

# St Mary's Catholic School

58 Main Highway, Ellerslie, Auckland

Principal Mrs Saira Boyle



Issue #2 | 28 February 2018

We provide a Catholic education for the whole child

## Communication

### Parent Portal

Last week paper notices and emails were sent home inviting you to access our Parent Portal through our student management system, eTap. Both parents / caregivers for each child would have received their own, individual username and password for each child that attends St Mary's School. The Parent Portal is a place where you can access a wide range of information about your child and our school. Everything from medical information and assessment results to financial account information and the school calendar. We hope that you take the time to have a look around the Parent Portal and please let us know if you have any queries.

### School App

Our school app is now registered with 340 users! This is outstanding and we want to thank all parents and whanau who have downloaded the app, we do hope that you are finding it useful. The app is a very simple way for the school to send important alerts school wide, or to particular learning teams/groups and is also a simple way for parents / caregivers to report absences, find contact information for staff and to view newsletters and notices.



## Water Safety

During swimming this week, Year 3-6 students learnt some valuable water safety skills about how to keep ourselves safe around the water.



## Parish

### FOOD BANK HELP NEEDED

We are delivering in February, and in just 8 days have delivered 48 parcels. If anyone could offer to be a second car on any remaining week days in Feb to deliver a food parcel, please contact Evelyn on 579 8113 or 0274722 117. Many hands make light work. Thank you.

## 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!

We met as a Board of Trustees (BOT) for the first time on Thursday evening last week. It was a positive and hopeful first meeting of the year as we discussed achievement data from 2017 and our Charter and 2018 Annual Goals were also a focus. 'For nothing will be impossible with God Luke 1:37 This information will be shared at our first Parent Partnership Evening of 2018 on 13 March. We have a new Staff Representative on our BOT, Sarah Nelisi, and also two of our Learning Assistants attended the public section of the meeting as they are undertaking a course of study and were keen to hear and see how a BOT meeting is conducted. We also have two new Proprietor's Representatives on our BOT who have recently undergone some induction, Judy MacMenigall and Siata Tavite.

Afterwards all three staff members and both new Proprietor's Representatives expressed great awe and wonder about the quantity, quality and depth of work that goes on 'behind the scenes' in a school; from legislation, student achievement, property, finance, health and safety, community connections, curriculum, human resources, strategic visioning and much, much more. It struck me, that as Principal, I took for granted that people would be aware of the work undertaken behind the scenes. It was also very affirming that these people acknowledged this and the fact that through all of the hours of work, commitment and dedication from our BOT and staff, the welfare and achievement of each of our learners it at the centre of decision making.



## Gospel Reflection

Thank you to those parents who bring their children to Mass on Sundays. It's a real sign of community.

### 2nd Sunday in Lent – 25 February 2018 The Holy Gospel according to Mark 1:40-45

What the three – Peter, James and John, saw on the mountain of the Transfiguration would always remain with them. Somehow by the gift of God the Father, they saw Jesus in glory, and heard the words of God, 'Listen to him'. The reason for the listening would be because he is the beloved Son of God.

What Jesus says comes from his heart, and what is in his heart is what he learned from the Father. This was something not just brought from heaven, but learned every day in his prayer with God his Father. The message of Jesus is an eternal message. He expressed this message always in the context and needs of the people he spoke with. So too for the apostles. They learned a lot on the mountain from God, but they were not to remain there. As he brought them up the mountain, later he brought them down. They had seen the Lord in glory and the afterglow would remain, and support them through the Passion and Death of the Lord, and they would remember his words about rising from the dead.

Lent is a time for dipping into the words and the truth of Jesus. We are never the poorer for this. We do so in prayer, in reading the gospel, taking some time with a spiritual book maybe, and helping the needy. All ways of getting in touch with God.

## Swimming Carnival

Year 3–6 students competed with enthusiasm and zeal at St Mary's Swim Carnival and supported each other with a lot of passion.

The highlight of the event was the year 5 & 6 class relays. There was a lot of loud rivalry between the classes, with Room 1 Girls and Room 4 Boys taking out first place in their relay race.

After two weeks of lessons, students demonstrated an overall improvement in their swimming.

We would like to thank YMCA swim school for their ongoing support and commitment to St Mary's swimming programme.



