

St Mary's Catholic School

58 Main Highway, Ellerslie, Auckland

Principal Mrs Saira Boyle



Issue #1 | 14 February 2018

We provide a Catholic education for the whole child

Values and Focus for 2018

After consultation with staff and learning from our founding order, The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, we have decided to move from 8 school values to 4 Gospel Values. This means it will be a lot easier for the students to remember and for teachers and parents to teach these in action. We have drawn from the Gospel Values focused on by our founding religious order and ours are now Mission, Communion, Contemplation and Zeal.



Mission



Communion



Contemplation



Zeal

Our focus strategic goals for 2018 have been grouped into three key areas and will be unpacked at our upcoming Parent Partnership Evening on March 13 at 6.30pm.



PURPOSE: BUILDING LEARNER AGENCY THROUGH AN EVALUATIVE CULTURE



ZEAL.4 Catholic Special Character

At St Mary's Catholic School we embed Special Catholic Character into all areas, so that members of our community live their faith and have a personal relationship with God.



ZEAL.4 Accelerating Learning

At St Mary's Catholic School our purpose is to build learner agency to promote individualised learning experiences and accelerate learning.



ZEAL.4 Continual Improvement - Evaluation

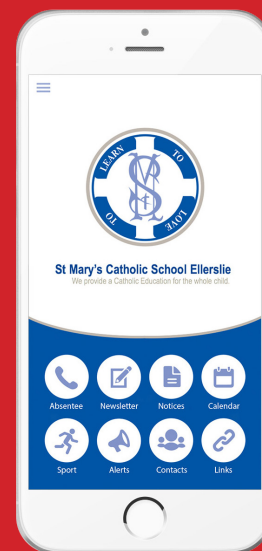
At St Mary's Catholic School we are committed to continual improvement and achieve this through a culture of evaluation.

St Mary's School App

Our school app is now ready to download and use. You can find it by searching 'St Mary's School Ellerslie' in either the App Store (iPhone) or the Google Play App Store (Android).

Our app can be used to quickly and easily find contact information, report absences, view school newsletters etc. The school is also able to send important alerts to the app that you will receive on your phone instantly.

Please ensure that when you download the app, you click on 'alerts' and choose the alerts you'd like to receive. For more information, please refer to the notice that was sent home last week.



SHARED GUARDIANSHIP/PARENTING

If you share the parenting/guardianship of your children with someone who does not live at the primary address we have in our records and you would like key notices such as reports, fees documentation etc to be provided for both parties, please ensure the office is informed and also has up to date email addresses and physical addresses of those involved.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Please ensure you return the student information notice with any amendments as soon as possible to the classroom teacher. We regularly send bulk group emails with key notices and it is essential your email address is up to date. Also in case of emergencies we require an up to date cell phone number.

Parish

DAY RETREAT OPPORTUNITY

A few places still available for this Day of Retreat '**Living the bread of justice with Suzanne Aubert**' led by Sr Sue Cosgrove of the Sisters of Compassion.

Held 24 February 2018, 9am-4pm at the Mary McKillop Centre, 30 Holgate Rd Mission Bay. Lunch supplied. Small koha toward costs. Contact Peter Garrick peterg@cda.org.nz or phone 022 1300 730 by Wed 14 February to register.

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!

Wishing you all a warm welcome back to our new school year. I hope you have all managed to have a wonderful summer break with your loved ones. We especially welcome all of our new families and students to St Mary's this year. We hope you have been made to feel part of our school family network. I have spent time visiting classrooms over the last week and can see the new learners are fitting in beautifully. Thank you for preparing them so well and also a great big thank you to all of our dedicated teachers (and support staff) for the hours you have given over the summer term break to be in school preparing for the return of our students.



Gospel Reflection

Faith has to be taught, and practiced in order for our children to see and want to develop it in their own lives. If you are regular church goers taking your children to church when they are really young is easy. I don't mean "easy" physically because it can be quite a challenge getting everyone out the door on a Sunday morning, especially with baby/toddler gear but it is easy to make them go.

As your children grow it becomes much more of a challenge. Your children want to sleep in, sports schedules come out that include Sundays, and your teens get jobs. All of a sudden you have children that can drift away from church!

5 reasons to take your children to church

1. God says to – This one answer is really the only one we need! Hebrews 10:25-27 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation."

