



# St Margaret Mary's School

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Newsletter No 4

## Update

Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2020

### Diary Dates

**Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> February**

**Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> February**

**Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March**  
**Catholic Schools Week**

- 8:40am Whole School Assembly.

**Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

- Years 3-6 Cross Country at StMM's

**Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> March**

### Open Morning

St Margaret Mary's will be holding an open morning on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March from 9:00am—10:30am, for New Kindergarten 2021 families.

### Enrolment

Enrolments for Kindergarten 2021 are now taking place. If your child was born between 1st August, 2015 and 31st July, 2016, please collect an enrolment form from the school office. Interviews will commence in May. Last year we had a waiting list with over 130 applications.

### Skoolbag App

All parents are encouraged to have the Skoolbag App, as this is the main preference for communication to all parents. Our **School Name** for Skoolbag App is **SMMPM**.



## Administration

### School Contact to Parents

Our main contact with parents is via the "Skoolbag App". Our school 'Bulletin' is printed every second Wednesday which is a four page Newsletter and sent home with the eldest child. The 'Update' is a small newsletter which is only uploaded onto the Skoolbag App & Website. Both our Bulletin and Update are available on the Skoolbag App. Parents are reminded they can also advise the school of a child's absence or a change in address via the Skoolbag App in the e-submission form.

### School Uniforms

Mr Mills spoke at assembly about students not wearing the correct socks. The socks should be ankle socks and visible above the top of the shoe and covering the ankle, NOT no show ankle socks. Mr Mills also spoke about students not wearing appropriate sports shoes for example, no hightops or indoor soccer shoes, they must be the correct joggers. Parents are asked to ensure that students are wearing the correct uniform before leaving home for school.



### Popcorn

Parents and students are asked to refrain from sending/bringing popcorn to school as a snack. The canteen will no longer sell popcorn once their stock has sold out. This is due to the mess the popcorn leaves and the attraction of the larger birds to the playground. Thank you for your support in this matter.

### Travellers

Thank you to all the families who travelled overseas and adhered to the travel arrangement set out by the CEDP and the Government. All families who have returned have been cleared with a medical certificate.

## Teaching & Learning

### Parent/Teacher/Student

Kindergarten: today your child was given a letter for a meeting with Kindergarten teachers on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March. Please choose which timeslot you would like to attend and return the slip to your child's teacher.

Years 1 – 6: Your child was given a letter with the following code on it: **xrspu** – these bookings are now open for you to choose a timeslot for a Parent/Teacher/Student interview time in week 7.

## Personal Growth

### Year 3 - 6 Cross Country Carnival

On Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, we will be holding our Cross Country Carnival for grades 3 - 6 in the school playground, beginning at 9am. The children need to wear their sports uniform, including their school hat. It is vital that all children wear sun-screen and have plenty of water to drink. If your child suffers from asthma, please ensure they bring their medication with them.



The students will be running within the school playgrounds as well as along the car pick up foot-path and up Davies Street. If your child is turning 8, 9 or 10 in 2020, they will be running 2km and need to complete the race within 13 minutes. If your child is turning 11 or 12 in 2020, they will be running 3km and must complete the race within 19 minutes.

Parents and friends are welcome to join us at this carnival.

# Personal Growth

## Attendance Month

### Attendance Month Begins Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

A major learning and pastoral focus of St Margaret Mary's each year is making sure that every student is at school every school day. During the month of March, Personal Growth Awards will be awarded to all students who obtain a 95% or more attendance rate. Following on from this event we will be addressing, in partnership with the CEDP, students who fall below a certain level.

As you are probably aware, attendance at school has a huge impact on a student's academic success, starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day - they understand why attendance is so important for success in school and life.

We realise some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. However, we also know that when students miss too much school, regardless of the reason, it can cause them to fall behind academically. Your child is less likely to succeed if he or she is absent. Absences can add up quickly and if a student is absent one day a fortnight over the course of a school year they will miss 20 days of education, which is almost half a school term.

