



# St Mary's Primary

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Year 3! We are looking forward to working with you and your children in 2016. At any stage throughout the year, if you have a concern, question, or just want to catch-up, please make a time to meet with us so that we can work together for the good of your children.

You can also contact us through the school email or directly at [eshaw4@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:eshaw4@parra.catholic.edu.au) or [agierek@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:agierek@parra.catholic.edu.au) Please allow a reasonable time for us to reply before calling the office or Mr Blissenden. When you consider playground duties, meetings and teaching, it can sometimes take a day or two to get back to you. **If your concern is urgent** please also send a note with your child or ring the school office. If you wish to be contacted by email please clearly PRINT your email address on the list provided.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is an important aspect of education at St. Mary's. This year has been declared the Year of Mercy by the Pope and we will be relating a lot of our scripture to this concept. Throughout the year the students will participate in a variety of liturgies, Masses and celebrations of Saints. Our Religion units have been developed using the Sharing our Story framework adopted by the Parramatta Diocese. As part of our Religion program students participate in Christian meditation each week. The aim of Christian meditation is to give the students the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the Gospels, to take time to listen to God and develop their own personal spirituality.

This is an important year of sacraments for your children as they have the opportunity to make their First Reconciliation and their First Communion. These programs are **entirely Parish based** and all information can be obtained from the Church or the Parish office. To support the children in this area we will be teaching units of work about these two sacraments to the whole of Year 3.

We invite parents to be involved in liturgy with us whenever possible. As part of our school community we participate in prayer each morning as a school. It is important that students join in and demonstrate reverence and respect and we encourage parents to do the same.

## ENGLISH

In 2015 English syllabus was introduced into all schools and we will continue to implement it. Students will continue to study a range of authors and engage in reading activities using a wider variety of reading strategies and materials. These will include multimedia texts, traditional stories, novels, poems, plays, rules and laws, propaganda, advertising and other products where literacy skills are used.

The three broad headings for writing now are Imaginative, Persuasive and Informative texts, and each term students will cover examples of these either in English or another curriculum area.

This year our school literacy goal is focused on writing, which will involve developing better sentence structure and language choices as well as writing for a real and specific audience.

Your children are strongly encouraged to participate in the Premier's Reading Challenge and borrow books from their local library, as well as using our school and class library.

Students will be given a range of experiences where they can further develop their talking and listening skills. This will occur in groups and individually and can range from simple reporting back of what the group has done to a prepared presentation by an individual to the class.

### **MATHEMATICS**

At St Mary's we participate in the Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) initiative. All students were tested using the MAI (Mathematical Assessment Interview) last week and information from these assessments is used to plan our Mathematics programs.

In the lead-up to NAPLAN we will review each strand of Mathematics in order to ensure that all children have the best chance of success.

Our aim is to provide challenging, interesting and appropriate Mathematics activities for every student.

### **HSIE- HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY**

This term we will be focusing on History. The following question will be explored this semester during our Inquiry time:

How and why do people choose to remember significant events of the past?

This involves looking at what we celebrate and remember, why we choose to do that and how we do it. It also involves exploring what and how other cultures celebrate significant events.

In Term 2 the focus will shift to the new Geography curriculum. We will begin by asking What is Australia like? This unit includes mapping skills, identification of climate regions, environments and people all over Australia.

Sydney is a rich source of opportunities for real life experiences of what we are learning about. There are festivals, museums, exhibitions and the city itself, which all provide wonderful and engaging learning opportunities for your children. It is also a great way to spend time together as a family!

### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Science is taught every term. This term we are learning about the properties of heat. Other topics we will cover include the effect of heat and cold on substances and materials, the needs and characteristics of living things and technological change in response to the changing needs of people. We aim to provide a range of hands-on experiences and skill-based activities to encourage scientific thinking.

### **PD/H/PE**

Children will participate in sport each Thursday with Miss Gonnet and on Wednesday with the class teachers. They are asked to wear sports uniform on **Wednesday** and **Thursday** this term. In preparation for the Cross Country, part of our sport lessons will involve a fitness component to build stamina.

In Personal Development and Health our school continues to reinforce the skills and practices highlighted in our whole-school Anti-bullying and Positive Behaviour Program. Through classroom lessons and whole school initiatives we continue to work as a school community on this topic.

## **CREATIVE ARTS**

Students will be involved in regular art lessons with their class teacher, music with Mrs Dennis and dance/drama with Mrs Kirkness. This term we are looking at the colour wheel and using white and black to make tints and tones.

## **NAPLAN (National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy)**

NAPLAN is conducted in every school in Australia in Years 3,5,7 and 9. This will take place in week three of Term Two. We will be doing some test preparation, mostly practicing how to approach formal tests and how to best select an answer. We will not be doing full practice tests as such, but will look at the types of questions they may be asked to answer.

It is more an indication of a school's areas of achievement and challenge than a true indication of what your child can do. The test is done in May and results usually aren't available until September. Please remember that these tests are completely different to anything we usually do at school and please don't put pressure on your children or frighten them about the tests. We try to take a low-key approach at school.

## **HOMEWORK**

Last year all parents were provided with a copy of a letter outlining our Homework Policy. We would like to remind you that this is not a no homework policy. Homework will consist of daily reading, spelling revision (words will be provided by the teacher) and revision of number facts. The students are expected to read every night, even on weekends, as well as learn their spelling words and practice their number facts.

Reading is a skill that should be practiced every night. At the Stage 2 level, students should read for at least 20 minutes each night. Even if a child is an independent reader, it is important that parents also read with them and then discuss what they have read. Often students are able to read words but not understand their meaning or context. We have included a handout that demonstrates how an extra ten minutes of reading a day can dramatically increase the vocabulary of every student. Please be good reading models and let your children see you reading.

## **UNIFORMS**

The school rule "**NO HAT, NO PLAY**" always applies to all outdoor activities at school. Please ensure your child has his/her hat with their name clearly marked every day. All items of clothing need to be labeled with your child's name for ease of identification and return.

The uniform policy is clearly outlined in the Parent Information Booklet and can be accessed online through the school website. Please remember the rules about nail polish, earrings, haircuts and correct shoes and socks.

## **ATTENDANCE**

To maximise your child's learning it is important that your child arrives at school before the first bell to join in school prayer. The official school starting time is 8:50am and the dismissal time is 3:10pm.

Whenever your child is late to school or needs to leave early, an appropriate form from the office needs to be completed. This is a legal requirement. If your child is absent from school please send a note, email or Skoolbag notification explaining whether they are sick or absent for family reasons. It is a legal requirement that we receive this within 7 days of the absence. If you are planning to take your child out of school for a holiday you must apply in writing to Mr Blissenden. In the letter, you need to state the dates and the length of the absence. Please do not leave this until the last minute.

During school hours, parent access to the school is via the main gate. Please sign in at the front office when you arrive and when you leave the school.

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology is used as a learning tool in our classroom. All efforts are made to ensure the safety of your children when using the Internet and students have a procedure to follow if they encounter any inappropriate sites or things that make them feel uncomfortable. It is very important that similar measures are in place at home.

## CRUNCH'N'SIP

St Mary's is a Crunch'N'Sip school. This means that we break for five minutes at around 10:00am so that students can eat a piece of fruit or vegetable and have a drink of water. We have found that this break re-energises the children for the rest of the morning session. Please ensure that your child brings a **small** piece of fruit or vegetable each day and a water bottle.

We look forward to a happy and exciting year as we work together to get the best out of your children. Remember, you can contact us at any time via email or the school office.

**Mr Ed Shaw and Mrs Amanda Gierak**