2. Knowledge about God, Jesus and the Bible – Church should not be the only place they hear the "Good News", it should be a way of life. But we can learn so much at church with the knowledge of teachers and priests. We want our children to do so as well.

3. Church Family – The church family can create a wonderful second family, sometimes closer than our blood family, especially as so many of us in Auckland are from overseas! Over the years our church family has blessed us so much with prayer, love, and more. This can be a wonderful experience for our children.

4. Worship – It is so important that we have times to just worship the Lord! Taking our children to church teaches them how important it is to just glorify the Lord; look at all HE has done for us!

5. Being around Fellow Believers – Being around fellow believers can help encourage our children in their faith and gives them others to look to for spiritual guidance and friendship!

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time – 11 February 2018 The Holy Gospel according to Mark 1:40-45

In Jesus' time leprosy made its sufferers outsiders, obligated to stay away from others. Leprosy lumped together various skin conditions that like race, gender, age, and other realities show visibly on the body. Poverty can show in missing teeth and listless faces.

On the basis of appearance, we human beings start setting up boundaries between people like us and people like them, insiders and outsiders. We tend to stereotype and even demonise groups we don't know. The voices of outsiders call for belonging among us, for equality and inclusion. The voices of those left out call us to widen our tents and lengthen our tables. In claiming justice and equality, people express their dignity as human beings made in God's image and likeness. In healing the leper, Jesus gives voice to God's intent for us all—wholeness and the communities love forms.

With who might you build a bridge from isolation to participation in economic life, parish life, neighbourhood life, or family life?

Principal's Post continued

Whilst there was a productive and positive energy, school buildings are never quite complete until filled with children, so on February 7 it was fantastic to see and hear our school filled with your precious children once again, ready for a year of learning, loving and growing! If you have not yet had time to connect with your child's classroom teacher please attend our 'meet the teacher' evening on Tuesday February 20. This is a general introduction and should you want to talk more specifically about your child, please email the teacher to make an appointment. We are also hosting a 3-way conference evening on March 28, where you will have a one to one 10 minute appointment with your child and the classroom teacher to discuss learning goals.

My family and I enjoyed a quiet Christmas and New Year and a relaxing break after a busy year in 2017. In early January, however, I was diagnosed with a blood clot in my left leg. Consequently I am wearing a compression stocking and taking blood thinning medication in the short term. When something like this happens in unexpected ways, we must always thank God for the positives and I did take time to take stock and contemplate on the blessings in my life and whilst I have always felt passionate about ensuring our students and staff experience a learning organisation founded on wellbeing, this experience has made me so much more determined to achieve this. We are looking for ways to ensure that the spirit, body and mind of each child is nourished, contented and happy whilst at school to promote wellbeing and in turn learning. In January and early February the whole staff spent two days with Declan Scott from the Resilience Institute learning about ways to nourish our own and also the wellbeing and resilience of our learners at school.

In Corinthians 6:19-20 it states 'Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.' At St Mary's this year we will have a big focus on student and staff wellbeing. We will be gathering student voices to hear about how they feel they could feel happier and safer at school and putting plans into place to ensure we eradicate negatives and increase the factors that promote a positive and safe environment.

Yours in God's Love

Saira Boyle
Principal

Year 3-6 swimming lessons

A reminder that Year 3-6 swimming started in Week 2, Monday 12 February, for two weeks. Please can all students bring their named swimming gear in a strong bag. Students will need goggles, a towel and enthusiasm for improvement! This is a wonderful way to start the school year and we are all looking forward to our Swim Carnival on Friday 23rd February beginning at 12 midday. Remember to swim your best at this event, as the results will determine our Year 5/6 Swim Team that represents St Mary's at the Remuera Zone Swimming Competition on Tuesday 20th March.

Below are the times each class will be swimming.

Room 1 & 5 lesson begins at 12.00pm
Room 2 & 6 lesson begins at 12.30pm
Room 3 & 7 lesson begins at 1.00pm
Room 4 & 8 lesson begins at 1.30pm

Thank you to our hardworking PTA who support our students by covering the cost of the buses to and from the Onehunga War Memorial Swimming Pool. If you have not paid towards swimming, please pay \$55.00 at the office or online (state child's name and room) – ASB account 12 3060 0202599 00.

