

St Mary's Catholic School

58 Main Highway, Ellerslie, Auckland

Principal Mrs Saira Boyle



Issue #15 | 22 November 2017

We provide a Catholic education for the whole child

Wellbeing

The St Mary's staff and Year 5 and 6 students have recently taken part in a wellbeing survey. This was set up through Wellbeing@School and is designed to support us to engage with the whole school community in a process of self-review to help build inclusive and safe practices for all learners.

Once the survey is completed we will be able to confidentially store data, access data reports, find suggestions for next steps actions, and track changes over time.

The principal will also be consulting with the community on this area as she is passionate about ensuring our school is a safe and happy place, focussed on learning, for everyone from the littlest and youngest of learners to the most experienced and oldest of staff. In order for us to work toward this we need information from all stakeholders as to your experiences and from this data, coupled with the survey we will start to update Policy, design a plan, and put together procedures so we have a transparent approach.

From here we will be able to think critically, implement and improve the way St Mary's includes all students and also how we can develop systems and approaches to improving our environment as a learning place of wellbeing for all.

MĀ TE TIKI O TE TOKI O TE TANGERE, ME TE TOHU O TE PANAHŌ, KA PAI TE TERE O TE WAKA I NGĀ MOMO MOANA KATOĀ.

By designing and shaping the keel of the waka to perfection, your canoe will overcome obstacles.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT

After many years of committed service, Mrs Kohlase is leaving our school. Earlier in the year we had an external audit of school administration which has resulted in a restructure, with the purpose of developing administration systems to support leadership of learning. Mrs Kohlase has chosen to take the option of redundancy. We offer Ellen much thanks, love and well wishes for her future, and once again acknowledge the significant time and care she has given to the school.

Parish

CHRISTMAS BOOKLET

Every year we enjoy the annual Christmas booklet – it showcases all the special Masses, important events and our Parish's goings-on from throughout the year.

This year we need to ask for support to get it professionally printed, as we've done in previous years. We already have a \$100 donation from LTCR Productions to get us started, but sponsors are still required for the remaining publishing costs.

If you can help with a donation, please add to the collection basket in an envelope marked 'Booklet donation', and a receipt will be issued from the Parish office. Email a business card to the Parish office and your business name will be advertised in the booklet.



Principal's Post

Nau mai haere mai – Greetings – Tena Koutou – Kamusta – Malo e Lelei – Talofa Lava – Namaste – Ni Hao – Hallo – Kia Orana – Bula – Fakaalofa Atu

Dear Parents and Whanau, Kia Ora!

Teachers have been making Overall Teacher Judgements against the National Standards in Reading, Writing and Mathematics for every child in the school recently. Each teacher uses a combination of assessment tool data, observation and conversational data to make the overall judgement, as to where the students are at. The initial analysis of this data demonstrates achievement at St Mary's is strong and when looking deeper it highlights that there are good numbers of learners whose learning has been accelerated this year.



Stepping Out

Thank you Constable Cyrus for delivering the 'Stepping Out' programme to our Year 0-2 classes. It is important that our students know how to keep themselves safe when walking in our community. Always remember to watch out for those 'sneaky driveways'!



Principal's Post continued

Teachers are now busy writing the end of year reports for our learners, highlighting progress and achievement through 2017. These will come out in the last week of term and we will give you a letter with your child's class for 2018, with instructions on how to order your child's stationery for 2018 online.

I would like to reassure you that despite the political environment with the removal of National Standards, we, at St Mary's are committed to a highly evaluative culture at every level, so we are working to make explicit what a minimum of 1 year's progress looks like and we are using the best available diagnostic tools to measure and monitor closely the IMPACT that we are having on learning. That, coupled with the use of formative assessment, which is the growing assessment, will ensure we continue to get better at monitoring, planning and designing specific learning experiences to accelerate the learning of your child(ren).