#### We know that research shows:

Attendance affects achievement. Every day counts. Attendance in Year One is predictive of the pattern in future years. The effects of absence accumulate over time. Absence in one year affects future academic achievement. Sporadic absence can affect academic achievement as much as consecutive days of absence.

#### Patterns of absence that cause concerns at school and office levels are:

- Unexplained absences.
- Partial attendance and lateness.
- Absence on certain days of the week.
- Frequent presentation to sick bay.
- Long holidays in school time.
- Frequent medical explanations that are not supported by a medical action plan.

#### We know that:

- Students that are absent between 20 and 40 days per year lose 1-2 years over 10 school years.
- Students that are absent between 40 and 60 days per year lose 2-3 years of schooling over 10 years.
- Students that are absent for 60 or more days lose more than 3 years of school over 10 years.

We know all our parents want their children to achieve their academic and personal development potential at school, and trust that all of our families will work with us to achieve high rates of attendance and engagement in learning, this term and in the future.

## St Pauls and Cerdon Visits

On the 18<sup>th</sup> February a few students from St Pauls and Cerdon with their Principal, Mrs Baker and Assistant Principal, Mr Humphries came to talk to the Year Six boys and girls about high school. Mr Humphries talked to the boys in Year 6 about the school rules, what it was like in high school, and three of the students that graduated from St Margaret Mary's joined him. It was really nice having the boys there because their perspective of high school helped us understand what it was like going to St Pauls. They talked about the subjects we would learn in Year 7, like English, Maths, Food Technology, and more. Mrs Baker spoke to the girls about what kind of subjects they would study in Year 7 and how high school was pretty similar to primary school. It is important to be organised for lessons and to enjoy the high school experience.

By: Isabella Blandon Cano and Lucas Chang



## Morning Assembly

On Monday, of week 5, Mr Mills spoke to us about the importance of wearing the correct school and sports uniform. For the sports uniform you must wear white socks with a fold down top, not ankle socks. Also, remember to have hair neatly tied back with hair ties that match the uniform. Mrs Foley then called up the children who went to the Parramatta Diocesan Swimming Carnival last Thursday. There are 5 children who are progressing to the next level and will attend the NSW Catholic Primary Schools Swimming Championships - MacKillop trials in March and we wish them luck! We also congratulated Isabella Blandon Cano who received the Senior Girls Diocesan Runner Up Age Champion Trophy for her performance on the day.

By: Thomas Yu Media Team



## Faith Community

### Lent

Ash Wednesday (From Sr. Leone)

We begin today with a ritual of ashes. The symbolism is obvious. The ashes are what happens when we are consumed by the fire of the Spirit (and for us it is the Spirit of Jesus, the fire of Pentecost). When we die and return to dust, our life...breath returns to God. We pray that God will breathe his life into us again, as he did to Jesus, and draw us into the embrace of eternal life. Now, as we begin our preparation for Holy Week and Easter, we focus on the fragile, sinful, broken part of our being, and we focus on our need for the fire of God's Spirit to reduce to ashes all in us that is not open to life.



In our ordinarily busy and perhaps cluttered lives there is little space for experiencing our deep yearning for communion with God. Fasting has been a traditional way of reminding ourselves to go without certain external pleasures so that we can create some space in which to feel our hunger and thirst for God. In the First Reading the prophet Joel tells us that it is time for us to turn away from sin, to embrace life. He also tells us that the way to do this is to turn to God with all our hearts.

Jesus in the Gospel also invites us not only to fast but also to turn our attention in a special way to the needs of our neighbour and to spend time in prayer. The question we might ask ourselves as Lent begins is: What is God gracing me to change? Where is God's love calling me to grow? We are not the ones who are going to do the purifying. We are too scared to do it, and we haven't the wisdom to do it well. We are branches of the vine that is Jesus and it is God who does the pruning. God loves us with an everlasting love and he will certainly be offering us the grace today, and throughout Lent, to find the courage to let him purify our hearts.

## Project Compassion

Parents and students are reminded of the importance of Lent and attending mass during the Lenten season. Project Compassion boxes are available from the church for families to have at home to help those in most need.

