



St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Toukley



Parent Handbook

Vision Statement

**“Empowered by the Spirit, we at St Mary’s live, learn and grow as disciples of Jesus
in a nurturing Catholic Community.”**

SCHOOL PRAYER

**Watch over us all at St Mary's today
as we work and play.**

**Thank you for our school and all the gifts
you give us each day.**

**Strengthen our faith in you
as we grow and learn.**

**Help us to love and care for others as you do,
and become the person you call us to be.**

May we always be, Children of

Faith, Love and Understanding

Amen



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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NORAVILLE NSW 2263

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GENERAL ORGANISATIONAL PROCEDURES

SCHOOL TIMES

8.30am	Supervision of children on the TOP playground commences
8.58am	Warning bell – children have a few minutes to line up in their class grid
9.00am	Whole School Prayer and necessary announcements. Children go to class – Roll Call/notes/lunch orders etc
9.00am	SESSION ONE
10.00am	FRUIT BREAK
11.00am	RECESS
11.25am	SESSION TWO
1.00pm	LUNCH
1.50pm	SESSION THREE
3.15pm	Classes dismissed
3.35pm	Supervision ends

ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCE

Parents are requested to phone the school office before 9:30am to notify of an absence. This helps us to ensure the safety of your child. A phone call also meets the legal requirement for explaining an absence; however parents may still choose to send in a written note to the teacher. All absentee notes and phone calls are recorded as a legal requirement.

LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY DEPARTURE

Children need a late note from the office if arriving after 9.10 am.

Parents picking up children early must sign them out at the office.

Appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible.

ASSEMBLY

This is held once a fortnight on Thursday after lunch (1.50pm). It is held in the Undercroft area below the Year 6 classrooms. Student Parliament organise and run the assembly each week.

Order of assembly:

1. Sacred Space - Explanation of the theme by class rostered on.
2. Weekly Class Awards and Stars Awards
3. Principal/Student Parliament/Other Teachers – Messages
4. National Anthem

Once a year each grade will perform a special assembly to share and showcase their learning. Parents are invited to attend these assemblies.

BUDDY SYSTEM

To help the Kinder children settle into the school community, we have a Buddy System for Kindergarten and Year 6. Each Year 6 child has a Kinder child to look after and be a special friend to for their first year of school. They are there to help the Kinder children on the playground. It also enables the Year 6 children to develop a responsible attitude towards the newest members of our school.

CANTEEN

Canteen operates each day **except** Tuesday. Pricelists are distributed at the beginning of Term 1. Lunch orders should be placed in a paper bag with the child's name, class and lunch order written clearly on the bag with the money enclosed. Class lunch crates are sent to the Canteen by 9.15am and collected just before the lunch bell.

No child is permitted in the Canteen.

Canteen Days:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

Canteen Times:

Mornings	8.30am – 8.50am (Thursday and Friday only)
Recess	11.00am – 11.20am
Lunch	1.00pm – 1.45pm

CODE OF CONDUCT

Positive behaviours are expected.

The School CODE OF CONDUCT asks that children abide by the following:

S	Share fun
T	Think safe, act safe
A	Act responsibly
R	Respect all that God has made
S	Speak with kindness

Restorative Practices are used to resolve disputes.

Minor incidents are dealt with by the teacher supervising at the time (classroom and playground). Some incidents are referred to the Restorative Room where deeper, guided discussion takes place to resolve situations and restore relationships.

Serious breaches of the code, including violence or victimisation, are referred to the AP or Principal.

St Mary's Catholic School's Behaviour Management Code does not permit the corporal punishment of students attending the school by school or non-school persons including parents. "Corporal Punishment is defined by the Bill (Education Reform – School Discipline Bill) as the application of force in order to correct the student, but does not include the application of force only because of action taken to prevent personal injury to, or damage to or the destruction of property to any person, including the student."

COLLECTION OF MONIES

All money (school fees, book fees, sport, excursions, notes etc) will be collected by the class teacher and sent to the office in the class bags between 9.00 and 9.15am.

Please ensure money is in an envelope labelled with child's name, class, amount and reason.

