



Foundation Handbook 2025

Welcome to St Mary's Primary School

Your child is God's gift to you. We are very happy to share with you the privilege and responsibility of educating your child.

Thank you for selecting our Catholic school for your child. We hope your involvement with our school will be a happy and rewarding family experience.

The aim of our school is to educate the whole child in his/her spiritual, emotional, social, moral, physical and academic growth. To achieve this, the continuing interest and co-operation of parents is essential, highly valued and appreciated.

Parents are the primary educators of children. By your example and training in the home since birth, the child has already learnt many skills. From you too, he/she will learn a love and respect for God and experience a meaningful and deep relationship with him in daily prayer and regular weekly celebration of the Eucharist (Mass). This is the faith commitment you made when you requested Baptism for your child. Your values make a deep and lasting impression on your child.

The school will compliment you in all these educational tasks. Teachers build on the foundations you lay so we encourage you to be as actively involved as possible in all school and parish life. Your child's interests are best served when there is close collaboration, understanding and mutual respect between school, home and the parish.

Here at St Mary's, we aim to present learning as an enjoyable experience. Children are encouraged to develop individually at their own rate. Emphasis is on developing confidence in using God-given talents for an effective contribution to our present and future society.

With all these experiences, the child learns respect and appreciation for self and others and this engenders self-discipline. Hence, he/she will need much encouragement, leadership and support.

Remember, "It takes a whole village to raise a child".

Term Dates for 2025

Term 1	Staff Return Student Assessments Yrs F-6 School Begins Yrs F-6 School Closure Day School Closure Day Public Holiday – Labour Day Term ends	Tuesday 28 January Wednesday 29 January Thursday 30 January Thursday 6 March Friday 7 March Monday 10 March Friday 4 April @ 2:10pm
Term 2	Term Begins Public Holiday – ANZAC Day Public Holiday – Kings Birthday Term Ends	Tuesday 22 April Friday 25 April Monday 9 June Friday 4 July @ 2:10pm
Term 3	Term Begins School Closure Day Term Ends	Monday 21 July Date to be confirmed in August Friday 19 September @ 2:10pm
Term 4	Term Begins School Closure Day Public Holiday – Melbourne Cup Term Ends	Monday 6 October Monday 3 November Tuesday 4 November Tuesday 16 December @ 2:10pm

At this stage, the first term timetable for Foundation children will be as follows:

Wednesday 29 January	Student Assessments - School Closure Day
Thursday 30 January	School Commences
Wednesday 5, 12, 19, 26 February and 5 March	Each of these Wednesdays will be a Foundation student free day, however, Foundation students will be asked back for individual assessment sessions during this time. Bookings will be available online.
Monday 10 March	Labour Day Public Holiday – School Closure Day
Tuesday 11 March	Year Foundation Commence Full-time

Faith Development

In sending your child to a Catholic school you have, presumably, made this choice for the benefit of his/her faith. We believe the values reinforced by our school are the right ones but, in these, as in all other aspects of your child's development, your part is vital. The notes below may help.

The five-year-olds world is one of awareness and wonder. Filled with wonder and curiosity they love to explore the world and delight in everything they find. Just watch and listen!

Everyday, everywhere, there is something new to discover – a sunset, a flower, wood, water. So much goes unnoticed by us adults who seem to have lost or forgotten our sense of wonder. We tend to think of wonder, as being for children but it is the basis of faith. We need to be aware of creation and delight in it so that we can believe in the Creator.

The sense of awareness and wonder is necessary in the formation of your child as a Christian. Their natural gifts of awareness, joy and awe can bring them, with our help, to an awareness of God.

We must encourage them and share their awareness of the beautiful, the wonderful and the good things and the not so good. We must help them to know the differences and to lead them to develop as Christian people.

Our program in the early years of school is based upon these precepts.



God's love
has no end.

