

St Gerard's Newsletter

Term 1, Week 9

27 March 2026



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

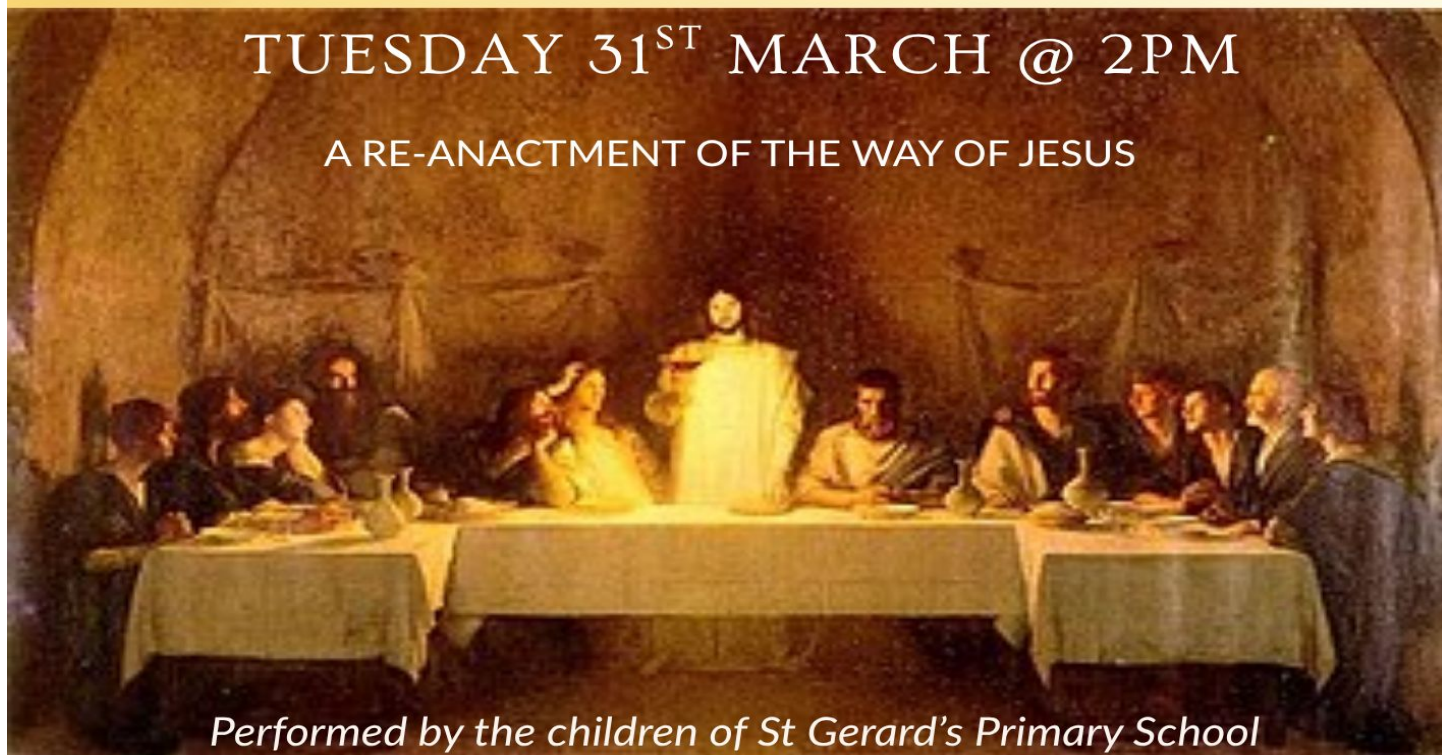


YOU'RE CORDIALLY INVITED TO

THE PASSION PRESENTATION

TUESDAY 31ST MARCH @ 2PM

A RE-ANACTMENT OF THE WAY OF JESUS



Performed by the children of St Gerard's Primary School
71 Gladstone Rd, Dandenong North 3175



@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,

Here we are at the end of the last full week of Term 1.

It doesn't feel like we started the year all that long ago and we now find ourselves about to enter into Holy Week. There have certainly been plenty of learning opportunities for our children both in and out of the classroom which I will reflect on more next week.

This week has seen rehearsals for our whole school performance of **The Passion, which will occur next Tuesday 31 March at 2.00pm in the Parish Hall**. This presentation identifies the significant events of Holy Week and allows our school community to come together as we look to celebrate Easter during the holidays. **An invitation has been extended to all families to join us** and I look forward to seeing you all at this special expression of our faith.