Student Leaders!

Our Year 6 Student Leaders have seen a wonderful start to 2018. They are responsible and enthusiastic about their new roles of leadership and responsibility across the school.

Our students are already showing that they are ready for Year 6 and are displaying great maturity.

When a school has a high standard of excellence in Year 6 this sets a very positive tone for the rest of the school.

Whanau/Family Connections

We would like each child in our school to feel truly connected and valued so we have decided to include a Whanau/Family Board as part of the display in each class.

We ask that you send in a family photo with your child so we can start to build these displays which will also illustrate the personal interests of each child.

Key dates * all welcome to attend

12-22 Feb	Year 3-6 Swimming*
14 Feb	Ash Wednesday Liturgy 9.30am* Newsletter published
15 Feb	Opening Mass 9.30am*
16 Feb	Whole School Assembly (Rm 13 hosting)*
18-21 Feb	Parish Lenten Retreat
19 Feb	Road Patrol Training
20 Feb	Meet the Teacher Evening 6pm*
22 Feb	Board of Trustees Meeting 6pm
23 Feb	Class Mass (Rm 1, 3, 11, 12) 9am* Swimming Carnival 12pm*
27 Feb	Dedication Mass 7pm (Staff and BOT)
28 Feb	Newsletter published PTA Meeting 7pm*
2 Mar	Whole School Assembly (Rm 15/16 hosting)*
9 Mar	Class Mass (Rm 2, 10, 4, 5) 9am*
13 Mar	Parent Partnership Evening 6.30pm*
14 Mar	Newsletter published
16 Mar	Class Mass (Rm 6, 8, 13) 9am*
28 Mar	Newsletter published Three Way Conferences*

Special Catholic Character from the Director of Religious Studies

Lent, precedes the season of Easter. It is a time of reflecting, fasting (going without sustenance) and alms giving in preparation for our Easter Day observance. During these 40 days, we ponder what it means to "give up, take up and lift up." Using prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we deepen our relationship with Christ and discern where God is working in our lives.

People often don't look forward to Lent. Childhood memories of giving up lollies or sitting through weekly Stations of the Cross come immediately to mind. Words like "sacrifice," "discipline," and "self-denial" are often used in ways that suggest that Lent is something to be endured rather than a time of grace and spiritual grace.

The most important thing for children is that we as adults understand Lent and enter into it ourselves with real devotion and joy. If Lent makes its way into our home and into the conversations and practices that children see, they will naturally grow up in a culture that embraces Lent as a season of grace.

The most important lesson children can learn is to make Lent a time to practise being more loving. Children are naturally loving, but they can get into bad habits of fighting with their brothers and sisters, being disobedient, or even talking back. Lent is a great time to build in special family practices that can also renew parents and other adult family members. Children will notice if part of our Lenten journey is to choose to fast from crabbiness or busyness and to spend more time with them. They will notice if we set the example by complimenting others in the family more, highlighting the good things we notice in them. If our family Lenten practice is to focus on being nicer, kinder, and more generous in helping one another, the children will take part in it. And if we fail on a given day, we can quickly apologise and ask for forgiveness.

Recently this was brought home to me in a reality-check sort of way. As part of our staff professional development during our Teacher Only Days, Declan Scott (Resilience Institute) asked us to go home and ask our families, "how we are doing" in our 'jobs' as mothers, wives, sisters, husbands, sons etc. The answers brought a few home-truths that are sometimes hard to hear. The biggest and most confronting answer came from my youngest Harry, who simply said, "I just want you to play with me more Mum, and for you to spend more time with me". So simple and yet often overlooked in our busy lives. It was something that I knew was not how I wanted it to be but had allowed other things to come in the way. It is now my Lenten – and beyond – focus.

Relationships with each other, especially within our families and therefore with God, all need to be nurtured, where mistakes are acknowledged and forgiveness given freely. Lent is the perfect time to reflect on this, acknowledging that the way we model the penitential and reconciliatory behaviour is central to Lent.

The Pope has recently released his message for Lent and it has, as always some enlightening reading. Here is the link to it. <https://www.romereports.com/en/2018/02/06/pope-francis-message-for-lent-2018/>

Finally, here is a lovely little prayer that I included in my newsletter at this time last year. It is a lovely prayer to share with family during prayer.

