

Principal's Message

Catholic Schools Week

Last week concluded Catholic Schools Week, a time to celebrate the distinctive qualities of Catholic education and raising awareness of the many opportunities Catholic schools provide through faith-based education.

We began this special week with a meaningful liturgy at Sacred Heart Cathedral, presided over by Bishop Michael Kennedy. It was a powerful moment, with school principals, ministry coordinators, and student leaders coming together to renew our personal commitment to Catholic education. This liturgical celebration set the tone for the week, reminding us of our collective mission and the values we strive to uphold.

The theme for Catholic Schools Week this year is 'Follow Me!', inspired by Jesus' call to His disciples. In the context of Jesus and discipleship, "Follow Me" is an invitation to walk in His footsteps, to embrace His teachings, and to live out our faith with courage and compassion. It challenges us to be true disciples, to lead by example, and to serve others selflessly.

In our daily lives, following Jesus means making choices that reflect His love and teachings. It means being kind, just, and respectful, and standing up for what is right. As members of a Catholic school community, we have a unique responsibility to nurture these values in our students, helping them grow into individuals who not only excel academically but also embody the principles of faith and service.

Catholic education is about more than imparting knowledge; it is about shaping the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. It instils in our students the importance of living out their faith through actions, fostering a sense of social responsibility, and encouraging them to make positive contributions to the world. By integrating faith into every aspect of learning, we help our students develop a strong moral compass that will guide them throughout their lives.

As we conclude Catholic Schools Week, let us carry forward the spirit of "Follow Me." Let us remember the importance of our roles as educators, parents, and community members in guiding our students on their journey of faith and learning. Together, we can continue to create an environment where students not only achieve academic success but also grow into compassionate, responsible, and faithful individuals.

Click on the link below to hear Bishop Michael Kennedy talk more about Catholic Schools Week.

<https://youtu.be/M8VwkMDiEWk>

Continued

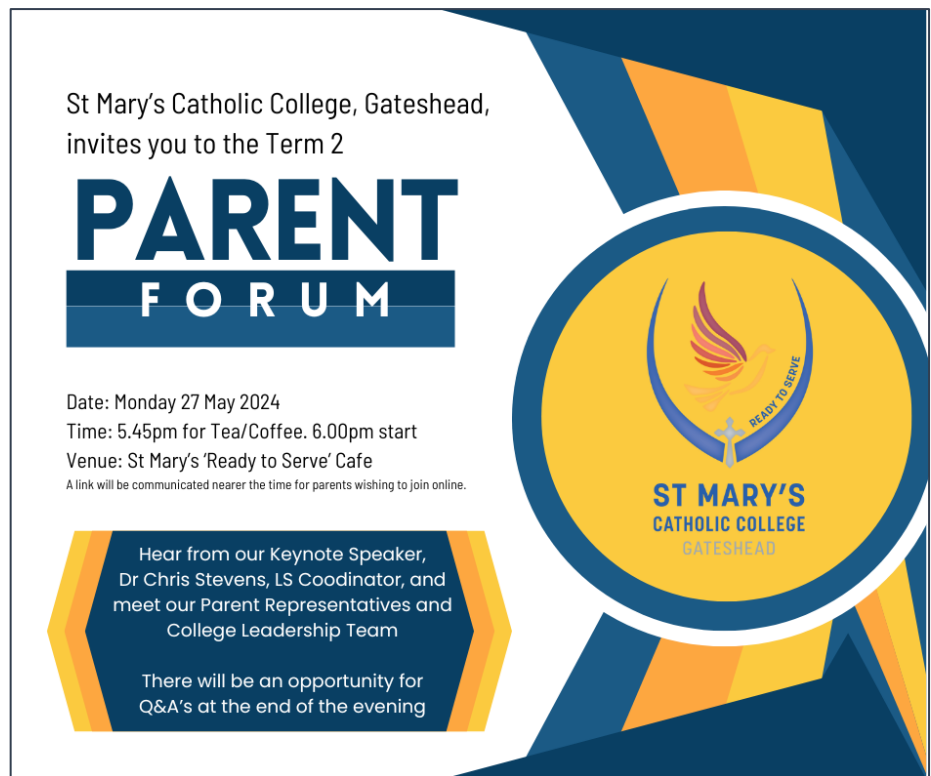


Parent Engagement Meeting (Parent Forum)

We cordially invite you to our Term 2 Parent Forum, Monday 27 May, in the Cafe. The meeting will commence at 6.00pm, with tea and coffee available from 5.45pm.