This week saw the **last of our Before School Reading and Skipping activities** for the term. I would like to **acknowledge and thank Mrs O'Brien (Reading) and Ms Adrien (Skipping) for coordinating these events and giving up their time** to ensure that our children and families have these opportunities on a weekly basis.

I would also like to **thank the staff that have offered our Library (Ms Adrien), Visual Art (Mrs Theodore) and Gardening (Ms Fernandez) Lunchtime Clubs each week**. These clubs are open to all students and they have proved to be popular. Our Before School activities and Lunchtime Clubs will start again in Term 2.

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. Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) is also available for families that start work early in the morning.

Lastly, **a reminder that Term 1 finishes next Wednesday 1 April at 3.30pm.**

God bless.

Paul Cowan
PRINCIPAL

Religious

Key Dates

Sacraments 2026

First Communion:

- Sunday, 14th June, 2026, First Communion, 10:30am

Confirmation:

- Saturday, 16th May, 2026 Confirmation, 5:30pm

Other Important Dates for Religion

31st March

The Passion

Project Compassion boxes are due back this Monday. We thank all families for their generous support of this important initiative.

All donations will be counted on Monday, and the class that raises the most money will be rewarded with a casual dress day.

PROJECT COMPASSION



Project Compassion
Box

ANZAC DAY Badges

ANZAC Day badges will be on sale at school starting next week and will continue to be available each day up until ANZAC Day on 25th April.

Badges are \$2 each and bracelets are \$3. All proceeds help support veterans and honour the soldiers who have served our country.

Students who would like to purchase a badge or bracelet are encouraged to bring some money to school.



Religious

The Passion – Costume Ideas

For Children: Year Prep – 4

Year 5/6: Wear All Black

To help reflect on the events of Holy Week, we will be holding a special school event on **Tuesday, 31st March at 2:00pm**. All children will be involved, either as part of the crowd, re-enacting the events of Holy Week, or singing.

We ask that:

- **Children in Foundation – Year 4** come to school dressed in clothing from the **time of Jesus**.
- **Year 5/6 students** wear **all black**.

We also ask that all children bring a gold coin donation on this day to support Project Compassion.

Costume Ideas:

- Traditional Indian, Sri Lankan, or Arabic clothing that could resemble attire from the time of Jesus.
- Tea towels on the head, secured with a headband or scarf.
- Old sheets tied with a rope or belt around the waist.
- Scarves wrapped around the head.

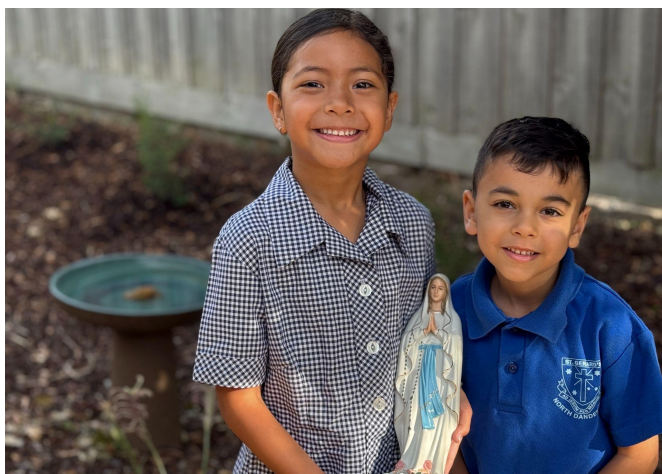
Thank you for helping your child participate in this meaningful event!



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.

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**.

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



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).

Wellbeing

MACS
CARE

Parent/Carer Newsletter



2



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

**Working
together for
Child Safety**

Child Safe Standard 2

“Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.”

Rooted in the Gospel and the teachings of the Church, MACS Catholic schools uphold the sacred dignity of every child as created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). This belief places Catholic educators in a privileged and profound position to protect and nurture the most vulnerable.

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 Child Safe Standard 2:

To be aligned, schools must support the following:

- A public commitment to child safety
- Champion a child safe culture at all levels
- Ensure governance supports child safety policies
- Develop and enforce a Code of Conduct
- Implement risk management strategies that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children
- Ensure staff, volunteers and contractors understand their obligation and the role they play in keeping children and young people safe. This includes information sharing and record keeping.

The Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards are a set of guidelines that help organisations create safe environments for children and young people.

They make sure that children are protected from harm, listened to, and respected. These standards require organisations to have strong leadership, clear policies, and a culture that puts children first.

As a parent or carer, you can expect organisations to involve families, empower children, train staff properly, and respond to concerns quickly and respectfully.