After a very busy year of learning, leading and developing the school, it is wonderful to see and hear the preparations for the end of year taking place. The start of this was marked with our wonderful PTA Christmas Craft Market on Saturday. This was a beautiful occasion of community and mission. There was much contemplation, prayer and hard work that went into the preparation for this special day and each and every person who took part in the preparations did so with zeal. Thank you does not seem enough for your generosity and spirit! Our founding order, the Sisters of Our Lady of The Missions, worked in community to build our school and it made me reflect on Saturday on how their values of Communion, Contemplation, Mission and Zeal are most certainly still alive and breathing in our school community. I could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit and the heart of Euphrasie Barbier, our foundress, deep in the hearts of all present. Thank you.

As we move to the end of the year celebrations of learning and love are something we look forward to. The Gospel this last Sunday was the Parable of the Talents, one of my favourite. We are each given talents from God, and we must try new things, take risks and embark on new learning every day in order to firstly find out what our talents are and then work to develop these. Our Year 6 students will be acknowledged through our Leavers' Mass for their sharing of talents and each one of our learners will take part in our Christmas Concert to share their talents.

Finding and developing our God given talents involves an element of risk and I am keen to share that we are starting to collaborate with the Resilience Institute to learn more about the science and practice of resilience and defining this as an ability, to support staff and students to show bounce, courage, creativity and connection. Staff took part in an introductory learning meeting earlier this week and in early February we will spend two whole days looking at, learning about and planning ways to grow our own, and in turn the students', resilience to promote wellbeing and a sense of EUDAIMONIA (living in good spirit), which is critical for 21st century positive living.

Yours in God's Love
Saira Boyle, Principal

Hats

Thank you to the families who are ensuring that children come to school with a school hat. There are still far too many students, however, for this time of the year who do not have a hat at school. This is a compulsory item of uniform for Term 1 and 4. The sun in NZ is damaging and not only are children spending time outside playing at morning tea and lunch time, they are also outside a lot with PE, practices for the concert and other activities. Please ensure your child wears a hat to and from school everyday.

Gospel Reflection

Taking your children to Mass, especially on Sunday is a rich and faith nurturing activity for families. It is a special time to support your child's faith development and nourish your own spirituality. When children are of primary school age it is something they are more willing to do and this is a great time to connect.

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time - 19 November 2017 The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 25:14-30

We are all familiar with the parable of the talents. It's easy to understand that God gives each of us special gifts and naturally expects that we should use them. We all know that it would be a betrayal of His gift to let it go unopened or unused.

A more fundamental question, however, is this: For whose glory are you using your talents? Remember that, in each case, the servants gave their talents back to the master, for his benefit, and not their own.

God gave you your talents to glorify and promote His Kingdom.

So you are a gifted musician. Are your song choices or works glorifying Him and promoting His way?

You are an agile athlete. Are you helping others through good sportsmanship, teaching, and fair play?

You have an aptitude for numbers. Are you making a fair account instead of using your gift to circumvent laws?

You are an eloquent speaker. What are the topics of your speeches?

In short, you may think you are using your gifts to their fullest, but if they are not used for glorifying the Kingdom, you are worse than the servant who buried his talent in the ground. At least he gave the talent back to God. When you use your talents for selfish or inappropriate purposes, you are in reality stealing from God.

Toys and Slime

Students have been asked not to bring any toys or personal belongings from home. We have had some students putting slime down the toilets, which creates a problem with the drains. There is also the issue of jealousy and or exclusion when some children bring personal toys and others don't. All personal toys and games are to be left at home please.

Special Catholic Character

from the Director of Religious Studies

This month of November is the month dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. The Church commemorates all her faithful children who have departed from this life, but have not yet attained the joys of heaven.

Praying for the "faithfully departed" is one of the greatest acts of charity we can perform, to help them during their time in Purgatory, so that they can enter more quickly into the fullness of heaven.

In investigating the Church's view on this, I have come across these interesting videos that give the roots and practices from which many of today's Halloween traditions stem. It would be a worthwhile clip to show your children and to have a discussion about if and how your family as Christ-filled Catholics will approach this increasingly popular holiday.