Your presence and input are invaluable to us, which is why we're offering both in-person and online attendance options. If you're unable to join us physically, you can still participate by accessing the meeting via the link that will be posted to you in Compass on Monday.

Our Parent Forums are all about engaging with you on matters that matter most to you. It's an opportunity for you to hear from us, ask questions, and share your thoughts on topics aligned with the published agenda. Please refer to the agenda attached.



A short survey was sent out to you via a Compass post last Friday to help us ensure these meetings serve your needs and help us understand your aspirations for the development of our upcoming forums. The survey should only take a few minutes to complete, and we thank you in advance for your time.

For those who can attend, we look forward to seeing you at our Parent Forum.

Tell Them from Me (TTFM) Survey

Last week, through the Compass newsfeed, we wrote to you and asked you to complete the 'Tell Them From Me' survey. The results from the survey will help to clarify and strengthen the important relationship between parents and carers and our school. This Thursday morning, all students and staff will complete the survey and a reminder message will be sent via text.

If you are yet to provide your valuable feedback, it's not too late. You can do so now, by clicking on the link that was sent to you via Compass. Please note, your responses are anonymous.

The more parents and carers who complete the survey the better, as this will enhance the reliability of results and be more representative of everyone's experiences.

Thank you to those who have completed the survey and helping us improve the overall educational experience and foster a supportive and effective learning environment within our College community.

Brett Donohoe
Principal

PARENT FORUM



27 May 2024

Venue: College Cafe

Apologies:

Time: 5.45pm – 7.00pm

Tea/coffee will be served from 5.45pm, and all are welcome. The meeting will commence at 6.00pm for those attending online and in person.

AGENDA AREAS:

1. Acknowledgement of Country & Prayer (5 mins): De-Anna Addicoat

2. College Leadership Report (20 mins): Brett Donohoe (Principal), Belinda Flood (Acting AP Teaching and Learning), Ben Frize (AP Wellbeing and Engagement), De-Anna Addicoat (Ministry Coordinator), Rebecca Morrice (Administration Coordinator).

3. Parent Representatives Report (5 mins): Michelle Burns, Tonee Summerville

4. Educative Items (15 mins):

- Learning Support: Chris Stevens (Learning Support Coordinator)

7. Questions (15 mins)

Leader of Wellbeing – Year 12

Timetables for the 2024 HSC have been released by NESA. It has become apparent that an email sent by NESA earlier this month that contains this information is sitting in the junk folder of the student's email. Some students have accessed their HSC timetable via students online. Some emails sent by staff to students, and possibly parents, via Compass have also landed in junk folders. Please encourage your son/daughter to regularly check the junk folder in their school email account.

Gerard Cushan

Leader of Wellbeing & Engagement – Year 12

Leader of Wellbeing – Year 7

NSW SCHOOL VACCINATION PROGRAM 2024

Each year NSW Health works in partnership with schools to offer the vaccines recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) for adolescents as part of the school vaccination program.

In 2024 the following vaccines will be offered:

Years	Vaccine	Number of Doses	Date of vaccination
Year 7	Human Papillomavirus (HPV9) vaccine	Single dose	Wednesday 12 June 2024
	Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine	Single dose	
Catch-up vaccinations for all years will occur on 20 November 2024			

Please find attached URL and a QR code for all Year 7 parents to access the online Parent Information, privacy statement and consent form.

To consent to the vaccination of their child, parents/guardians are asked to:

- Enter the URL into your browser, select the School Vaccination Program tile and follow instructions.
- read all the information provided
- complete the online consent form and give consent for which vaccine/s they would like their child to receive
- ensure that their child eats breakfast on the day of the school vaccination clinic.