What children need to know

While many children know the alphabet, can count to 20 and recognize colour, these are not the vital skills for making a smooth start to school.

Children need skills in all aspects of their development, including:

- Intellectual
- Physical
- Self-Care
- Emotional
- Social
- Language

Intellectual Development

A child gets to know and understand things through seeing, hearing and doing. Before a child can meaningfully read, he/she needs to have heard the words and understood what they represent. Before they can meaningfully work out sums, children need to know 'more' and 'less' and 'bigger' and 'smaller'.

Knowledge and understanding is obtained when the child:

- Knows their surname
- Knows their age and where they live
- Able to recognise their name
- Ask questions
- Understands concepts (e.g. first, last, up, down, front, behind, big, bigger, small, smaller)
- Understands that some words have more than one meaning (e.g. fly, orange, chop, glasses)
- Understands and follows rules
- Has a story read to them

When the parents talk to the children and say things like... 'make it bigger', 'find a little nail', 'it is only half full' they are giving the child knowledge and the words to express that knowledge. Don't underestimate the importance of the parents' conversation with the child!

Physical Development

This first section concerns the child's health –

1. Good Eyesight

Good eyesight is important for reading, copying and art activities. The teacher needs to know of any deficiencies as these could affect where the child sits in relation to the blackboard etc.

Children should be able to see things that are up close or in the distance and concentrate for long periods of time.

2. Good Hearing

The child who has poor or fluctuating hearing may become bewildered because he/she does not hear what the teacher says and then does not know what he/she should be doing. Good hearing is very important in learning to read.

Children should be able to discriminate what needs to be heard in noisy environments, able to hear subtle differences in sound.

3. Good General Health

The child who gets very tired or who feels unwell, finds it hard to concentrate and will not enjoy school. If the teacher knows, for example, that a child suffers from epilepsy, diabetes or asthma etc, he/she can prepare and make allowances for this.

If you have any doubts in these areas it is worthwhile consulting your General Practitioner before the child comes to school.

4. Clear Speech

Poor speech can make it difficult for the teacher and other children to understand the child's needs and this can lead to frustration for the child.

Good grammar is developed in a relaxed atmosphere – most parents automatically say, 'John did it' when the child says, 'John done it'. Encourage your child to use correct grammar.

When a child begins to read, he/she has to match up the words he/she sees with those heard. It is important that they hear the endings of words, for example, yes, going, sitting and the beginning, umbrella, elephant.

On average, children are 7- 8 years old before they can master all sounds of our language, so do not expect too much. However, seek professional advice if your child:

- Rarely talks
- Is unintelligible
- Stammers
- Is distressed at his inability to talk

5. Eating and Drinking

The child needs to be quite independent when it comes to eating and drinking at school, simply because he/she is one of a large number of children.

This is developed from an early age when the parents let the child have a spoon at mealtimes and give him/her 'finger food'. Later he/she learns how to turn on a tap. Later still, he learns how to peel fruit.

6. Eye-Hand Co-ordination

This is the ability to have the hand do what the eye sees – this is important for both using classroom equipment and for joining in play outdoors.

Painting with any medium, drawing with chalk, crayons, pencils, pouring water, colouring books, catching big balls, hitting with bats help develop this skill.

7. Toilet Training

Once again, the child is unable to depend on an adult's help at school. Being able to manage by himself gives a feeling of confidence and independence.

Toilet training is slowly developed over a period of years. Between 4- 5 years it can still be affected by anxiety etc. Teachers try to prevent accidents by programming regular visits to the toilet in early days at school.

8. Self Care

Children should be able to carry their school bags into school and unpack them ready for the school day.

Children should be able to recognize whether they are thirsty and/or hungry, hot and/or cold.

They should be able to cope with opening and closing their bags, lunchboxes and drink bottles.

They should be able to blow their nose independently.

9. Basic Movement

These are skills, which a child uses in the games he/she will be taught.