Alternatively, parents can make payments by coming to the office in person between 8.00am and 3.00pm.

COUNSELLING SERVICE

St Mary's Catholic School is very fortunate in having access to a School Counsellor.

To access this service, parents talk to their child's classroom teacher before they complete a confidential Request for Counselling Form, which is sent to the Catholic Schools Office. Once processed, the School Counsellor will contact the parent to discuss the assistance on offer.

The counselling service provides a confidential environment where students can talk about difficulties they face. The Counsellor helps students develop problem-solving and coping strategies that can be used to deal with difficult situations and help them get back on track when things aren't going so well. The counsellor is also a great source of knowledge regarding other community services available.

Please contact the school office if you wish to find out more about this service.

MASSES AND LITURGIES

Children participate in regular school and class Masses and Liturgies. Parents are warmly invited to attend. Liturgies and parish happenings are promoted with parents in the term calendar and weekly newsletter.

LOST PROPERTY

Parents are asked to clearly label their child's clothing – jumpers, hats etc. Lost items of clothing will be put in a large plastic container near the uniform shop next to the Undercroft area below the Year 6 classrooms for collection. Distribution of lost property is carried out at the end of each month. Anything not named or claimed will then be sent to the clothing pool.

MEDICATION

Teachers are **not** permitted to dispense medication to children. Any necessary medication may be administered via the School Office but only after relevant medical forms have been completed by the parent/carer and doctor. 'Administration of Medication' forms are available from the school office. Medications need to be in their original containers, clearly labelled.

All sick and injured children are to be referred to the First Aid Officer in the office.

MOBILE PHONES

Children are discouraged from bringing mobile phones to school. If they must bring them, the phones are to be left at the school office in the morning before assembly and only collected after children have been dismissed from class at 3:15pm. Parents are asked to request, in writing to the principal, if their child has the need to bring a mobile phone.

CHILDREN BEING COLLECTED EARLY OR ARRIVING LATE

If you are collecting your child earlier than 3.15pm, you must first visit the office and sign your child out on the Early Leavers Slip. You must then attend your child's classroom and give their teacher the Early Leavers Slip before collecting your child.

Please walk onto the top playground to collect your child at 3.15pm. No child is permitted to leave the playground unaccompanied.

If a child arrives after 9.10am, they must be signed in at the office by an adult. Once the adult has filled in the Late Arrival Slip, the child must take this slip to their classroom and give it to their teacher.



SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Students are expected to wear the correct uniform at all times. School hats are compulsory. If, for some reason, a child needs to be “out of uniform”, a note from the child’s parent is requested.

Girl’s Summer: Green and white checked dress, white ankle socks, black leather school shoes, green school hat.

Girl’s Winter: Bottle green and white tunic, white long sleeved blouse with Peter Pan collar and the tie made out of the same fabric as the uniform, white ankle socks or bottle green tights and black leather school shoes. A school crested zip front bottle green fleece jacket, bottle green school crested parka.

Sport (Unisex): Bottle green and gold school shorts, bottle green and gold sports shirt with school emblem, sandshoes and white socks, green school hat/cap. School bottle green and gold tracksuit during the colder months.

Boy’s Summer: Bottle green polo with school emblem, grey shorts, grey school socks with green/gold stripes, black leather school shoes (not joggers), green hat.

Boy’s Winter: Long grey trousers, long sleeved white shirt, school crested bottle green zip front fleece jacket, bottle green school crested parka, green and gold striped tie, black leather school shoes, school socks, green school hat.

SCHOOL UNIFORM SHOP

The uniform shop operates next to the Undercroft, Monday - Friday from 8.15 – 9.45 am. Please contact the office for other details.

SELF EMPLOYED PEOPLE WORKING ON SCHOOL PREMISES

All self-employed contractors and external service providers, including tutors, coaches and other peripatetic workers who are engaged directly by the school to work with students will need to apply to the Commission for Children and Young People for a ‘*Certificate for Self-Employed People*’ to demonstrate that they are suitable to work with children. These credentials must be sighted and verified by the school prior to engaging self-employed persons to provide a service in school. A site induction must also be conducted.