Lord, please help us to be a family of prayer, of fasting and of giving to others this Lenten season. Remind us to pray to You when it gets hard to do the things you ask of us. To Thank You, To Love You, To Hear from You each and every day in Lent. Amen.

God's blessings with you always.

Rachael Hill



Student Council

Our Year 6 Student Council members were announced this week and will be celebrated with the other leaders and monitors during our Opening Mass on Thursday 15th February, where they will receive their badges.

Congratulations to the following Year 6 students:

- Richard Board
- Zhen Ng
- Jesse Hanley
- Soane Tavite
- Zachary Moss
- Frederick Klitscher
- Dyce Tatafu
- Kaleb Rawiri
- Meg Endeacott
- Kate Monro
- Alexi Hyland
- Tatiana Shearer
- Kiera Martin
- Kelly Pilcher
- Dixie Whiting
- Josephine Stickly

The position to be a Student Council Leader is a very important role in our school. These students are role models and give witness to Christ, in their interactions with other students and staff at our school.

They help to make positive improvements for learning in our school. They help to gather and then share a student voice from the whole school so that all students can be involved in decision making and consistently live our St Mary's Gospel values of Mission, Communion, Contemplation and Zeal.

Parent connections Q is for questions

Find out what is on your child's mind by asking questions:

- Ask specific questions. Your child is more likely to have an answer to *Who did you play with?* than *How was your day?*
- Ask open-ended questions. *How did you do that?* or *What would happen if...?* questions will yield more information than questions that can be answered in a word or two
- Help your child develop critical thinking skills by responding to his or her questions with questions



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

WELCOME

Welcome to all the new families that have joined the St Mary's community this year, we look forward to seeing you throughout the year. Please ensure that you have put your name and email down with your child's PTA class representative to ensure you keep up to date with PTA communication. If you are unsure of who your class rep is then please feel free to email us at stmaryspta@gmail.com.

CHRISTMAS CRAFT MARKET 2017

The final numbers are in from last years market – we managed to raise \$24,160.53! This is more than we raised in 2015 (\$21,072.48), so once again thank you to everyone who supported this. We will be working with the school in terms of how these funds will be spent and we will be sure to keep you updated.

SECONDHAND UNIFORM BOUTIQUE

The Boutique will be open for sales and donations of uniform items, both old style and new each **FRIDAY 2.30-3.15pm** this term. Also by appointment as required. Please contact grotto@orcon.co.nz (Cathy Shearer).

Please feel free to pop in and get organised for Winter Uniform! We have a good stock of girls winter tunics, blouses and both boys and girls winter shoes. Also hair accessories, padded headbands and scrunchies to match. As always thank you for your support.

PTA MEETING

Our first PTA meeting for 2018 will be held on Wednesday 28 February, 7pm in the staff room at school. Everyone is welcome to attend and it's a great way to get to know new people, especially if you are new to the school or have been attending for a few years.

The PTA is made up of many parents who volunteer to do what they can whether it be one hour per month or a few hours per week. Many hands make light work. So if you are interested in finding out more then please email stmaryspta@gmail.com.

ICE BLOCKS

Lemonade ice blocks will be on sale for \$1 every Friday at morning tea during Term 1.

Digital Technologies

Welcome back everyone and a warm welcome to new students. Just a reminder we are a BYOD school from Year 3 upwards (optional). In light of this just a few reminders:

- Please ensure that the device is fully charged
- No charging plug to come to school
- The device is clearly labelled with your child's name

If any new families need further information about our school BYOD program please do not hesitate to contact me via email on gail@stmary.school.nz.

Gail Christie

Upcoming College Open Days 2018

- **St Peter's College:** Tuesday 27 February 2018 at 9.30am and 1.00pm
- **St Paul's College:** Thursday 8 March at 9.30am and 1.45pm
- **Sacred Heart College:** Wednesday 7 March 2018.
The Principal's welcoming address is in the Auditorium at 1pm.
Tours of the College are being conducted at 11.45am and 1.30pm.
Prospective students and their families are welcome to attend, but do NOT need to register first.
- **Marist College:** Wednesday 7 March at 3pm and 6pm
- **Baradene College:** Thursday 8 March 2018 at 6.30pm.
Enrolments for Year 7, 2019, are presently being accepted and will close on Thursday 22 March 2018.

