



St Mark's Parent Handbook 2026





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Principal's Welcome



Welcome to the St Mark's School community.

The purpose of this Kinder parent handbook is to provide you with an overview of the aspects of school life, and the policies and procedures with which you will need to be familiar with as your child transitions into Kindergarten and progresses through primary school. It is a useful resource that you can refer back to as required during the school year.

Our website also provides important information to assist you, with links to St Mark's and Sydney Catholic Schools' (SCS) policies.

St Mark's is a dynamic and welcoming community in which students are inspired by a love of learning in the Catholic tradition and empowered to reach their full potential and grow as a whole person. Positive wellbeing is promoted and nurtured so that all students feel valued, dignified, safe and happy to learn and engage in the life of the school community.

I encourage you to take the time to become familiar with the contents of this handbook. In this way we can work together in partnership to ensure a safe, supportive and thriving academic environment for your child as they continue to live out our school motto, 'Live the Gospel.'

Mrs Melissa Lentini
Principal

Know the child. Grow the child



Vision & Mission

Mission Statement

With Christ as our model, St Mark's Primary School works together with our Parish, parents and teachers to provide and celebrate Catholic Education for all students.

School motto

As a faith-filled community, our school motto is **LIVE THE GOSPEL**. This motto underpins our School Vision.

Vision statement:

Living the Gospel we - **DISCOVER** ~ **ACHIEVE** ~ **BECOME**

At St Mark's we seek to lead each student to:

DISCOVER	ACHIEVE	BECOME
More about themselves, their relationships with others, their world, their Catholic faith tradition and their God.	Their full potential: personally, spiritually, academically and intellectually.	Empowered, lifelong learners.

Vision For Learning

Our Vision for Learning at St Mark's

Students are the centre of our learning environment and they are given opportunities to:

- ★ **discover** in a supportive and positive learning environment which caters for diverse needs
- ★ **achieve** through challenging, yet achievable learning experiences that are relevant to real life
- ★ **become** confident, resilient and critical thinkers, enabling them to make connections between their learning and the outside world.

School song ~ 'Live the Gospel'

Living in faith, we gather in your name. Living in hope, we learn about our world. Living in love, we reach out to one another.

With our ears and eyes, and hands and lips,
and minds and hearts, we live the Gospel.

Open our ears to hear your voice,

Open our eyes to see,

Open our hands to help, and to be all that we can be.

Open our lips to speak kind words,

Open our minds to learn,

Open our hearts to feel your love,

And to love you in return.



Religious History of the Parish and the School

The school was founded in 1889; it had 13 students who were taught by two local sisters, Colse and Sarah Hayes. In 1894 the Sisters of the Good Samaritan took over the leadership of the school and then in 1900 the Sisters of St Joseph began their tenure. In 1948, the Presentation Sisters of Wagga Wagga began leadership of the school and remained a significant part of the school until 1994, when the first lay principal was appointed.

Our school Charisms

At St Mark's we have a dual charism. A charism is a deep awareness of a Gospel value or values linked to a special need in the world. The Gospel value or emphasis remains constant over the history of the group throughout history. The area of need also remains constant but the specific expressions of the need may change over time, place and culture. Charism is always at the service of mission and for us as Christians, this mission is Jesus' mission.

St Mark's dual charism:

- a) The Sisters of St Joseph, with Mary MacKillop as the founder and
- b) The Presentation Sisters of Wagga Wagga, with Nano Nagle as the founder.

These religious congregations were both at the school for substantial amounts of time. Both Mary MacKillop and Nano Nagle were women who had seen a need in their society and responded to help those who were poor and disadvantaged.



Who was Mary MacKillop?

Mary MacKillop's parents were originally from Scotland but did not meet until they were both in Australia. They were married in 1840 and in 1842 in Melbourne, the first of their eight children, Mary, was born. Mary began work as a clerk at the age of fourteen and she supported her family with her income. When Mary was eighteen she moved to Penola, in South Australia, and became a governess to her aunt and uncle's children - the Camerons. Mary loved educating children and felt a great need to educate those who, because of poverty, were left to look after themselves. Mary taught many children who were in need that came to the Cameron estate. While she was there, she came in contact with Fr Julian Woods, who was a priest in Penola. Fr Woods had a similar dream to educate the poor and eventually a small Catholic school was opened in Penola. In 1861 Mary MacKillop became the first Sister and Mother Superior of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. Ten other sisters had joined the Sisters of St Joseph by the end of 1867. The number of Sisters joining the Order continued to grow in Australia and New Zealand. For some years after 1901, Mary suffered poor health and on 8 August, 1909, Mary died. There are many stories of Mary's compassion towards those in need. Mary and her sisters offered education to the children of the working class and the poor. On October 17, 2010, Mary was canonised at St Peter's Basilica, Rome.

For more information go to: www.marymackillop.org.au



Who was Nano Nagle?

Nano Nagle was born in 1718 in Ballygriffin, Cork, Ireland. As Catholic education in Ireland at that time carried the death sentence, Nano had to go to France to be educated. On her return to Ireland, Nano became aware of the many people all around her who lived in appalling poverty and oppression. Soon she set about improving the lot of the poor. Nano knew that without education, no permanent change in society could occur. In the degraded condition of her people she recognized not only the effects of political oppression and economic change, but a divine call. At great personal risk, Nano opened small schools in Cork and in this way made a stand against some of the injustices of her time. Inspired and led by the Spirit, Nano Nagle pioneered a courageous ministry to the poor and downtrodden and in so doing, challenged the authorities of the day. Besides teaching in the schools, Nano went out after her work during the day and carried a lantern in the night to visit the poor, especially the elderly and the sick. The symbol for Nano is often the lantern as she brought the light of Christ to many who were disadvantaged. Soon it became clearer to her, that such work demanded not only a special call from God but also great generosity and a permanent commitment. Therefore, in 1775, Nano began the Congregation of Presentation Sisters and these sisters are now in many countries. The last Presentation Principal at St Mark's was Sr Susan Miller.

For more information about Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters go to:
<http://presentationsociety.org.au/about/our-founder/>



Religious History of the Parish and the School

The St Mark's Parish

Established in 1889, St Mark's enjoys a close relationship with the Parish of St Mark's and draws most of its students from the Parish community of Drummoyne and the Canada Bay area. Together we form a faith community centred on the Eucharist.

St Mark's School Prayer

Loving God be with us today as we gather in your name. Open our ears to hear your voice in the people we meet. Open our eyes to see the needs of those around us.

Open our hands to help others and to do our work well.

Open our lips to bring laughter and kind words to each other.

Open our minds to learn about you and our world.

Open our hearts to love You, just as You love us. May the spirit of St Mark walk gently with us today. Amen.

St Mark - Pray for us.

St Mary of the Cross - Pray for us.

Venerable Nano Nagle - Pray for us.

A system of Catholic Schools and Religious Education

St Mark's is part of a school system made up of 147 schools called Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) under the guidance of the Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board and the Catholic Education Office. These bodies operate on behalf of Archbishop Anthony Fisher.

The Catholic School

The Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic School Board's Vision for the Catholic School is built on four basic assumptions. As partners in Catholic education, we commit ourselves to developing authentic Catholic schools which:

- are founded on the person of Jesus Christ and enlivened by the Gospel
- highlight the relevance of our faith to life and contemporary culture
- are embedded within the community of believers, and share in the evangelising mission of the Church
- are committed to the development of the whole person.

Spiritual life of the school and Religious Education

The teaching of Religious Education:

- is designed to help students to understand, appreciate and celebrate the richness of the Catholic tradition that supports the catechetical and evangelising mission of the Church, while supporting students in their lifelong journey in faith
- has been developed to stimulate and challenge students, especially in their understanding of scripture and tradition, their critical thinking and moral reasoning and is based upon sound pedagogical practices
- features the 'storytelling approach' to scriptures which nurtures the natural capacity that young children have for curiosity, imagination and wonder, promotes open ended questions, reflections and opportunities for exploration to engage students with the story.

The teaching of the Religious Education (RE) curriculum is supported by the 'To Know, Worship and Love' books and/or online series designed by SCS.

