the words of John:

“I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full”

(Jn 10:10)

Note: The term ‘Aboriginal’ includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is important to be respectful of how individual children, students, their families and community refer to themselves and use appropriate language when referring to individuals or communities.

Working together for Child Safety



Wellbeing

Spotlight on Child Safe Standard 1

Creating a Culturally Safe Environment for Aboriginal Children

Child Safe Standard 1 relates to children and young people feeling culturally safe, respected, and valued.

What does this look like in a school environment?

- **Celebrating culture:** We include and celebrate Aboriginal culture in our classrooms/events e.g. NAIDOC Week, researching stories to share, inviting guest speakers.
- **Taking a stance:** We lead by example against racism and swiftly respond if it is observed.
- **Working together:** We contact and engage with Aboriginal families and communities to make sure our school is welcoming and inclusive. We ask families what they need to feel supported at our school.
- **Ongoing development:** Our staff receive training and knowledge to better understand and support cultural safety.



How Parents, Carers and Guardians can get involved!

Here's how you can support:

- **Familiarise** yourself with the school's child safety policies and understand how they support student wellbeing.
- **Provide feedback** when you notice something that may impact a child's safety or wellbeing.
- **Support** your child when they express their views and that their opinions are valued and heard.
- **Join in** on school activities, parent committees or forums that promote child safety and wellbeing.

Want to know more?

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about how we're supporting child safety, please get in touch.

More information on the Child Safe Standards can be found via the [Commission for Children and Young People \(CCYP\) website](#).

Check out these additional resources below to learn more!

- [Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Koori Heritage Trust](#)
- [Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria](#)
- [AIATSIS: Map of Indigenous Australia](#)
- [Yoorrook Justice Commission](#)



Working together for Child Safety



Reviewed: January 2026

Reading before School



Just 10~15 Minutes a Day Makes a Lifelong Difference

★ Why Reading Together Matters

Builds Strong Brains

- Improves concentration and memory
- Develops imagination and creativity
- Strengthens thinking skills

Grows Literacy Skills

- Expands vocabulary
- Improves spelling and writing
- Builds fluency and comprehension
- Increases confidence

Strengthens Relationships

- Creates special one-on-one time
- Encourages meaningful conversations
- Helps children feel supported and valued

Broadens Understanding

- Develops empathy
- Introduces new ideas and cultures
- Helps children understand the world

How You Can Help at Home

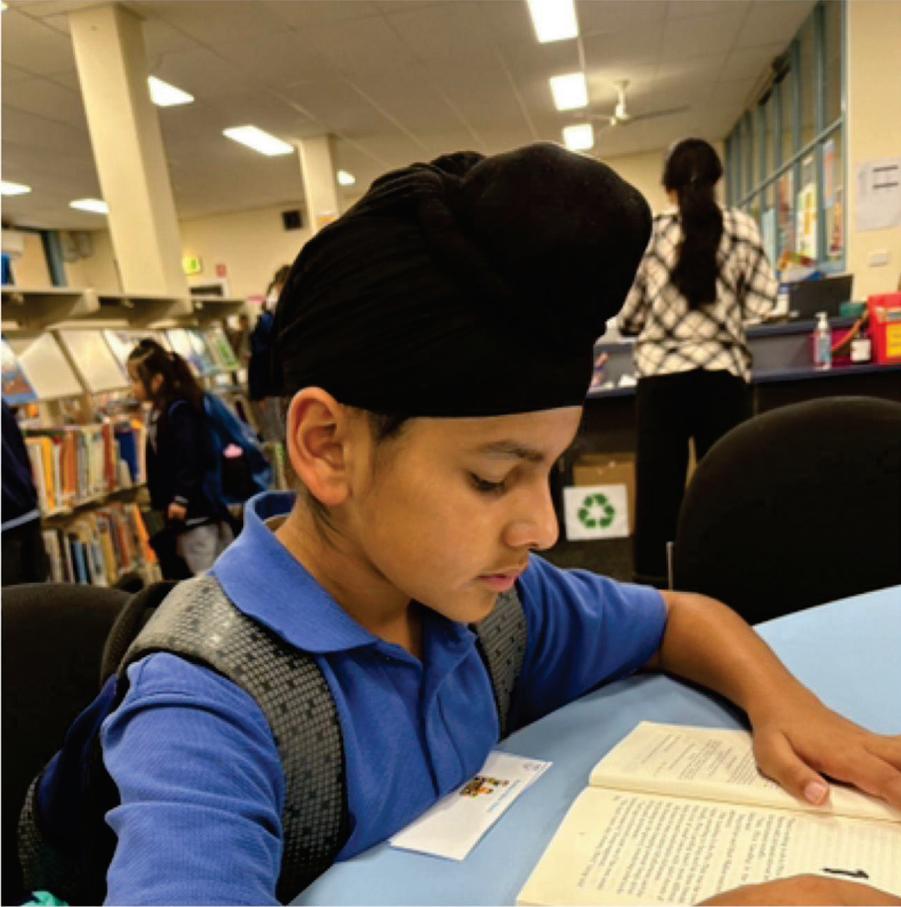
- Set a regular reading time each day
- Take turns reading aloud
- Ask questions about the story
- Praise effort, not just accuracy
- Make reading enjoyable
- Let your child see you reading too

Remember

- You don't need to be a teacher to make a difference.
- Your time, encouragement and interest matter most.

“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.”

Reading before School



Reading before School



Important Dates

2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

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.



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 Notes

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.



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.

- JORAM Yr 5
- ABEL 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.