## Principal's Post continued

There are multiple advantages to sending your child to a Catholic school, too many to mention here. We all know that our Catholic schools are renowned for their academic excellence, values based education and sense of community. Our children are taught the importance of social action, through mission; contemplation which is essential to positive mental health in our very busy and demanding world; as well as community, as we come together in partnership, through Christ.

It was consequently disappointing to have been contacted by the Ministry of Education last week and informed that a member of our community chose to make a complaint to a MOE office in Wellington about some of the decisions made in our lovely school here in Ellerslie, where we value and promote true partnership as found through the Gospels, *'two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil'*, Ecclesiastes 4:9.

Everyone has the right to an opinion and I would always encourage respectful, open communication especially when you may feel challenged or unsure about decisions made at school. However, I choose to bring this to the attention of the wider community through this forum because I strongly believe it is important to share 3 key factors here;

1. Be assured there are many things considered, taken into account, discussed and debated before any decisions are made. Decision making is about balance, common good and places students at the heart of all decisions, whilst driving improvement for our school.
2. There will always be decisions that are made where some people do not fully agree with the decision in any community. We know we cannot please everyone all of the time and sometimes what's right is not always popular and what's popular is not always right. Not accepting this is damaging to the school.
3. There are appropriate communication channels to go through when you experience dissatisfaction and we hope we would always make you feel welcome and comfortable to be able to use these. In the first instance the Principal or leadership team should be approached. If this does not bring satisfaction then a letter to our BOT would be welcomed and then if this brings no resolve, communication with our local MOE office.

We welcome transparent, honest and respectful communication, with Christ as our model. This does not mean we can always do as requested. We also sometimes make mistakes, as we are only human. We act, as Jesus encourages us, for the common good, with your children and continuous improvement at the heart of all matters.

However, no matter how many 100s of hours of work we commit each week, as a BOT, a leadership team and a staff, I do know that when individuals do not take a Christian approach and do not accept there must be a common good approach, and take their complaints or criticisms beyond our school community, this is always damaging to our spirit, our work, our heart and consequently the St Mary's reputation. It detracts from the main thing; student achievement and wellbeing in a Christ centered environment, our key work.

Finally and most significantly, I wish to offer sincere gratitude to the hundreds of families and whanau who take a considered and trusting approach to building powerful partnerships between home and school as promoted in the Gospels, *'But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin'*; 1 John 1:7.

*Yours in God's Love*  
Saira Boyle, Principal



## Board of Trustees

Roger Shearer	Parent Representative (Chair)
Jeff Martin	Parent Representative
Jason Moss	Parent Representative
Amanda Griffiths	Parent Representative
James Willoughby	Parent Representative
Fr Joy	Proprietor Representative
Siata Tavite	Proprietor Representative
Judy MacMenigall	Proprietor Representative
Sarah Nelisi	Staff Representative
Saira Boyle	BOT CEO and full BOT Member

### Complaints Guidelines

Should there be a matter with which you are not satisfied we wish to draw your attention to our complaints guidelines, which alongside our other policies can be found at <http://stmary.schooldocs.co.nz/>.

For any complaint, in the first instance we encourage you to approach the Principal and leadership team. If you remain unsatisfied with the response, you may then put your concern in writing to the BOT. The only person delegated to speak on behalf of the BOT is the Chair. Your concern will be presented at a BOT meeting and a decision made as to whether it is Governance or Management and responded to accordingly.

At St Mary's we pride ourselves on being an open, collaborative and Christ centered community of faith and with this in mind we ask you to be reasonable and considered in the way in which you deal with your concerns, safe in the knowledge that we always endeavour to act in the best interests of our children, while balancing this with our vision and the common good.

Roger Shearer  
BOT Chair

## Key dates \* all welcome to attend

<b>27 Feb</b>	Dedication Mass 7pm (Staff and BOT)
<b>28 Feb</b>	Newsletter published PTA Meeting 7pm*
<b>1 Mar</b>	Girls cricket competition (Y3-6)
<b>2 Mar</b>	Whole School Assembly (Rm 15/16 hosting)*
<b>6 Mar</b>	Meet the Teacher Whanau picnic*
<b>9 Mar</b>	Class Mass (Rm 2, 10, 4, 5) 9am*
<b>13 Mar</b>	Parent Partnership Evening 6.30pm*
<b>14 Mar</b>	Newsletter published
<b>16 Mar</b>	Class Mass (Rm 6, 8, 13) 9am*
<b>28 Mar</b>	Newsletter published Three Way Conferences* School closes at 12pm

## Teacher wellbeing

Our lovely new Year 5/6 teacher, Kate Sharp, was spotted competing in the Sprint Event, at the Panasonic Tri Series at Maraetai Beach last weekend.