To improve vaccination completion, students whose parents/guardians have provided consent while in Year 7 or Year 10 and who miss vaccine doses at any clinic, will be opportunistically offered these vaccines at each clinic visit throughout 2024 (Year 7 or 10) & 2025 (Year 8 or 11).

Parents/guardians who wish to withdraw their consent for any reason may do so by amending their student's online consent. The Procedure for Withdrawal of Consent is available on the NSW Health website at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/withdraw_consent.aspx

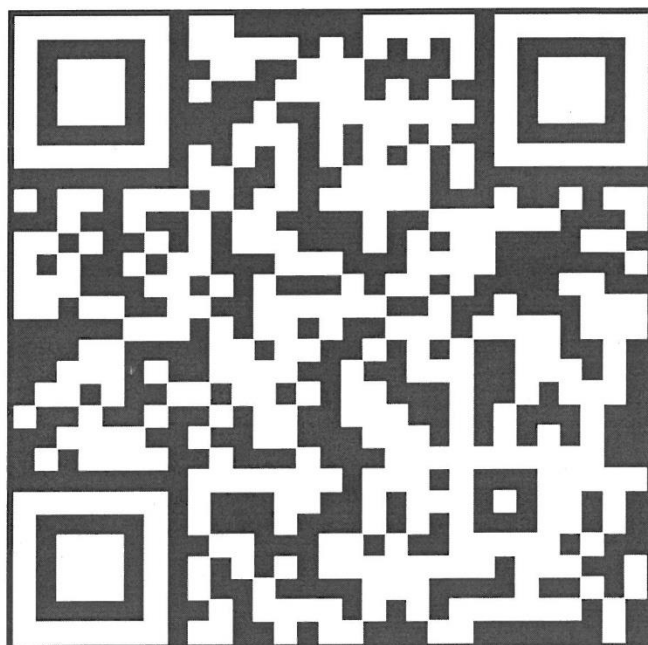
A Record of Vaccination will be provided to parents by SMS once a student has been vaccinated. Parents/guardians should not assume that their child has been vaccinated if they do not receive this SMS notification.

NOTE: If you experience difficulty with accessing the online consent package, please speak with Student Services for a paper form.

Is your child in year 7 or year 10?

To provide consent for routine school vaccinations online

Scan the QR code to give your consent now.



OR visit:

<https://engage.health.nsw.gov.au/engage>

English Faculty

As a part of year 8's theatre study this term, the 8ENGO English class were able to design and create their own theatre masks. The class has been studying the conventions of ancient Greek drama and throughout the unit will consider how these elements can be adapted for contemporary theatre. Following Greek theatre tradition, these masks have exaggerated facial expressions to reflect the mood of the play and ensure all audience members in the 'theatron' can see them. When finished with their masks, students ventured out into the quad to do some movement exercises and practise using their body to reflect the emotion they chose for their mask.

Celia Kemeny
English Teacher



Shakespeare Workshop

I was blessed to attend a two-day Shakespeare workshop run in Newcastle by Brian Weaver, artistic director of the Portland Playhouse, USA. The event was organised by 'Whale Chorus' and facilitated by Janie Gibson and Matt Harper. The group aim is to reinvigorate theatre as a ritual of reconnection. The practical education sessions were of huge benefit and have already begun to be shared and implemented in English classrooms at St Mary's.

A professional photographer was there across the weekend to capture the joy experienced during the workshoping. I am looking forward to using the techniques learned and reinvigorating student understanding of Shakespeare in the English classroom.

You might recognise some of the faces in the images, I was well out of my depth surrounded by young, vivacious thespians. "Images by Lee Illfield. @livecreativlee". Check out the Whale Chorus Facebook page if you are interested. What an incredible opportunity to learn with such a powerhouse of theatre professionals.

Elisa Milajew
English and SOR Teacher

Year 8 – Inquisitive Minds

Year 8 students participated in a range of different activities set up at various locations around the school for the Inquisitive Minds Incursion. It was their job to solve mathematical puzzles and problems in the time they were given.

They dove head-first into a series of mind-bending challenges, some of which may have pushed them outside their comfort zone, this made them think of new strategies and ways to solve the problem by thinking outside the box. Throughout the day, the students gained knowledge and more understanding of how to solve these mathematical challenges.