Parent involvement is encouraged at St Mark's to enrich our Catholic community. Students have the opportunity to celebrate liturgies with their families at many events in the liturgical year as well as significant events in the life of the school. Family Masses are celebrated for every year group as well as our annual Mothers' and Fathers' Day Liturgies. Students participate in the Sacraments as they continue their education at St Mark's:

- ❖ Year 2 partake in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- ❖ Year 3 celebrate their First Holy Communion
- ❖ Year 6 continue their religious journey with the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The sacraments are parish based and the units in the RE curriculum are taught at the same time that students are preparing for the Sacraments in the parish.



About St Mark's

School leadership

The School Leadership Team is made up of the Principal, the Assistant Principal, the Religious Education Coordinator and two Coordinators, each playing an important role in the leadership of the school.

The Leadership Team is responsible for the religious and educational leadership of the school, including setting the overall direction for the provision of the effective care and education of all students.

Each year an Annual Improvement Plan is created for the school and is aligned with the:

- Archdiocesan Vision and Mission Statement for Catholic Schools
- Priorities contained in the Sydney Catholic Schools Strategic Plan.

Student leadership

In line with our Vision at St Mark's, students in Years 5 and 6 are given opportunities to use their gifts and talents in leadership roles.

In Year 6 all students share leadership through their membership in the Social Justice, Liturgy, Environmental, Wellbeing, Creative and Performing Arts or Sports Committees.

Sports colour houses

Students participate in sporting events throughout the year, including swimming, athletics, cross country, carnivals and gala day events, for example, touch football, netball, soccer and OzTag. Parents are invited to assist at these events.

St Mark's Sport Colour Houses

Nagle	MacKillop	Therry	Polding
			
<p>Nano Nagle was born in 1718 in Ballygriffin, Cork, Ireland. Nano started schools for those who were poor and needed an education. She also used to visit the poor at night and she carried a lantern to visit the poor, especially the elderly and the sick. The symbol for Nano is the lantern as she brought the light of Christ to many who were disadvantaged. In 1775, Nano began the Congregation of Presentation Sisters and these sisters are now in many countries. The Presentation Sisters were in St Mark's school for many years.</p> <p>Mary MacKillop was born in Melbourne in 1842. When Mary was eighteen she moved to Penola, in South Australia, and became a governess. Mary loved educating children and felt a great need to educate those who were poor. With Father Woods, Mary opened a small Catholic school in Penola. In 1867 Mary MacKillop became the first Sister and Mother Superior of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. There are many stories of Mary's compassion towards those in need. Mary and her sisters offered education to the children of the working class and the poor. On October 17, 2010, Mary was canonised at St Peter's Basilica, Rome. The Sisters of St Joseph were in St Mark's school for many years.</p> <p>John Joseph Therry was born in Cork, Ireland in 1790. He was ordained a priest in 1815 and was assigned to parish work in Dublin and then Cork. He arrived in Sydney, in May 1820. Therry was the only priest on the mainland for five years. He set himself the task of attending to every aspect of the moral and religious life of the Catholics. Therry was a determined man and achieved many great things for the Catholic Church in Australia including the building of St Mary's Cathedral in 1821. One of the streets in Drummoyne is named after him.</p> <p>John Bede Polding was born in Liverpool, England, on November 18, 1794. He joined the Benedictine community in 1811. Polding arrived in Australia in 1835 as the first Catholic bishop. He travelled throughout Australia, bringing Christ's healing, compassion and neighbourly love. He had a passion for the reign of God and compassion for the people of God. He spoke out about injustices in society and gave a voice to those who had no voice: the poor, the convicts, the Aborigines and women. Polding is also credited with laying the foundations of Catholic education in Australia. One of the streets in Drummoyne is named after him.</p>			

Student Wellbeing & Pastoral Care

The school implements the SCS Student Wellbeing Policy.

The aim of this Policy is to enable a learning environment which promotes and provides for the spiritual, physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth of our students.

At St Mark's there exists a whole school approach to supporting and strengthening a child safe community which values and promotes student wellbeing through:

- Strong interconnections between student safety, wellbeing and learning
- A continual focus on inclusion, encouraging positive relationships and safe behaviours
- Learning experiences that develop students' social and emotional skills and resilience

If students feel safe and happy their sense of wellbeing are enhanced which in turn will lead to respectful and trusting relationships with their peers and teachers.

The following infographic summarises some of the key wellbeing frameworks and programs that we provide students with at St Mark's to develop positive wellbeing and relationships. These programs further enhance the learning experiences that are taught in the Personal Development and Health curriculum.

WELLBEING AT ST MARK'S

Positive student wellbeing is at the centre of all that we do. To ensure that every student feels safe, respected and happy to learn and engage at school, a variety of frameworks and programs are implemented.

WHOLE SCHOOL POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING (SPBL)

What is SPBL?
It is a comprehensive, integrated whole school approach to student wellbeing and behaviour. SPBL is closely aligned to the Be You framework, developing and maintaining student wellbeing and mental health which clearly improves learning.

What's the Positive behaviour matrix?
All staff and students work from our whole school positive behaviour for learning expectation matrix that names the positive behaviours that we expect all students to display at St Mark's. The matrix is written in a positive and child friendly way so that students are able to understand and take ownership of their daily choices.

Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be a learner	Be Kind
I keep my hands and feet to myself. I stay in supervised areas.	I listen. I use kind words. I wear the correct uniform. I use equipment appropriately. I stand aside for adults. I place my rubbish in the bin.	I care for my school environment. I use technology appropriately.	I treat others with kindness. I speak kind words. I include others.

St Mark's Drummoyne
LIVE THE GOSPEL

THE RESILIENCE PROJECT
The Resilience Project is an evidence based program that equips students with practical wellbeing skills and strategies to develop resilience. The program is underpinned by 3 pillars:

- Gratitude
- Empathy
- Mindfulness

RESILIENCE PROJECT

The program has a strong focus on connection, purpose, kindness, emotional literacy and physical health.

The First Six Weeks of School
This program supports students transition to a new school year and class. Students engage in wellbeing activities that focus on developing a safe and nurturing classroom environment and fostering positive peer connections.

Peer Support
A peer led, skills based, experiential learning program that encourages peer connections across grades. Students develop practical skills to enhance social and emotional wellbeing.

Peer Support

The Peer Support Program

The Peer Support Program is a peer led, skills based, experiential learning program that provides students with opportunities to develop the skills, understandings, attitudes and strategies to improve their mental, social and emotional wellbeing. Further to this, it develops students' key skills in resilience, assertiveness, decision making, problem solving and leadership.

Trained student leaders facilitate sessions with multi-aged groups of about 8-10 students from Kindergarten to Year 5.



Approach to Behaviour Management

Positive behaviour for learning (PBL)

What is PBL?

PBL is a comprehensive, integrated whole school approach to student wellbeing and behaviour. It provides all members in the school community with clear expectations for behaviour.

PBL is closely aligned to the Be You framework as they both look at developing and maintaining students' wellbeing and mental health which clearly improves learning.

All staff and students work from the whole school positive behaviour for learning expectation matrix that names the positive behaviour that we expect all students to display at St Mark's.

- A matrix is developed for each situation or area in order to model and support students to follow our school values of:
 - Be safe
 - Be respectful
 - Be a good learner
 - Be kind

BEE SAFE BEE RESPECTFUL BEE A LEARNER BEE KIND



We are Safe	We are Respectful	We are Learners	We are Kind
We keep my hands and feet to myself. We stay in supervised areas.	We listen. We use kind words. We wear the correct uniform. We use equipment appropriately. We stand aside for adults. We place my rubbish in the bin.	We care for my school environment. We use technology appropriately.	We treat others with kindness. We speak kind words. We include others.