Well done Kate!  
You are a great inspiration to our learners and we are looking forward to seeing you put your passion for health and fitness to use in school with our students.



## Special Catholic Character *from the Director of Religious Studies*

Over the past couple years, all of the Catholic schools of New Zealand were consulted in the development of a new curriculum document that is being developed for our Religious Education programme. The current curriculum is about 20 years old and although it was considered a world class document when it was written, teaching practices, (due to research and technology) have since developed.

The Religious Education Bridging Document was released at the end of last year, ready for the new school year and has been developed as an interim measure until the complete curriculum document is written. It is a way to introduce some of the improvements that the new document will contain and at the same time it utilises the valuable resource of the existing document, whilst incorporating more modern teaching practices.

I attended a conference recently, where one of the authors of the document, Ann Kelly, spoke to the all the Auckland DRSs about the ideas and understandings behind the curriculum and ways in which it could be introduced into our current programmes. The key difference between the old and new, (aside from modernisation) is that the programme is set to bring the focus back to Christ again - building a relationship with Him being at the centre of all we do. There is also a huge emphasis on service and outreach.

As a school we have had one staff meeting to introduce the staff to the document and several more are planned throughout the year to assist teachers with this transition period. As I, myself become more familiar with this document, I am very excited about the revolution to our current programmes that it promises

God's blessings with you always.

*Rachael Hill*



## Parent connections R is for respect

If children are to show respect for others, they need to understand what it is to be respected. Author Michelle Borba emphasises these parent practices that nurture respect:

- Treat your child as the most important person in the world
- Encourage children to have high - but achievable - expectations of themselves
- Give love with no strings attached
- Listen attentively and respectfully
- Enjoy being together
- Tell kids often *why* you love them



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

### PTA MEETING

Our first PTA meeting will be held this Wed 28 Feb, 7pm in the school staff room. Anyone is welcome to attend and we would love to have more parents involved.

### ICEBLOCK FRIDAYS

Iceblocks are on sale every Friday for \$1.00. Thanks to Gillian Moore (PTA) that organises and looks after the selling of these each Friday for the PTA.

### MEET THE TEACHER & PICNIC EVENING

Next Tues 6 March is a casual meet the teacher picnic where we will all gather on the back field to socialise. The PTA will have a sausage sizzle running so if you don't get a chance to bring some food you can always grab a sausage or two for the family.

### SECONDHAND UNIFORM BOUTIQUE

Thank you all for the great support of the Boutique so far this term! We have the winter stocks of second hand uniform for sale now and are open each Friday afternoon 2.15-3.15ish or you can make an appointment by contacting Cathy Shearer at [grotto@orcon.co.nz](mailto:grotto@orcon.co.nz). Payment may be made by cash/online banking direct to the PTA account.

We are always grateful for your donations of clean uniform and are accepting both the updated and older versions of uniform items. We intend to donate all the old style uniform later in the year to needy children rather than have it discarded to landfill. Thank you

**If you need to get in touch please email [stmaryspta@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryspta@gmail.com).**

## Digital Technologies

For those of you that are new to the school or your child has moved into Year 3 this year, the Year 3-6 children are using Hapara and G Suite to support their learning. Ask your child to show and tell, have them show you how it works.

G Suite for Education is a suite of tools that can help increase opportunities for critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. It allows children and teachers to connect and get work done from anywhere and anytime on any device. Learners use Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Sheets and more to share their learning with teachers and peers.

Hapara Workspace is a collaborative and differentiated digital space in which teachers and children can engage in meaningful explorations, embark on individualized learning paths, and design individual and collective solutions and understandings. Students can receive and submit their learning through Hapara Workspace.

*Gail Christie*

## 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 and other activities. Please ensure your child wears a hat to and from school everyday.

**No hat, no play.**



## 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](mailto: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.