The child needs to be given plenty of opportunity to develop these skills. Often children need to be shown how to skip. If they can hop, they can be shown that skipping is alternate feet hopping!

10. Manners

Saying 'thank you', 'excuse me', 'please', addressing adults respectfully, are habits that should be cultivated early. These habits begin at home and are encouraged at school.

Emotional Development

- Children need to be able to separate easily from the parents, usually their mother.
- They need to be positive about school
- Cope with a variety of new situations
- Accept re-direction without a temper tantrum
- Will ask for help when it is needed
- Able to stand up for own rights
- Able to apologise and make amends

- Tries even when tasks are difficult
- Can work independently for reasonable periods of time
- Has an "I can do that" attitude
- Able to avoid contact with those they find undesirable

Social Development

The child needs to be able to:

- Listen to the teacher
- Do what the teacher asks
- Make known to the teacher his/her needs
- Play and work with other children without adult supervision
- Share and take turns and recognize the rights of others
- Be with other children and play in a friendly way

The ability to adapt to other adults is important when more than one teacher is likely to be involved with the child.

Relationships with other adults are developed when

- Parents model greeting others
- Visitors are invited to the home
- When an adult other than a parent minds the child
- When the child plays at the home of others
- When he/she goes out with other people, when attending kindergarten and playgroups
- When he/she stays away from home
- When he/she learns to buy things in a shop
- Parents encourage eye to eye contact when talking to others

How You Can Help Prepare Your Child for School... a checklist

Before starting school, it would be helpful if your child could:

- Recognize their name in lower case
- Put shoes on and take shoes off
- Be able to dress themselves
- Cope with a packed lunch
- Look after their property
- Use a public toilet (for many boys it will be the first time they have used a urinal)
- Share, co-operate, and take turns
- Pack up after playing with toys

Parents have also helped when they have:

- Attached value to money, e.g. pocket money
- Showed patience and waited for him/her to finish speaking
- Read a goodnight story especially to young children
- Answered annoying questions gladly, promptly and honestly
- Explained current happenings
- Posed problems
- Encouraged daily routine
- Encouraged their child to use their initiative and to be resourceful
- Allowed their child to do large paintings and drawings
- Provided 'dressing up' materials
- Spoken clearly and carefully
- Corrected speech errors without nagging
- Regulated programs children watch on TV
- Provided an opportunity to use computers

Preparation for the First Day

You may find some of these points useful:

- See that your child is at school at the appointed time. Show by your words and actions that you are sure school is a happy place.
- On the first day, please bring your child to school at the correct time, introduce him/her to the classroom teacher and then leave him/her. Don't worry if your child sheds a few tears. Tears usually disappear after the parents have left. If there is a problem, don't worry, we will contact you!
- Children will cope better with the new environment if they are able to recognize their own name and realize that there is a boy's toilet and a girl's toilet.
- Once your child commences school, he/she will have a full day of activities both in the classroom and the playground. The new regular and long hours place an extra strain on their stamina. He/She will need to be in bed early in order to build and restore energy for another day.

Brain Food

Studies have indicated that children perform better at school if they eat small quantities or graze on "Brain Food" during the day.

Each day at 10am, the children are allowed to graze on "Brain Food".

Some brain food ideas are:

- Dried fruit
- Cheese
- Chopped up fresh fruit
- Chopped up vegetables
- Rice crackers

Lunches

Please do not pack too much into your child's lunch box. Small, manageable sandwiches, one piece of fruit and a drink are sufficient. A small portion of food may be eaten at morning recess. Wrap this separately so he/she will know what you have provided.

We promote healthy eating with the children and strongly encourage parents to provide healthy food each day for the children to eat.

Water

Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle into the classroom each day, to enable them to sip water during the day. During summer, children can easily become dehydrated.

Please encourage your child to have regular drinks of water.