Approach to Behaviour Management

Restorative Justice

St Mark's believes in the Restorative Practice philosophy of:

- Compassion
- Forgiveness
- Hope

Seven Principles of Restorative Justice

Based on this Philosophy, St Mark's manages student conflict resolution using the Seven Principles of Restorative Justice;

1. Foster awareness in the student of how others have been affected
2. Avoid scolding or lecturing. This often results in the student reacting defensively and detracts from them noticing the feelings of others
3. Involve the student actively. Instead of simply doling out punishment which the student is expected to accept passively, in a Restorative intervention the student is asked to speak. They face and listen to those who have been affected by their inappropriate behaviour. They help decide how to repair the harm and make a commitment to this. The student is held accountable for their actions
4. Accept ambiguity. Often fault is unclear and people can agree to accept the ambiguous situation
5. Separate the deed from the doer. We can recognise a student's worth, their virtues and accomplishments while disapproving of their wrongdoing
6. See every serious instance of wrongdoing and conflict as an opportunity for learning. Negative incidents can be used constructively to build empathy and a sense of community in the hope that there is a reduction of negative incidents in the future
7. Restorative Practices must have a whole school approach. Every attempt on an individual level to use these principles needs to be well supported by a whole school approach to minimise the chance of further harm (Marist Youth Care)

Restorative Practice

St Mark's has a Restorative Practice program. The aim of the program focuses on making friends, caring for them and restoring relationships that need healing.

The aim is to:

- repair the harm done to individuals and relationships after a conflict
- provide strategies for social and emotional learning
- offer wrongdoing as an opportunity to learn
- build and maintain strong and nurturing relationships.



A group of mentors from Year 5 are present on the playground every recess and lunch to help their fellow students develop and maintain healthy relationships.



Prevention and Management of Student Bullying

St Mark's Position Statement on Bullying

St Mark's is committed to providing a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment for students. Bullying undermines the dignity and wellbeing of each student, and St Mark's considers all forms of bullying behaviour unacceptable.

Bullying is intentional and repeated behaviour that involves the ongoing misuse of power that can cause physical and/or psychological harm to a student. Bullying behaviour can be verbal, physical, social (e.g. excluding, alienating behaviour) and psychological (spreading rumours, sending hurtful messages or comments) and includes bullying via social media and other online platforms (cyber-bullying).

Bullying can involve discrimination, intimidation and harassment. Bullying behaviours may be individual or collective behaviours which occur on or outside school premises and during or after school hours. Some bullying may constitute criminal conduct such as assault, threatening behaviours, property damage or harassment and stalking.

Bullying complaints are investigated and responded to in a timely and procedurally fair manner, to respect the dignity and privacy of those students involved.

Parents and carers of students are required to work collaboratively with school and SCS processes and staff to prevent and resolve allegations of bullying in their child's school and not engage in bullying behaviours toward any SCS students, SCS staff or other parents.

Preventative education

St Mark's implements and regularly reviews an Anti-Bullying Plan, which includes all steps to build a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment that aims to reduce or avoid bullying incidents.

Staff are provided with training on how to reduce the incidence of bullying, how to report and respond to any incidents of bullying and promote the development and maintenance of respectful student relationships.

Educational opportunities are planned for during the school year to educate students about 'anti-bullying' as well as provide them with the knowledge, tools and resources to be an 'upstander' and engage in healthy, positive and respectful relationships.

Community partnership

Throughout the year the school works closely with our police youth liaison officer to promote safe and respectful behaviours. Topics that are presented to students have included Cybersafety, stranger danger, anti-bullying, respect of others and their personal property.





Supervision Before and After School

SUPERVISION - BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

School hours and supervision

- 8.30 am: Playground supervision commences
- 8.51 am: Assembly music begins to play - children line up on playground
- 9.00 am: School commences
- 11.00-11.30 am: Recess
- 1.00-1.45 pm: Lunch
- 3.15 pm: School dismissal
- 3.15 – 3.30 pm: After school supervision / Kiss and Drive

- No supervision will be provided other than between those hours and no responsibility will be taken by the school for any consequence of the activities of students outside those hours. This is of particular importance when students stay back for after school activities – martial arts or for any other activity.
- All out of hours activities are the responsibility of the parent.
- Any student waiting for an after school activity must be supervised by an adult. If the lesson does not commence at 3.30pm, parents will need to supervise or arrange for their child to be supervised by the person leading the activity .
- In the interest of student safety, please ensure that your child does not attend or remain in the precincts of the school outside the hours of 8.30 am to 3.30pm without adult supervision.
- The Before and After School Care Provider is Gourie NSW. They can be contacted for supervision outside of school hours on [0436 616 744](tel:0436616744) or visit their site:<https://www.gouriensw.com.au/out-of-hours-care/gourie-oshc-drummoyne> for further information.
- The school will not be responsible for supervising or caring for students outside the school premises unless the students are engaged in a school sponsored activity, for example an excursion or a sporting event.
- The school will not be responsible for supervising or caring for students on their journey to and from the school or for supervising students at bus stops on their way to and from school.
- Each student's journey to and from school is the responsibility of parents and/or guardians.



Supervision Before and After School

Dismissal at the end of the school day

- School Gates are opened for parents to approach their designated dismissal points at 3:15pm. Once parents have collected their child they are asked to kindly move off
- All gates will be locked once all students have been collected by no later than 3:30pm.

The following dismissal procedure will be in place each afternoon from 3:15pm to ensure a safe and orderly transition occurs and to alleviate congestion in front of the church:

Kindergarten - At the end of each school day, the Kindergarten teachers will escort their class to the front Kindergarten playground (P1). Students will be seated in their class lines and parents are to walk up the ramp to collect their child from the small gate from the front playground (P1).

Year 1 and Year 2 - At the end of each school day, teachers will bring their students to sit in lines at the driveway gate between the church and school. Parents walk to the driveway gate to collect their child and exit via the front of the school (Tranmere St).

Once you have collected your child we kindly ask that you move off to avoid congestion in front of the driveway area.

Years 3-6 - At the end of each school day, students will be dismissed via the side parish gate to greet their parents. Students/parents are asked to wait along the concrete Church pathway to meet their child/dren

South Street - back gate - If you normally pick your child up from the back gate - South Street - your child will walk over to you. There will be a supervising teacher at this gate as per usual.

Parish lawn - out of bounds

As the parish lawn is not school property, students are not to play in this area after school hours. Should you wish for your child to play with friends after dismissal you are encouraged to access Brett Park, South Street or other play spaces.

Before and after school care - Gowrie NSW

A before and after school care facility operates on site, 5 days per week.

The service provider is Gowrie NSW. Please enrol if you need this service on
<https://www.gowriensw.com.au/out-of-hours-care/gowrie-oshc-drummoyne>



At the beginning and end of the day, the entrance on South Street is used for drop off and to collect your child.



Supervision Before and After School

After School Pick Up - Kiss & Drive:

It is recommended that Kinder students do not use this afternoon pick up service until Term 2 when they become more familiar with the school procedures. If students use Kiss and Drive, they are walked over to the brick fence along Tranmere Street. They sit along the brick fence and are supervised by two teachers. Parents drive up to collect their child, with their family surname displayed inside the windscreens. During wet weather, the Kiss and Drive service is not offered and students will be collected from their Kinder classrooms.

In order to ensure the safe, smooth procedure in the afternoons, the Kiss and Drive procedure is outlined below:

- students must only approach cars in the designated area, as directed by the teachers on duty
- the student approaches the car door on the kerbside. At no point is a teacher to escort a child to the driver's side of the car to enter the vehicle. Teachers do not encourage students to sit in the front seat
- at no stage is the parent to park the car and leave it to collect a child. If parking is necessary, this should be done in another area
- the driver of the vehicle takes responsibility for the child wearing their restraint before driving away
- traffic and parking is a major issue for our community. Your support is essential and appreciated.

After school supervision procedures:

- All students, except those walking and after school pick up students, are to remain with their classroom teacher until collected by a parent or guardian
- Once your child has been collected, the child is in your care. It is your responsibility to ensure that your children are behaving safely whilst on school grounds
- The students are discouraged from climbing trees, playing on the parish verandah, playing with or kicking balls on the school or parish grounds - this is an out of bounds area and is not school grounds
- In the interests of safety we would request that once collected, the students remain with you until you leave the school premises
- All students who have not been collected by 3.30pm will wait in the office until their parents or carers arrive to collect them
- Any student waiting for an after school activity must be in the care of an adult at all times.

Wet weather procedures:

- In the morning, students go straight to class
- During recess and lunch times, students remain in the classroom
- After school, parents collect students from designated areas. There is no Kiss & Drive in wet weather.