All Soul's Day video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLGwUX8VExo>

"Should Catholics celebrate Halloween?" video clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I1TsBI_fkA

History of Halloween: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBusTdK1kp4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91EstdKw4CE>

Advent

As we prepare for our end of year celebrations and the Feast of Christmas, children are learning the meaning of Advent and about the symbols of Christmas, in the Religious Education programme. The first Sunday in Advent this year is December 3rd.

Advent is a period of waiting and preparation, extending over four Sundays before Christmas. The word 'Advent' comes from the Latin *advenio* 'to come to'. It refers to the coming of Christ, not just at his birth at Christmas time but also for when Christ comes again.

The Advent wreath has its origins in Germany and Scandinavia and has been adapted over the centuries to fit in with Christianity. Originally, people gathered around a wreath to welcome the return of the sun after the winter solstice. The circular wreath made of evergreen branches with four candles interspersed represented the circle of the year, the life that endures through winter and the seasons of the year. As the days grew longer, people lit candles to the 'sun god' for the light.

Catholics have kept the circular wreath as it has no beginning or end, symbolic of God, who is eternal and also without beginning or end. The wreath is made of evergreen branches, evergreen meaning ever alive and symbolic of Christ who died but is now alive, never to die again.

The wreath has four candles, three violet and one rose. These four candles represent the four weeks of the Advent season. The colour violet represents a time of waiting and preparation, a time in which we should be preparing our souls for the coming of Christ. The single rose coloured candle is lit on the third Sunday (traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete means rejoice and it is fitting that we should do so).

For Catholics, the lighting of the Advent candles represents the promise of the coming of Jesus, the light of the world. As the light of the Advent wreath grows, we share in the expectation of Isaiah, of John the Baptist and of Mary for the fulfilment of God's promise to send a saviour.

Year 6 Leaver's Mass

Our Year 6 children are purposefully working with excellence in their hearts to celebrate their last ever Mass at St Mary's Catholic School (**Wednesday 6 December 6.30pm at Sacred Heart College**). These children have brought many blessings to our school community. They are a vibrant and talented year group, with Catholic faith in their hearts. We wish them much love well wishes on their educational journey and pray that they continue to grow in faith.

God's blessings with you always.

Rachael Hill



Key dates

20 November	Sports Team Photos
21 November	APPA Choir rehearsal
24 November	Whole School Assembly* (Rm5 Lead)
28 November	Zone Athletics
1 December	Class Mass (Tika Team)*
3 December	Ellerslie Santa Parade 11am*
6 December	Leavers' Mass 6.30pm
7 December	PTA Mini-market 2pm* BOT Meeting 6pm
8 December	Whole School Assembly* (Rm3 Lead)
14 December	Christmas Concert*
20 December	Last day of term

* all welcome to attend

Athletics Sports Day

What a wonderful St Mary's Athletic Sports Day we had on Tuesday last week. Each and every student took part in practises, and on the day this certainly showed. Student engagement was high; participation was done so with determination and joy. It was great to see so many more activities and everyone having fun and developing their God given talents. The rain, thunder and lightning stayed away till the end of the day and the only postponements were the House Relays. These were ran on Wednesday morning, with the whole school cheering on our Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 students.

A huge thank you goes out to all our wonderful St Mary's community who supported our students with precise measuring and direction. Thank you all for such positivity and enthusiasm.

Our teachers all worked collaboratively together to make this a day of participation for all. We look forward to following, with interest, how our year 5 and 6 athletes compete at the Remuera Zone Athletics Meet on 28 November.