Classroom Requirements

At the commencement of the year your child will require:

- An art smock (can be purchased on your booklist)
- Chair bag (sold at the P&F Uniform Shop)
- A school hat (sold at the P&F Uniform Shop)

All possessions are to be marked clearly with your child's name – socks, shoes, sports clothes, jumper, lunch box, library bag etc. The Book List will cover all other requirements.

School Routine

Physical Education

This is held every Wednesday and Friday. Children are to wear their sports uniform. There may be other occasions when the children are required to wear their sports uniform. These will include the Athletics Carnival, Feast Day, Swimming Carnivals etc. You will be notified of these days via email & PAM (Parent Access Module).

Library

Each week your child will attend the library to borrow books and use computers. You will be notified of the library borrowing day early in the school year.

Canteen

Lunches may be ordered from the canteen each week. All ordering is done using our online CDFPay website. The canteen is open each Wednesday and Friday.

Parents, please help by observing these rules

- Please ensure your child is at school by 8.50am each day. A late start is unsettling to the child and their class.
- No child is permitted to leave the school during hours of instruction without the permission of the Principal. Should your child return home unexpectedly, please notify the school as soon as possible.
- Do not take children from the school ground at any time without reporting to the class teacher and completing the attendance register at the Office.
- The work of the classroom teacher must not be interrupted during school hours. The teachers will be happy to speak to you at appointed times. At the beginning and end of the day the teacher's focus is the children.
- Notices – the only way the school has of keeping you in touch with school activities is via your email & PAM account. Newsletters are available every second Friday by email and can also be accessed from your PAM account. Hardcopy notes may also be sent home from time to time.
- Safety – our school program will help develop safety habits in your child. It is important, however, for his/her safety and the welfare of others that your child knows his/her full name, address and telephone number.
- Routine – if your child's usual routine is changed e.g. someone other than yourself is to pick him/her up, or the usual means of transport has been changed, send an email or phone the school office. Children often forget what you told them at breakfast.

Prepare your child by instructing him/her in the following habits:

- Travel directly between home and school
- Always use designated crossings (Parents and grandparents too!)
- Stop and look both ways before crossing the street
- Stay on the footpath
- Never run from behind parked cars
- Never accept rides from strangers
- Do not bring to school articles that may cause accidents, eg scooters, skateboards, roller blades
- Bus travel – show the child the bus stop where he/she will be picked up/dropped off.

Please try not to be late collecting your child as they may worry.

- Please do not send your child if he/she is ill. They will not learn anything, share their germs and will feel miserable.
- If you notice any changes in behaviour e.g. nightmares, bedwetting, loss of appetite, let us know as this could indicate that they are worried about something. A child who is upset will be distracted from learning. Often the problem is minor.
- For the first few months your child may feel tired. It is a big adjustment from a few hours a kindergarten to a full day at school. Be interested in what they have done during the day. They will enjoy showing you their schoolwork.
- Do not hesitate to contact us if you wish to discuss your child's progress. The best time to see a teacher is immediately after school. As Tuesday night is staff meeting night, please refrain from seeing teachers on that night. Our school office can make an appointment for you or you can contact the teacher via Class Dojo to make a time with them.

CONTACT US

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Our School Song

Mary, our Mother, you walked with Jesus,
Protecting and loving, in faith you said 'yes'
Teach us to follow, guide us to Jesus
Mary, our Mother, heart of our school.

**There is power in truth and truth in the
Gospel.**

We are stronger because we believe.

Mary, our Mother, lead us to Jesus:

Show us the power in truth.

Mary, our Mother, you walk beside us
Protecting and loving, you guide us in faith.
Mother of Jesus, help us to follow
Be here with us through all of our days.

Our School Prayer

This is our school
Let peace dwell here.

Let it be full of contentment,
Let love live here.

Love of one another,
Love of mankind,
Love of life itself,
And love of God.

Let us remember,
That as many hands build a house,
So many hearts make a school.



SAINT M