Wet weather pick up areas

- Kinder students are collected from their classroom
- Year 1, 2 and 4 students are collected from the multipurpose area
- Year 3 and Stage 3 students are collected from in front of the school hall

Teachers supervise students from 8.30am in the school playground as well as at recess and lunch times.

- The school accepts no responsibility for accidents before 8.30am or after 3.30pm
- Students are not permitted to be in the school building unless supervised by a teacher.



Attendance

Regular attendance at school

Regular attendance at school is compulsory for all children aged 6 and above, as governed by the NSW Government and the Catholic Education Commission of NSW. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. Student attendance is monitored and if your child's attendance falls below what is deemed as 'reasonable', parents will be contacted by the school. Should your child's pattern of attendance remain a concern, you may be called in for a meeting with the principal to discuss this attendance matter. If you are experiencing challenges with getting your child to school, you are encouraged to make contact with your child's teacher or with the principal so that suitable strategies can be implemented to support your child's regular attendance.

Percentage	Number of days away per fortnight	Could be described as...
95 % +	A rare day away	Excellent Attendance
90 % - 95 %	½ - 1 day away	Regular Attendance
80 % - 89 %	1-2 days away	Emerging Attendance Concern
70 % - 79 %	2-3 days away	Significant Attendance Concern
< 70 %	More than 3 days away	Critical / Complex Attendance Concern

Everybody has a responsibility to help children

Families, caregivers, the student, the school and the community

- All kids in NSW must go to school by the time they turn 6.
- They must go to school or be involved in training or employment up to the age of 17.
- The law says they must attend school every day.
- If they do not go to school they will fall behind in their learning.
- Children who go to school every day do better and have more opportunities.

Missing school matters and EVERY DAY counts

If kids go to school...

Consent to reprint image given by Council of Catholic School Parents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parent Committee 2014.



Attendance

Absences

In the event of your child being absent from school, it is necessary that a reason is given via Compass or email before or on the day of your child's return to school. This is a legal requirement. The explanation need only be brief. Simply follow the prompts on Compass stating the reason for the absence, the date of absence etc. If your child is sick for 3 or more consecutive days, please provide a medical certificate.

Holidays ~ Extended Leave during the school year

Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. For leave less than 5 days, the school still needs to be advised via email or note accordingly.

Leave of 5 or more school days will require the completion of an Application for Extended Leave/Travel Form which will be approved by the Principal. This form can be obtained from the school office.

Late and early leave

Punctuality: Lateness in arriving at school means a poor start to the day and disrupts the class, teacher and lesson. We seek the support of all parents in ensuring their child arrives at school by 9 am. Arrival after this point is marked as Late, and parents are required to sign their child in at the school office. Students must be accompanied to the school office with an adult if they are late.

Early Leave: No child is permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours unless collected by a parent or other authorised person.

- In the case of students leaving early to attend important medical or dental appointments that cannot be made outside of school hours, a note should be given to the class teacher in the morning noting the date, time and purpose of the appointment.
- An email can also be sent to the office at info@stmdrummoyne.catholic.edu.au
- When the parent comes to collect the child, the student will then be called to the office, and the student must be signed out from school via the Compass Kiosk located in the Office.

Student absences ~ Sick leave

An explanation of any student's absence due to sickness needs to be advised in writing to the school on the student's return. The School can request medical certificates or other documentation to support frequent or prolonged sick leave requests.

EVERY MINUTE COUNTS!



Your child has arrived in time to settle well and has the best start possible.



Your child has probably arrived just after most children as the school day starts at 9:00am.



Your child is late and has missed the beginning of the school day. Being late often unsettles children.



15 minutes late = 8 days lost a year



20 minutes late = 11 days lost a year



25 minutes late = 14 days lost a year



School Uniform

School uniform

Wearing the school uniform correctly is an indicator of the pride the St Mark's students have in their school, and students are expected to wear the full school uniform at all times. The sports uniform is only worn on the child's class sports day each week. Sports shoes are not part of the general school uniform and are only to be worn on sports days. The regular school uniform must be worn at all other times. No other styles or colours are permitted without prior arrangement with the principal.

Summer uniform is worn from the beginning of Term Four and winter uniform is worn after the Mother's Day weekend in May.

Hats: The school hat is a compulsory part of the school uniform. Our school expectation is 'No Hat, No Play and Sit in the Shade'.

Sports shoes: These shoes may be navy, black or white (with a small amount of colour on the white).

Uniform Shop

Uniforms can be purchased online or from the mobile van each Tuesday morning. The uniform company is Reji Uniforms.

Phone: (02) 9771 5454

Email: sales@rejiuniforms.com.au
www.rejiuniforms.com.au

The following items are available from the school office:

- library bag
- school bag
- excursion bag
- hats

Summer



Summer Sport



Winter



Winter Sport





Parent Engagement

What is parent engagement?

Parental involvement entails parents' participation in the educational process and experiences of their children. This includes discussing school activities, imparting aspirations and expectations, supervising and helping with learning activities at home, contact with school staff and volunteering at school.

Why is it important?

Supportive discussions between child and parent concerning school-related matters, such as assistance with and planning of schoolwork, have a strong positive relationship to academic achievement. Parental expectations also impact students' aspirations, resulting in higher academic achievement. Strong parent-teacher partnerships are developed and sustained through effective communication.

How is parent engagement supported and encouraged at St Mark's?

- Two way communication: Parent teacher meetings - 'Meet and greet in Term 1', Semester 1 parent teacher meetings as well as ongoing communication during the year at point of need
- Curriculum outline sent home at the start of the term to inform and share with parents the learning focus and expectations for the term
- Parents volunteering and supporting in the classroom, on excursions and at whole school events
- Learning - Twice a term, student's workbooks are sent home for parents to view and to discuss their child's learning, achievements and areas for growth
- Open classrooms and 'learning showcases at the end of the term' - parents are invited to celebrate the learning achievements of their child/ren
- Attending assemblies, Masses, liturgies and other key events during the term and year
- Participating in Parent workshops and information sessions during the year
- Supporting the school's positive behaviour for learning expectations that promote a safe and respectful learning environment.





Parent Involvement

The process of education is a partnership between home and school. Parents at St Mark's are encouraged to be involved in every aspect of school life through the Parents' and Friends' Association or through involvement in classroom activities, excursions and the fete.

Parents are most welcome to help out in classrooms. In doing so however, you accept the school policy that no student is to be discussed or comparisons made by parents as a consequence of what you see in the classroom or on any school activity.

It is most important to understand that parents do not have the authority to approach a student in a disciplinary manner while on school grounds. If there is an issue with a child your first action must be to speak to the teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal.

It is mandatory that our parent volunteers participate in an annual Volunteer Induction Session held at the beginning of the school year. Parents or other volunteers will not be able to volunteer for any student related activity if this is not completed.

Class Parents

Each year, parents are asked to volunteer as class parents. Class parents:

- liaise with class teachers if additional help is needed in the class
- coordinate social events
- compile a list of parent names, phone numbers and emails (if parents agree to be on this list) so that contact can be made for social events such as Dad's nights out, Mum's dinners etc. It can also be useful for contacts for children's parties or for organising after school play times.

Parents can opt to have their details shared but due to privacy, the school cannot release parents' details.

Purpose of Class Parents

Class Parents operate in three main areas of the school: Fundraising, Social and Community.

- Fundraising - To identify and organise fundraising opportunities and events in our school
- Social and community - To provide opportunities to meet and get to know other families. Social events which have been initiated by Class Parents within the school community in recent years include Mothers' dinners, Fathers' events, morning tea for Kindergarten parents and morning tea after Family Class Masses on a Sunday.

Parents' and Friends' Association (P & F)

- The Parents' and Friends' Association is a group of voluntary parents to promote a sense of community and support the school with fundraising opportunities and social events.



Volunteering at the School

Child protection and mandatory annual volunteer induction

It is essential that appropriate care and protection structures exist within our Catholic School System to enable us to provide the safest possible environment for our students. As workers and helpers within our schools you must be aware of your shared responsibility in this regard and demonstrate your commitment by meeting the legal obligations surrounding the care and protection of children and young people.