Play-Based Learning

The transition from pre-school to school made more successful.

After some professional development, our Year 0-1 teachers are very excited about introducing and developing a play-based learning programme with their classes this year. The teachers will be providing play-based learning environments that reflect developmentally appropriate responses to students learning needs.

Extensive research on the role of play has shown its value in the healthy development of all aspects of learning – physical, sensorimotor, social, emotional and cognitive for young children. When engaged in authentic play, children are more likely to develop higher order cognitive and socio-emotional skills than if exposed to direct teaching and adult-structured learning opportunities. Neurological research now confirms behavioural, biological and developmental research gathered over 30 years ago on the importance of play to healthy childhood development.

We want to make it clear that this does not mean our children will experience free play all day, and we will certainly be teaching them Reading, Writing and Mathematics too. This development ensures we have a differentiated, child centred approach where we transition from our world renowned NZ ECE Curriculum – Te Whāriki into our New Zealand Curriculum. Keep an eye out on FB and Twitter to see more.

SICKNESS, ABSENCES, LATENESS, APPOINTMENTS

If your child is going to be late or absent, please email both the class teacher and the office (adminaccounts@stmary.school.nz) or report it through our School App.

Students must be signed in and out via the Vistab tablet in the office. Please do not pick them up directly from their classroom.

Likewise, during the day, all visitors must report to the office. That means dropping off togs for swimming or lunches MUST come via the office please. This is a health and safety matter and we aim to keep all children as safe as possible.

Daily structure for wellbeing

We have made some positive changes to the structure of our school day. Last year we researched some other schools and staff worked together to formulate possible options for a new structure of the day. The purpose of this is to provide a day that is more suitable for young people, their health and their learning.

We now start the day at 8.45am and have four learning blocks, rather than three. During the day we break four times rather than two.

The first break is short and gives students the opportunity for a small snack and some movement to get the oxygen moving around the body, with their teacher and class.

At the second break students go straight out to play with one another and at the end of this play time they return to class and eat other small snack. In the middle of the day we stop as a whole school and spend time in silence, meditating for a few minutes. At lunch time students go straight out to play and on their return they eat lunch and are given milk.

We are so happy with the positives we are noticing already. Children are eating more, are more focused during their learning blocks and have more energy during the last block of the day.

As humans we are designed to move and be active. Learning is accelerated through movement, music and laughter and we aim to provide as much of these as possible.

Lunchbox ideas

Due to the fact we are having more, shorter breaks for eating and moving, we feel this is a great opportunity to get your children involved in lunch box preparation. Fewer, smaller, healthier palm size portions of food would be beneficial for students to eat through the day.

The Bento lunch box idea is becoming more and more popular as it provides a range of healthy foods for children to snack on during the day. A Bento style lunch box has several compartments and this also means food does not need to be wrapped, making it not only easier for the child to eat, but also better for the environment.



Time	Activity	Purpose
Pre 8.30am	All classroom doors locked	Health and Safety
8.30am	Classrooms Unlocked	Teacher and student preparation for the day. Conversations with students for building relationships.
8.45am	School Starts Prayers and Roll	Monday Whole School Prayers and roll. Tuesday - Friday Prayers and Roll.
9.00am	Learning Block 1	Religious Education; Literacy
9.50am	Brain Break 1 - Fitness and Food	This is a class break from sitting and learning. Teacher and students to take part in a fitness activity together. Students eat a small palm sized snack. Water consumed.
10.00am	Learning Block 2	Literacy
11.00am	Brain Break 2	Student Playtime
11.20am	Little Lunch	Students eat their 'little lunch' and consume water.
11.30pm	Learning Block 3	Maths; Meditation
12.40pm	Brain Break 3	Student Playtime
1.20pm	Extra Eating, Milk and Reading	Teachers supervise students eating additional lunch, whilst being read to. Teachers supervise milk. and ensure students are taught and supported to fold cartons and stack in box, with straw, ready for monitors to collect at end of day.
1.25pm	Learning Block 4	Gratitude Journals; Inquiry Learning; Art; PE; PiPs
2.40pm	Leave Room	
2.45pm	School Ends	Students Dismissed from pick up zones