Parent connections O is for overcoming obstacles

When kids face obstacles that seem insurmountable, parents must be there to:

- encourage children to have high, but achievable, expectations
- ask children *how do you eat an elephant?* (One bite at a time!) That's how people face obstacles too. Help your children divide and conquer their obstacles
- Help children recall past experiences. Emphasise their accomplishments. Use those memories to build kids' confidence as they "keep their eye on the prize"



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From your PTA *Fun and social, caring and capable!*

Christmas Craft Market – Saturday 18 November

Firstly a huge thank you to Claire, Jo, Kathleen, Melissa and Vanessa (Christmas Craft Market Committee) for all your hard work and dedication over the past two years in planning this Market. I hope as a school community that you got to enjoy the market with family and friends. The PTA wish to thank everyone that was involved in making this day happen. We are especially grateful to our teachers and staff for their support.

The market raised \$24,000! The funds will be used in consultation with the school to build an outdoor/stage area outside Room 13 and assist with other practical requirements for the school. We will keep you posted on developments.

We'd love your feedback as to what worked at this market and what could be improved upon next time. Please email your ideas to stmaryschristmasmarket@gmail.com.

Mini-market – 7 December, 2pm

We have crafts, preserves, Christmas decorations and pocket money items leftover from the market. There is something for everyone so we will be holding a mini-market at school on Thursday 7 December at 2pm. More details to come but mark it in your diary now!

House Mass

Thank you to everyone that contributed to the morning tea to support the Euphrasie house mass on Sunday 12 November.

Iceblock Sales

Every Friday - \$1.00 iceblocks are for sale during morning tea.

Sausage Sizzles

Please note that there will be no more sausage sizzles for Term 4, we will do these again in Term 1, 2018. Thanks to all the Dads who have helped with these sausage sizzles over this year and for your continued support.

Santa Parade - Sun 3 December

There is a group of St Mary's students involved in this year's Santa Parade. If you can help in any way please contact Rebecca Schollum email: rebecca.schollum@hotmail.co.nz.

PTA End of Year Dinner - Tuesday 28 November, 7pm

This is our last get together as a PTA for the year, anyone is welcome to attend. If you do wish to attend then please RSVP as soon as possible to Annette Fale – annettefale@gmail.com.

Digital Technology Device Progression at St Mary's

Year 0-2 students will be using classroom iPads. They will be learning how to use the iPads and educational apps (this is learning the administration and e-doing side of their learning in this area). In Year 3-6 students will be using classroom iPads and Chromebooks. They will be consolidating admin, e-doing and embarking upon more purposeful e-learning.

Chromebooks will be the preferred device that we are inviting students to bring in, should you choose to purchase a device for your child to bring to school.

As St Mary's Catholic School is a Google environment, we feel Chromebooks work seamlessly with this as it is a Google device. Chromebooks are primarily education based and have little scope for other 'distractions'.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you

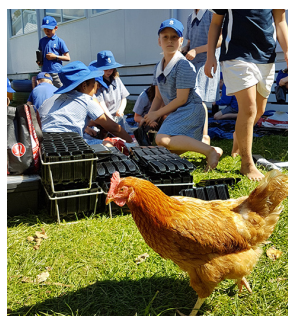
Gail Christie

Sustainable Learning Environment

Walking through the school over the last few weeks you may have noticed two large metal crates being erected in our Sustainable Learning area.

To be more sustainable we are lucky enough to be growing trees for survival. Over the next year we will grow over 1000 native saplings and then they will be planted in areas around Auckland. These trees will be planted in waterways and areas that will benefit our local ecosystem.

Our children are lucky to be a part of this programme where they will learn to grow and protect trees which in turn will protect our environment.



Walking School Bus Leadership Programme

At St Mary's we are lucky to have some fantastic Walking School Buses that are led by our amazing parents.

Last week, Delia from Auckland Transport came to school to run the Walking School Bus leadership programme with some of our older students. The children were so enthusiastic to learn about leadership, and we are looking forward to seeing them grow in this role and be positive assistants to the adults on the Walking School Buses.

The leadership programme guides the children through their 'Learner', 'Restricted' and finally onto their 'Full' Walking School Bus licences, teaching them leadership and road safety skills throughout.