Volunteers play a critical role in a student's education and overall development and St Mark's highly values the time, energy and skills that our parent volunteers bring to the community. Under the new legislation, we are required to obtain a disclosure from all volunteers which needs to be updated on an annual basis.

- All volunteers are required to participate in a volunteer induction every year
- These induction dates and times are set at the beginning of the school year and will be run face to face at the School
- No parent/grandparent/carer can volunteer in the school without participating in the annual volunteer induction
- Parents/grandparents are not required to have a WWCC but they do need to attend an annual volunteer induction and sign relevant forms
- All volunteers are required to sign in and out of the school and wear an easily identifiable Visitor Pass during their time at the school

Volunteering commences in Term 2 of each year and concludes at the end of Term 3.

Children's safety

Children should be alerted to safe ways to travel to and from school, for example; follow a familiar route; travel with others; don't stop off to play alone in parks or lanes; avoid walking through car parks; always go straight home before going off to play and know the location of nearby safe areas. The school strongly urges the support of parents in this most important task.

For safety reasons, vehicles are prohibited from using the driveway and the area in front of the church before and after school times.

****At no time are cars to enter the school grounds during school hours****



Communication

Compass

At St Mark's we use the Compass platform to communicate with parents. Compass is a web-based system that is accessible on any modern web browser or mobile device and it is used by all Sydney Catholic Schools. At the start of the year, all new parents to the school will receive their unique Compass login details.

How can I access/download the Compass platform on my device or mobile phone?

The portal is accessible via a web browser and/or by using the Compass School Manager mobile application. The Compass School Manager App can be downloaded from Google Play or Apple store. Alternatively, visit our school website <https://stmdrummoyne.syd.catholic.edu.au/compass>

If you are already using Compass, there is no need to do anything further.

What can I access and action on Compass?



- A parent calendar with the key dates for each term
- Submit an absence note for my child/ren
- Read and download the school newsletter and newsflash
- View and download my child/ren academic reports each semester
- Receive News Feed notifications for timely messages from the school

How do I contact my child's class teacher and Office staff?

All teachers and office staff can be contacted via the school office at info@stmdrummoyne.catholic.edu.au

How does the school use Compass to communicate with parents?

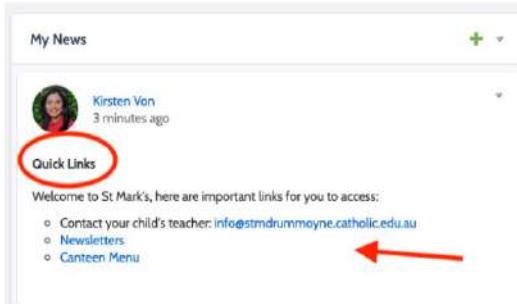
- Newsfeeds: Key information will be sent to you via email and a push notification to your mobile device. Posts remain accessible under "My News" for as long as the school has determined. The most recent posts will be displayed chronologically after the "Quick Links" post.
- Email: correspondence from classroom teachers and staff may be sent via a @noreplycompass email address. It is important that parents check their email settings and spam folder to ensure such emails are being delivered to your inbox.
- Student Academic Reports: Once published, semester reports are accessible for viewing and download.
- Parent calendar: All key school events will be added to the live parent calendar.



Communication

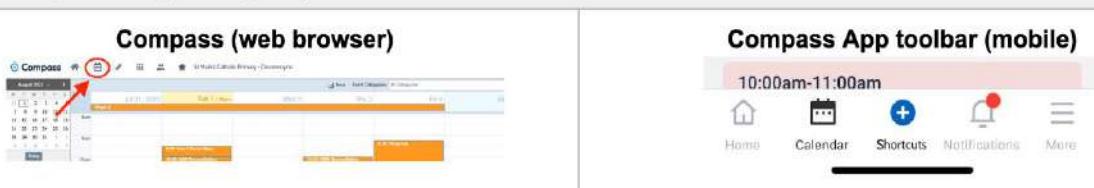
How do I contact a teacher, access the newsletters and canteen menu?

Parents can access a "Quick Links" post which links the email to contact class teachers and staff info@stmdrummoynecatholic.edu.au, the folder of newsletters (from Week 4, Term 3 2023 onwards) and the latest canteen menu.



How do I access the parent calendar?

The parent calendar is accessible via the calendar icon. When using a web browser it is located on the top toolbar and when using the Compass App on your mobile device it is located on the bottom toolbar.



How do I access the school newsletter and newsflash?

The newsletter and newsfeed will be shared via Newsfeed under "My News" each fortnight and archived in the Newsletter folder in the "School Favourites" or "Quick Links."

Newsletter/ Newsflash Link Shared via Newsfeed (web browser & mobile)



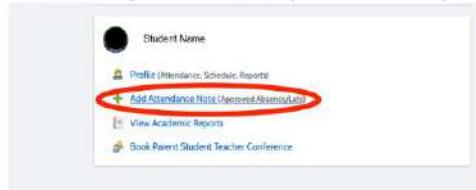
Previous Newsletter Location (web browser)



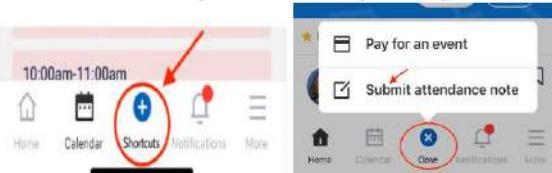
How do I inform the school of my child's absence?

Parents can enter an absence note directly into Compass or by emailing the school office directly at: info@stmdrummoynecatholic.edu.au

Entering an Absence (web browser)



Entering an Absence (mobile)





Communication

Communication with your child

At St Mark's we fully understand that there will be last minute matters of urgency that require a change of plans so it would help if you could discuss the plans for the upcoming day with your children in the morning so that they know what is happening for the day.

Students will not be called to the office telephone except in emergencies. Due to the pressures on the school office, telephone messages to students will not be received and delivered unless they are of a highly urgent nature.

Communication with teachers and office staff

Teachers are not available to take telephone calls during class time or whilst on supervision duty, and must be contacted via the school office. Please advise your child's teacher in writing if you wish for an appointment time with them to discuss any matters relating to classroom issues and procedures and they will get back to you to arrange the best possible time to meet.

Alternatively, you could email the office on info@stmdrummoynesyd.catholic.edu.au or phone the school office on 9181 3042.

All email communication to teachers and office staff needs to go through the school email info@stmdrummoynesyd.catholic.edu.au rather than to individual staff because if an individual staff member is not at work, messages about your child cannot be passed on. A teacher will be able to respond to your email in 3-4 days.

Communication between students and parents

- parents are not to approach other students to correct their behaviour (unless it is deemed unsafe) or discuss their impact on the parent's own child
- parents are encouraged to let the school deal with issues of conflict or about another child, rather than contacting the parent directly
- if parents approach another child it is upsetting for the child. If there are issues, contact the school.

School fortnightly Newsletter - Even weeks

St Mark's Primary School publishes fortnightly newsletters on Thursdays.

The newsletter offers a broad overview of life at St Mark's and contains information pertaining to students' learning and religious aspects of the school. Updates from class teachers are included. It is important to read the whole newsletter so that all parents have knowledge of what is happening in the school.

School fortnightly newsflash - Odd weeks

The school newsflash is a brief communication that reminds parents of upcoming dates/events that may be occurring in the coming week.



Communication

St Mark's Process for Raising a concern or making a complaint

At St Mark's, with Christ as our model, we commit ourselves to developing an authentic Catholic school founded on the person of Jesus Christ and enlivened by the Gospel.