As well as them working hard to accomplish the tasks, they had plenty of laughs and good times along the way. Even though they may have not won every challenge, they gave it their all and that's all that counts. We especially thank the volunteers and staff members who participated and helped organize this day for the year 8 students.

We also thank the year 8 students for coming along to the day, participating, and showing us what they can do. Overall, the Year 8 Inquisitive Minds day was a blast and hopefully will happen again next year.



Caitlyn Skinner
Year 8



Aboriginal Education



National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week is from 27 May to 3 June. There are many big national events occurring over this time.

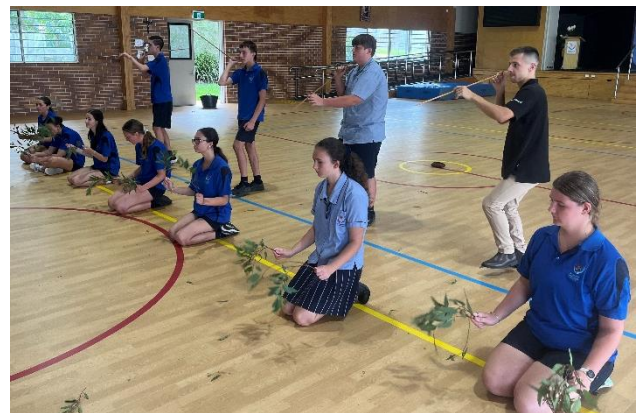
Over the next couple of weeks students across Years 7-10 will be participating in Reconciliation Week in Australia, how we are going with it.



Kentan Proctor from Bahtabah Land Council recently presented to Yr 12 Biology students on Bush Medicine

Dancing with Roo

Aboriginal students from Year 7-10 have been participating in a series of dance lessons with Roo over the past few weeks. Students will perform these dances at the Catholic Schools Office Reconciliation Week Liturgy next Thursday at 10.15 am. Details are in the permission note that has been sent to the dancers.



St Pius Windale Literacy Project

Some students from Year 7 were invited back to their 'old school' – St Pius X, Windale – to participate in a special literacy project.

Layla, Lakiesha, Love, Enosh and Damian joined with younger students and the author/illustrator Sami Bayly to create their own 'Dreaming story' around legend of the Kangaroo of Nobby's Head. We look forward to the publication of the book over the next few months.

Paul McKay, Richard Faulkner and Levi Briggs
Aboriginal Education Team



SPORT

Girls Diocesan Cup Competition

During Week 3, our Year 7- 9 Girls Soccer teams competed in the annual Diocesan Gala Day held at Speers Point Park.

The Girls Team competed well in their first game against a very well drilled St Pius X, Adamstown demonstrating skill, speed and great defence, however they could not hold them out with 2-0 loss. The second game was against St Joseph's Lochinvar. It was a very hotly contested game for the majority of the game with the two goals being conceded in the last 10minutes of the game. With two losses on the board, the girls were determined to get a win.

In the third game the girls came up against St Bede's, Chisholm, who were great contenders against our team. With skills and great game play, the girls scored a cracking goal to win 1-0. The final game the girls came up against St. Joseph's, Aberdeen. For the last game of the day the girls displayed endurance, footwork skills and great game sense. They were able to put two goals in the back of the net to win 2-0.

Congratulations to all players who represented St. Mary's Catholic College with great sportsmanship and enthusiasm throughout the day, especially up against very talented teams.

Miss E. Savovski
Supervising Teacher



Supporting your child to make friends and respond to social difficulties and bullying

WEDNESDAY 29 MAY 2024



A FREE webinar for parents and carers with one of Australia's leading experts on wellbeing and resilience, and the Director of Positive Minds Australia, Madhavi Nawana Parker.

Parents and carers play an essential role in helping their children foster the foundations of healthy friendships.

Accordingly, this workshop is designed for parents and carers of children in primary school who are seeking to support their children to develop positive social relationships and navigate friendship challenges.