This standard promotes a shared responsibility for safety across the entire school community and all levels of the organisation. It ensures a child safe culture is actively championed and modelled from the top down and bottom up.

Working together for Child Safety



Wellbeing

What does this look like in a school environment?

- **Leadership commitment:** School leaders actively promote child safety and wellbeing as a priority in decision-making and daily operations.
- **Ongoing training and professional development:** Staff are provided with ongoing training and professional development opportunities that increase capacity and confidence surrounding all aspects of child safety.
- **Clear governance:** Policies and procedures reflect child safety responsibilities and are regularly reviewed, updated and publicly available.
- **Staff modelling safe behaviours:** Expectations of staff are clearly defined. All staff demonstrate respectful, inclusive, and protective behaviours towards children. All staff are encouraged and empowered to speak up if any alternative is observed.
- **Ongoing culture building:** Child safety is embedded in school values, professional development, and community engagement with the objective to continually improve practice.
- **Thorough recruitment processing:** Applicable to all staff working in a school context, extending to volunteers and contractors. Valid credentials, references and Working with Children Checks apply. Ongoing monitoring and supervision of all staff and intervention if required.

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](#).

Working together for Child Safety



Reviewed: January 2026

Skipping

THURSDAY SKIPPING



Skipping

SEE YOU NEXT TERM!



Reading before School



READ WITH ME!



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



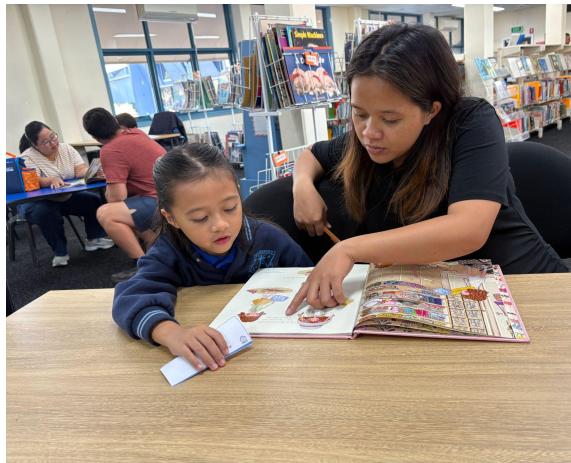
Remember

- 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



Thank You to Our Reading Before School Families
A sincere thank you to the families who attend our Reading Before School program. Your diligence and commitment to making time to read with your children each Wednesday morning is truly appreciated. By sharing these moments together, you are helping to foster a love of reading, strengthen literacy skills, and show your children that reading is valued and important. Your support makes a meaningful difference in their learning. Thank you for being such wonderful partners in your child's education.

With thanks, Mrs O'Brien



Library News



LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



Week 9, March 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 participated in a fun trivia game of Kids vs. Grown Ups. Everyone was highly engaged and eager to contribute, with both teams showing great knowledge and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, we ran out of time before the game could be completed, resulting in a tie. Hopefully, we will be able to continue and finish the game next week, which will be the final week of Library Club for the term.

Miss Adrien will be checking for any overdue books every two weeks until the end of term. Last week was final week of borrowing. From now on, students are asked to please return their books. Thank you for your ongoing support in caring for our school library resources.

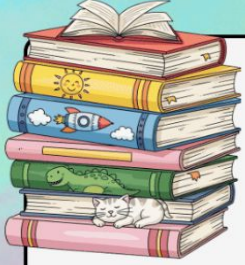
Congratulations to Ameya, Ephrata, Andrea, Sanaya, Grace, Hudson, Matej, Elaine, Izabella, Anthony and Bommy who have each received their Gold Pass after successfully completing three training sessions.



Miss Stephanie Adrien



Library News



LIBRARY CLUB



Week 9, March 2026



Miss Stephanie Adrien



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.

Term 1, 2026 Dates

March

- 30th Whole School Meditation in PAC at 8.45am
- 31st 'The Passion' in the Parish Hall at 2:00 pm

April

- 1st End of Term 1 at 3.30pm

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.

Please call Marina for further information: 0402 192 685



ST GERARD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

SERVICE HOURS

Before School Care
6:45AM – 8:45AM

After School Care
3:30PM – 6:30PM

Pupil-Free Day
7:00AM – 6:00PM

COST

\$30/\$35
PERMANENT/CASUAL

\$35/\$40
PERMANENT/CASUAL

\$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.

- MALEAH Yr 5
- NICHOLA Yr 2
- LENNY Yr 1



COMMUNITY NOTICE

- *Every Day Counts* - Primary School Attendance Information
- 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.