We are committed to living the Gospel values of compassion, forgiveness and hope. We aim to:

- develop a positive and collaborative relationship between home and school
- welcome and value diversity of opinion
- inform the staff of the changing needs of students and families
- have clear and open communication within the community

With this in mind and within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur and these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of the contemporary world.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES (taken from SCS Resolution of Complaints Policy)

- Confidentiality, access, dignity and impartiality form the basis of the complaints resolution process
- Stakeholders work together with respect and openness to achieve fair and reasonable decisions
- Complaints resolution is most effective at school level
- Each parent/caregiver has the right to be heard and to expect that ongoing relationships will continue respectfully
- Complaints will be resolved as quickly as possible
- The input of all stakeholders is valued and respected
- Restoration of 'right relationships' is most often best achieved through 'restorative practice'
- The communal needs of the school community generally exceed the needs of any individual
- Staff members have a right to be informed of formal complaints made relating to them
- The availability of review is an integral component of the complaints resolution process
- Parents are advised not to approach the children of other families with a school related complaint. In order to protect all stakeholders, it is advisable to work through the complaint with the relevant teacher or member of the leadership team
- Meetings that are not in keeping with the principles of respect and dignity, may be terminated and rescheduled for another time.

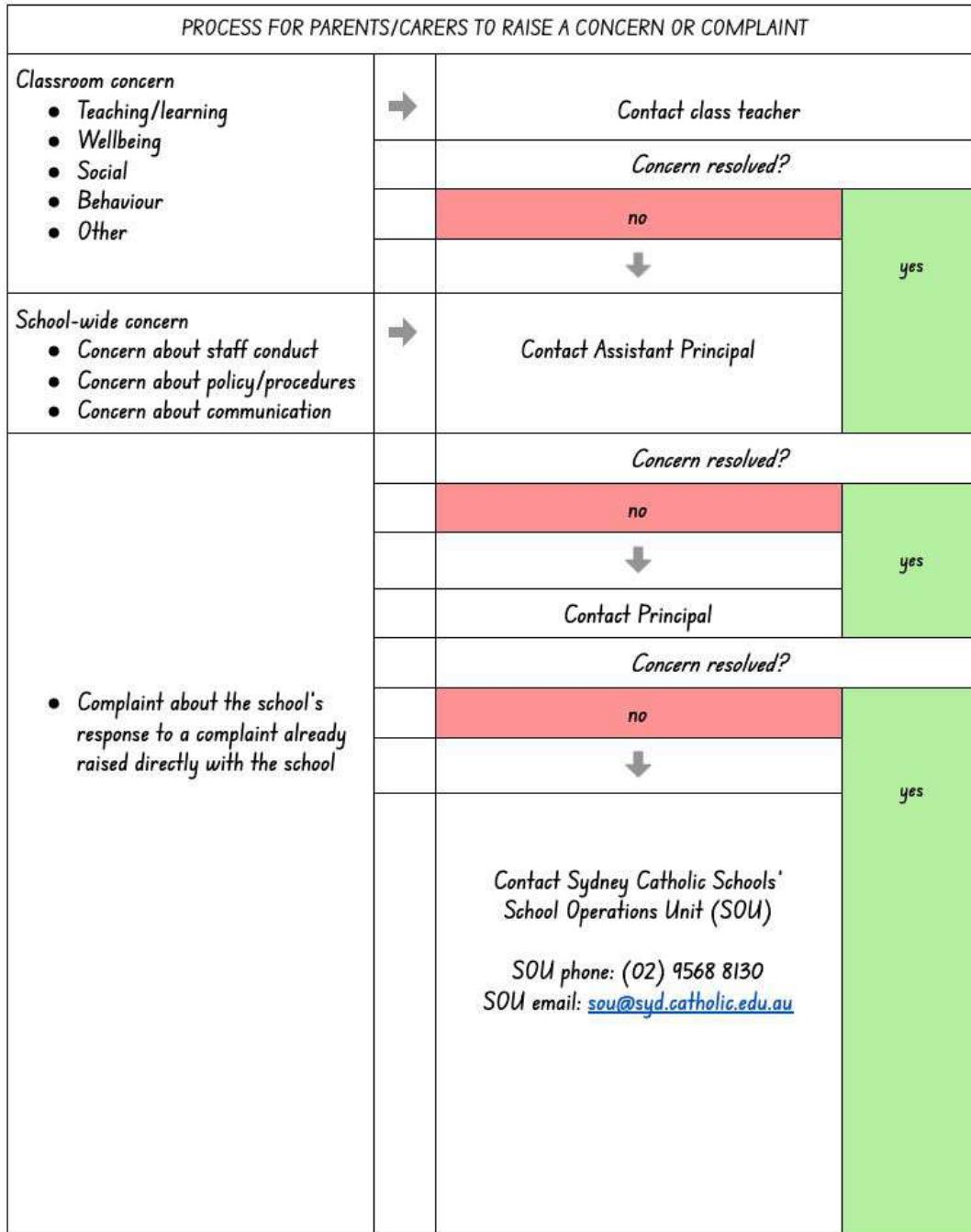
The following flowchart outlines the process for raising a concern or complaint in order to reach an outcome that is in the best interests of your child. Complaints can be resolved early when a concern is first raised with the person responsible for the situation. You must go through each step before progressing to the next.

When addressing concerns and complaints, St Mark's expects that all parties will:

- maintain the confidentiality of all parties
- acknowledge that the common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties - work towards a solution
- act in a calm, respectful and courteous manner
- show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.



Communication



PLEASE CONSIDER:

Before approaching the staff member:

- be clear about the issues you want to discuss
- focus on the facts and the things that affect your child
- remember you may not have all the facts yet
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- check the school's policies on their website
- be realistic about what the school can do.

The person managing the complaint will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and may:

- request further information from you or others involved in the matter
- hold a meeting with you or others involved in the matter
- facilitate a meeting between you and the person/s that the complaint is about.



Assessment and Reporting

The staff at St Mark's believe that all learning is a partnership between the student, parents and the teacher. Communication with parents about your child's progress is offered at parent/teacher evenings, in reports and formal and informal interviews. You are most welcome to make an appointment with your child's teacher at any time throughout the year should you wish to discuss your child's academic progress.

Assessments: All assessments are done in class. Assessments are graded/marketed according to the grade the student is in.

Semester 1 and Semester 2 reports

During Semesters 1 and 2 teachers will write formal academic reports for each student to assess and report to parents on their individual academic progress and level of effort across curriculum areas. These reports will be published and accessible by parents via the online Compass parent portal.

Parent/Teacher conversations at the beginning of the Year

Early in Term 1, parent/teacher conversations take place, so that teachers can introduce themselves, gather information about your child, discuss relevant classroom procedures and for students to share their personal learning goals.. A questionnaire is sent home approximately a week before this 'meet and greet' so parents can provide written feedback about your child. An online system is used to arrange meeting times and details relating to booking your interview will be outlined in the school newsletter.

Years K - 6 have interviews and students in Years 2-6 are required to attend with their parents and share their learning goals.

Parent/Teacher Interviews - Mid Year

Student progress conferences take place mid-year. These interviews:

- communicate information about various aspects of students' development such as academic progress, social and personal development
- provide the opportunity for parents to communicate with the class teacher about their child

Parents of Years 2-6 students are given the opportunity to have a 3-Way Conference (parents, child and teacher). An online system is used for parents to arrange interview times.

- If a teacher is concerned about your child's progress at any time during the year, you will be invited to come and discuss the problem
- You are welcome to meet with your child's teacher at any time, but an appointment is essential and should be arranged in writing or by telephoning the school office
- The class teacher is always the first person to see if you have a classroom concern
- She/He will always be available to listen to your concerns and act on them when appropriate
- Class teachers are not available for interviews during class time or while they are on playground duty
- Teachers have a duty of care to the children in these situations, with pastoral and legal implications.



Curriculum

At St Mark's, curriculum includes instruction in Religious Education and in the six Key Learning Areas designated by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA). The Key Learning Areas are English, Mathematics, Geography and History, Science and Technology, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, and Creative and Performing Arts.

Curriculum

outline

At the beginning of each term a curriculum outline for each Key Learning Area that your child will be studying is available in the newsletter. If you have any questions relating to the curriculum please make an appointment with the class teacher.

Professional planning time and specialist subjects

Executive staff in every school is provided with release from classroom teaching. The amount of time given varies with the degree of responsibility.

Each full-time classroom teacher is provided with release from face-to-face for the equivalent of 2 hours per week. It is during these periods that students attend Physical Education, Music/Dance/Drama and Art lessons.