Topics covered in the workshop include:

- Friendships through the ages, and developmental stages.
- Practical advice on how to support children to get along with others, manage their feelings, and grow in self-confidence and resilience.
- Understanding why it can be difficult for children to regulate their emotions and impulses when they feel socially isolated or bullied.
- Identifying the difference between bullying and social clumsiness.
- When to guide your child to overcome social challenges vs when to get involved.

Following the presentation, parents and carers will be invited to ask questions.

DATE Wednesday 29 May 2024
TIME 7pm-8.30pm presentation
VENUE Online (Zoom).
 Link provided when you register.
COST FREE

RSVP is essential, prior to the event
<http://mn.shor.tn/1d>

If you are unable to attend the webinar at the designated time, you can access a recording of the session for up to one week after the event. All you have to do is register to attend the event, and the recording will then be made available to you, afterwards.

This webinar is proudly hosted by the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's Federation of P & F Associations for parents and carers of children enrolled in local Catholic schools.



mn.catholic.edu.au

Parents and carers, your voice matters.

Have your say

OUR SCHOOL WANTS TO BE THE BEST IT CAN BE!
CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW TO ANSWER QUESTIONS THAT WILL
HELP US BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT WE'RE DOING WELL AND,
WHERE WE HAVE WORK TO DO.



Tell Them From Me

HELP US TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE AND PRACTICAL CHANGE AT SCHOOL

**CLICK HERE
TO BEGIN THE SURVEY**



**ST MARY'S
CATHOLIC COLLEGE
GATESHEAD**

For questions about this survey, email
schoolimprovement@mn.catholic.edu.au



**Catholic
Schools Office**
DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

CALENDAR – TERM 2 - Week 4 – (B Week)	
Fri 24 May	Pupil Free Day - Staff Formation Day Year 7 2025 enrolment period CLOSES
Week 5 – (A Week)	
Mon 27 May	Year 9 Formation Day
Tues 28 May	U14 Boys Cochrane Cup
Thurs 30 May	Oztag – NSW Championships Reconciliation Week Liturgy Chess Club
Fri 31 May	College Leader Morning Tea with local MP
Week 6 – (B Week)	
Tues 4 June	Landcare Extended Professional Development for Teachers – Students released at 2.40pm
Wed 5 June	Year 8 RE Literacy Test
Thurs 6 June	McBeth incursion
Fri 7 June	Year 7 Reptile Show Newsletter 9.24 published
Week 7 – (A Week)	
Mon 10 June	Pupil Free Day - Public Holiday – King's Birthday
Tues 11 June	Year 10 (Year 11 2025) Subject Selection Evening 6pm
Wed 12 June	Year 7 immunisations Wollotuka Emerging Day – Ourimbah Campus
Thurs 13 June	DioSounds Tech Rehearsals
Fri 14 June	Year 12 Geography excursion DioSounds Performance
Week 8 - (B Week)	
Tues 18 June	Studies in Catholic Thought Assessment Task
Fri 21 June	Newsletter 10.24 published
Week 9 - (A Week)	
Wed 26 June	U14 & U16 Girls Rugby League Catholic Championships
Week 10 - (B Week)	
Mon 1 July	Acceptance of Offer of Enrolment 2025 and deposit due to St Mary's
Wed 3 July	Solar Buddy Light incursion
Thurs 4 July	Aboriginal Community Netball Day
Fri 5 July	Newsletter 11.24 published
HOLIDAYS	
Mon 8 July to Fri 19 July	U14 & U16 Girls Rugby League Catholic Championships
TERM 3 – Week 1 (A Week)	
Mon 22 July	Pupil Free Day – Staff Professional Development Year 7 (2025) Booking period for interviews open
Tues 23 July	Usual Classes Resume for Years 7 to 12
Thurs 25 July	Landcare Year 7-10 PST Conferences – 3.30pm to 7pm
Fri 26 July	Year 7-10 PST Conferences – 8am to 2pm Classes as usual for Years 11 and 12
Week 2 (B Week)	
Tues 30 July	Extended PLM – Students released at 2.40pm
Fri 2 August	Year 7 (2025) Booking period for interviews close

A Request for Assistance

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL 2024

Good quality, pre-loved, blankets, bedding, towels, beanies, and socks are desperately needed.

Please donate any items to Reception – thank you!