Creative and Performing Arts

Music/Drama/Dance Lessons

A specialist CAPA teacher is employed to teach Kindergarten to Year 6. The students receive a forty five minute lesson per week. The teacher also leads a singing group. The Amadeus Program is Sydney Catholic Schools' music education program that provides students in Year 3-6 with instrumental tuition classes in small groups facilitated by professional music tutors.

Visual Arts

A specialist visual arts teacher is employed to teach Visual Arts. One forty five minute lesson is offered to each class every week.

Physical Education (PE)

The sports uniform is worn on sports day - Years 3 - 6 on Wednesday and Kindergarten - Year 2 on Thursday. You will be informed of additional PE days each term.

We also have a ten week Martial Arts Program (infants in Term 2 and primary in Term 4).

Homework

At St Mark's, the academic, sporting, cultural, spiritual and social development of the child is highly valued.

Homework activities should reinforce work done in class. Reading is most important as well as Maths. Home tasks should allow the children to practice skills in these areas.

Monday - Thursday approximate times would be:

- Early Stage 1 (Kinder): maximum 30 minutes per night
- Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2): maximum 30 minutes per night
- Stages 2 (Years 3 & 4): maximum 45 minutes per night
- Stage 3 (Years 5 & 6): maximum 45 minutes per night

This time includes reading, Maths (Mathletics online program), spelling (copying and learning spelling words) and may include research for various topics. If you would like your child to do additional work, they can choose to do their own project.



Curriculum

ICT - Information technology

Information and Communication Technology is an integral feature of learning at St Mark's and plays a significant role in the students' development as learners.

In Years

- K-1 the students work with iPads
- 2-6 the students have access to dual platform devices, both Chromebooks and iPads, that they can use for accessing digital resources and creating their own content
- 3-6 can bring their own device and a Chromebook is recommended

We develop the students' ICT skills through exposure to a wide range of technology such as devices, apps, sites, robots, movie creation, coding and programming. Students have a school account which gives them access to the Google Suite, safe use of the internet, a variety of creative apps as well as educational sites. With these facilities on offer, our students can become confident digital citizens as they utilise and develop their skills for use in the future.

Newman

St Mark's is an accredited Newman Selective Gifted Education Program school. Staff are trained in catering for the needs of gifted and talented students through quality differentiation and enrichment programmes.

What is Newman? It is:

- Effective differentiation in the classroom in all subject areas by the classroom teacher
- Cluster and flexible grouping within the classroom
- Higher Order Thinking (HOT) questions
- Deep and Complex tasks
- Social and Emotional Wellbeing support
- Support for teachers in creating effective differentiated programs in class
- Training for teachers to be qualified gifted education practitioners
- Coordination of gifted education provisions such as Bebras, ICAS, Sleek Geeks, RoboCup, Paper Planes, Writers competition, Maths Olympiad, REACH programs, Herodotus and Hypatia challenge, Science
- Identification of Gifted and High Potential learners
- In depth profiling of learners with recommendations for teachers
- Assessment coordination, data collection and analysis
- Grade or subject Acceleration
- Collaboration with parents and teachers to meet student needs.

It isn't:

- A pullout program where students are withdrawn from class
- A separate program to the class syllabus.

Library

Students borrow once a week with their class teacher from books allocated from the library. For this purpose they need a cloth bag to transport library books to and from school. Library bags are available for sale from the school office. Students across Kindergarten to Year Six also have regular scheduled library lessons.



Learner Diversity

Diverse learning

St Mark's follows the SCS Guidelines for enrolment of students with diverse learning needs. Students have differing abilities and needs. St Mark's supports individual needs by providing a range of programs and facilities to meet the needs of each individual student. Programs to support students include:

- English as an additional language/dialect
- Learning support - learning support officers work with students in the classroom to support their learning and provide small group instruction when required
- Literacy intervention
- Gifted Education
- Mini Lit - literacy intervention
- Multilit - literacy intervention
- Quicksmart Maths - numeracy intervention
- Small group phonemic support (K and 1)
- Fine motor skills support (K and 1)

School counselling services ~ Catholic Care

Students who require support can access a school counsellor who is employed through Catholic Care - the social service agency of the Archdiocese of Sydney - or directly by the system, i.e. Sydney Catholic Schools.

If you wish for your child to receive counselling, you will need to discuss this with the Assistant Principal or Principal, and a Sydney Catholic Schools School Counselling Form will need to be completed.





Health and Medical Information

Anaphylaxis and Asthma

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening. All students with significant health related issues, particularly Anaphylaxis and Asthma, or who require daily medication are to provide the school with an Action Plan signed by their doctor. The Plan must include a recent photo of the student and needs to be updated regularly. This information is used in a Student Medical Report for staff in order to identify all students with significant health requirements in the case of an emergency.

Head Lice

Periodically the presence of head lice is found on an individual student. Head lice enjoy both clean and not-so-clean hair. If lice or nits are found, parents are contacted and information is provided to help treat the problem. Head lice should be treated quickly to prevent them from spreading. Students must not attend school if lice or nits are present in their hair. It is advisable that parents regularly check their children's hair and report any infestation to the school. Parents are also alerted if there is an outbreak of headlice. Useful information can be found on the following website; www.health.nsw.gov.au

Illness and medication

Regular attendance is most important as it maintains continuity of learning experiences and helps social adjustment. However, home is the place for a sick child. If in any doubt about your children's health it is wise to keep them at home. If a student becomes ill at school, parents are contacted and asked to come and collect them.

Some students attending school require medication to control illnesses such as asthma, epilepsy and conditions relating to behaviour management. The student's continued attendance at school is dependent on this therapy. Under these circumstances the school may administer medication once parents have completed the Student Medication Permission form available from the school office. No medication will be administered without this form. All medication is to be in the prescribed container (no loose tablets in plastic sandwich bags) with the child's name and class on it.

Under no circumstances should a student be in possession of, or administer, their own medication at school.

Immunisation

Before starting school, children must have their Immunisation history statement up to date from Medicare. This certificate will be kept for the duration of your child's enrolment. Parents must inform the school immediately if your child is diagnosed with any Childhood Infectious Diseases or have been in contact with an infected person. Students not fully immunised will be excluded from school during any outbreaks of a disease for which he/she is not immunised. This is a Health Department regulation. The Health Department publishes "Control Guidelines Information" for contagious diseases like Chickenpox, Measles, Mumps, Ringworm etc. This information sets out the time the child is to be excluded from classes. Please notify the school if your child contracts an infectious disease. The Health Department information can be found at:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/default.aspx>



Financial Information

Sydney Catholic Schools offer an affordable Catholic education of the highest quality. Sibling discounts are applied for families with more than one child attending Sydney Catholic Systemic Schools.

Annual school fees are listed on the [school website](#) for parent reference.

Building Levies

An additional building levy will apply to the eldest sibling in the family attending a Sydney Catholic Systemic School.

Payments

School Fees are invoiced annually at the beginning of each school year in February.

Parents/Carers have the option when enrolling to nominate their preferred payment method either by term (over the first 3 terms), month or fortnight. If a nomination is not made, payments will be set to the default monthly method.

All fees must be paid in full by the due date shown on the fee statement.

Fee Assistance

Parents/Carers who need support to meet the cost of educating their child may be eligible for a bursary by application through the school office. Support may be provided via a:

1. Financial Hardship Bursary
2. Indigenous Bursary
3. Refugee Bursary
4. Foster Child Bursary



Term Dates

	2026 SCHOOL TERMS	STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS <i>Pupil Free Days</i>
Term 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Thursday 29 January: Kindergarten - Year 6 return to schoolThursday 2 April - Last day of Term 1 <i>Holidays - Friday 3 April - Friday 17 April</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tuesday 27 JanuaryWednesday 28 JanuaryMonday 30 March
Term 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monday 20 April - Students return to schoolWednesday 1 July - Last day of Term 2 <i>Holidays - Monday 6 - Friday 17 July</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Friday 1 MayFriday 3 July
Term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monday 20 July - Students return to schoolFriday 25 September - Last day of Term 3 <i>Holidays - Monday 28 September - Friday 9 October</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monday 20 July
Term 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monday 12 October - Students return to schoolTuesday 15 December - Last day of Term 4 <i>Holidays - Wednesday 16 December - TBC</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monday 12 OctoberWednesday 16 DecemberThursday 27 December



General Information

Canteen Provider

St Mark's lunch service is currently available 3 days per week and is outsourced to a company called Bon Appetit. This service is currently provided Tuesday - Thursday, with a possibility of increased days in 2026.

Their menu features a diverse selection of meals at affordable prices, and lunch orders will be managed through the Flexischools platform.

You can register with Flexischools and access the Bon Appetit menu via the links provided in the School Newsletter which is sent out to the School Community fortnightly.

As lunch orders are only able to be submitted online, please make sure you complete the Flexischools registration for your child.

Food

We encourage:

- 'nude food' (food that is free of wrapping or any type of packaging)
- uneaten food to be taken home
- no nuts or any nut products to be taken to school, as some students have severe nut-related allergies.

Some students have allergies to other foods/ingredients. Please inform the office and the class teacher at the beginning of each year if your child has any food allergies. If medication is required for your child, please complete the necessary Student Medication Permission Form at the school office and provide an Anaphylaxis Action Plan from your child's doctor as outlined in the 'Health Issues' section.

School photographs

School photographs are taken each year. The dates for school photos will be announced in the school newsletter and there are opportunities for parents to receive photos of individual children, class groups and siblings at the school.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the school premises.

Sun safety

St Mark's requires each student to wear a school hat at all times when outdoors. This means daily before school, at recess and lunch times, on excursions, visiting the local park, Physical Education lessons etc. The rule is "No school hat, sit in a designated shaded area". Students are encouraged to wear their school hat to and from school. When students are in the sun for any length of time, such as sports days or swimming carnivals, they are expected to also use sunscreen.

Traffic issues

Parents are required by law to obey all traffic signs related to parking outside the school. Essentially these regulations are in place for the safety of the children so we implore you to obey them. "NO STOPPING" means that in the area in the direction of the arrow you must not stop your vehicle at any point on the road or kerb, unless there is a medical or other emergency. Parents are not to stop in the driveway or on the pedestrian crossing.





General Information

Student mobiles and digital watches

Mobile Phones: Students may need to have a mobile phone with them at school so that they can be in contact with their parents before or after school, particularly if they are walking to and from school each day.

Students are expected to adhere to these expectations:

- Mobile phones must be placed in the student's school bag and switched off during school hours
- Mobile phones can be turned on at 3.15pm at dismissal so that the student can contact their parent if needed

If students are seen using their mobile phone during school hours, their phone will be confiscated and they will be handed back their phone at the end of the school day. Their parent/s will be informed so that they can reiterate the school's expectations with their child.

Digital watches that can access the internet:

- Students are not to have access to watches that allow them to message, email or phone others during school hours
- Some students are distracted by these watches and may use them during assessments, to email parents and to message parents during class or school time
- Digital watches that can access the internet are treated like mobile phones so if they are brought to school, they will need to stay in the student's bag or be handed in at the office

If you need to contact your child, please contact the office and your message will be passed on.

Students are responsible for the care and safety of their phone or digital watch. With the right to have a phone also comes the responsibility to care for it. The school will not be responsible for the loss of any mobile phone or digital watch. Mobile phones and digital watches are not permitted on excursions.

Valuables at school

We discourage children from bringing valuables (including precious and/or expensive toys) to school as there is no guarantee of protection from breakage or loss. We seek parents' support in this regard.

Excursions

School excursions are planned by staff to support the students' learning. Each excursion assists in the achievement of educational outcomes, which are found in the various syllabus documents.

The cost of excursions is kept as low as possible and no student will be denied the opportunity to attend an excursion purely for financial reasons. Parents will be advised by letter about the date, purpose, and cost of each excursion at least four weeks prior to the excursion. Permission slips for each student will need to be collected by the teacher before the student can be taken on the excursion. For planning and costing purposes it is important for parents to advise the school as early as possible if any student is unable to attend an excursion. It is anticipated that all students will attend each scheduled excursion. Preparation for the excursion and follow-up activities in the classroom form an important part of each student's learning.

Teachers often need to request assistance from parents for the adequate supervision of students on an excursion. The classroom teacher is ultimately responsible for all the students on the excursion and will be responsible for selecting the parents who assist on the excursion. Toddlers will not be allowed to attend school excursions.

Parents need to have completed the appropriate Child Protection Volunteer Form/s and have completed the annual mandatory Volunteer Induction at the beginning of the year to be eligible to assist on excursions.

Incursions

Throughout the year, students may participate in on school site incursion facilitated by an external provider. Permission notes are not required for incursions, however parents will be informed about these events.



General Information

Hairstyles

Parents are asked to co-operate in ensuring that students have appropriate hairstyles for school. Long hair must be tied back. Hair ribbons, headbands, scrunchies, clips etc. must match the uniform colours. Shaved tracks and designs are not considered appropriate.

Jewellery and Nails

The only jewellery permitted with the uniform is a pair of earrings - plain sleepers or studs. Please note that students with pierced ears are expected to wear earrings in both ears. Nail polish is not permitted, and nails are to be kept short and clean.

Labelling belongings

It is important to permanently label all your child's clothes and other school equipment as this will avoid unnecessary expense replacing lost property. We encourage parents not to allow students to bring valuables to school, and no responsibility will be taken for lost or damaged goods

Visitors

All visitors are to report to the office on arrival at the school. They will then be asked to sign in and receive a visitor's badge which they must wear at all times. They will return the badge to the office when they sign off. All visitors, whether for work purposes or volunteers, will be instructed as to access points, evacuation protocols, child protection and acceptable behaviour when working/ visiting a Child Related Industry.

Workplace health and safety (WHS)

Each term practice drills are required for evacuation and lockdown. Students are prepared and notified of these practices and you will also be notified, where possible, ahead of time. There will be times when we have evacuation and lockdown practices without notification. You will be advised if this has occurred via Compass so you can speak to your child about the practice. Sometimes some students can find these practices distressing but we do need to be prepared for emergencies. Any adult on site at the time of evacuation/lockdown will need to participate.

Staff development days

Eight times each year Staff Development Days are planned so that the staff has quality time for curriculum and spiritual development, including whole school planning. These dates are published on the school calendar and in newsletters. Students do not attend school on Staff Development Days.

Student validation forms

Student details need to be checked and updated every year. A form will be sent home in Term 3 each year. These forms must be promptly returned to the school.

Change of Address, Phone Numbers, Contact Details and Medical Details

Please notify the school office immediately if there is a change of address, email address, home phone number, mobile number, work phone number, emergency number, contacts and medical details so that, in case of accidents or any other emergency, we can make immediate contact with you. In the event of an accident, when a parent cannot be contacted, the child will be taken to a local medical centre or an ambulance called and a member of staff will accompany the student to hospital.



General Information

Lunch clubs and activities

There are different activities that students can choose to do at lunch times as well as the playground. Lunch activities vary from year to year and the timetable changes depending on the availability of staff. Currently we have: active play in the school hall, art, choir, library, lego club and passive play on P2.

Lost property

Please ensure all items belonging to your children including clothing, lunch boxes, drink bottles etc. are clearly labelled so that they can be directed back to the owner if they are found. All unnamed clothing will automatically go into the second hand clothing pool.

Mufti days

Mufti Days are days on which students wear clothes other than their school uniform. These days are normally held as fundraisers, either before the school fete or in connection with supporting Catholic charities. Sufficient notice is always provided to ensure families are well informed regarding these days. Parents are requested to ensure that students' dress is suitable for school, i.e. closed in shoes, no inappropriate logos on shirts, hats etc.

Brett Park ~ Permission note

At the beginning of your child's schooling, they will receive a note to take home to parents seeking permission to walk to Brett Park and/or around the local area. We request that you sign the permission slip. It will remain effective for the duration of your child's schooling at St Mark's (i.e. K-6)

These excursions will then take place without further advance notice to parents. Having this permission allows the teachers to utilise the surrounding park and facilities for sport or other activities.

Playgroup

St Mark's playgroup is a great way to meet other parents in the community. It runs weekly during school terms on Fridays from 9am - 10.30am in the front playground for children 0-5 years of age.