SPORT & PE

Children wear their Sports Uniform on their respective days. A specialist teacher is employed to teach PE skills. Children will be informed which day to wear their Sports uniform.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS

In addition to the first day of each school year, four (4) days annually are set aside for Staff Development Programs. There are no classes on these days. Parents will be notified of these days through our weekly school newsletter.

VALUABLE ITEMS AND EXPENSIVE TOYS

Students are not to bring such items to school.

VOLUNTEER HELPERS

Volunteers assisting in schools or with school activities are required to complete a *Volunteer/Student Worker Declaration* which is retained at the school and entered onto a database. School staff should ensure that volunteers engaged to provide a service in the school environment have completed the declaration and receive appropriate induction regarding what is expected of them in their role as a volunteer.

COMMUNICATION

NEWSLETTER

This is the school's main line of communication with the home and includes items of interest and coming school events. Newsletters are distributed to the eldest child in the family on a weekly basis. The newsletter is also available online and via email. Regular visits to our school website are encouraged.

www.smtddb.catholic.edu.au

PARENT / TEACHER EVENINGS

Information Evenings will be conducted when appropriate to inform parents about Curriculum matters, School Policy and new initiatives.

PARENT / TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Interviews are offered twice a year. They can also be arranged whenever the need arises. These interviews are to take place outside of teaching time.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

School Reports are sent home to parents twice a year.

SCHOOL WEB PAGE

This is updated at regular intervals. It allows parents access to the weekly newsletter, necessary notes, policies, photos and school calendar.

www.smtddb.catholic.edu.au

CHILD PROTECTION

We take our responsibility to protect children seriously. All staff are expected to promote child safety by having a clear understanding of their legal child protection responsibilities and act in accordance with those responsibilities.

In particular the school will:

1. Maintain professionalism in our interactions with children at all times by exercising appropriate duty of care and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
2. Follow an established process to address allegations of inappropriate behaviour by staff towards children.
3. Ensure all people working in our school who are required to undertake a Working With Children Check have a valid clearance.
4. Respond appropriately when we suspect a child is at risk of significant harm due to possible abuse or neglect by a parent/carer or other adult.

See also Appendix 1: CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION

COMPLAINTS

We take complaints seriously and try to resolve them in the most appropriate, efficient and confidential manner possible:

- If you or your child has a complaint about a student other than your own child you should raise it with your child's class teacher.
- If you or your child has a complaint about a staff member relating to teaching and learning, the issue should first be discussed with the relevant teacher or the principal.
- If you or your child has a complaint about the inappropriate behaviour of a staff member towards any child or young person, your concern should be directed to the Principal and confidentiality must be maintained (see Child Protection).

See also Appendix 2: MAINTAINING PROFESSIONALISM

PARENT HELPERS / VOLUNTEERS

The participation, involvement and help of parents, close relative and other volunteers are welcome and appreciated for various activities both in school and on excursions.

It is important that all volunteers are aware that they are subject to child protection legislation. This means all volunteers must:

- sign on at the front office, be inducted and get a visitors badge from the office as per school procedure. Check with the school what the current requirements are for the working with children
- not engage in any inappropriate behaviour towards any children. In particular although volunteers are technically not employed by the school, they are considered to be 'staff' for legal purposes and need to be aware that complaints about inappropriate behaviour towards any child or young person must be investigated (see Child Protection).

See also Appendix 3: WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

APPENDIX 1:

CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION

We take our responsibility to protect children seriously. All staff are expected to promote child safety by having a clear understanding of their legal child protection responsibilities and act in accordance with those responsibilities.

In particular the school will:

1. Maintain professionalism in our interactions with children at all times by exercising appropriate duty of care and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
2. Follow an established process to address allegations of inappropriate behaviour by staff towards children.
3. Ensure all people working in our school who are required to undertake a Working With Children Check have a valid clearance.
4. Respond appropriately when we suspect a child is at risk of significant harm due to possible abuse or neglect by a parent/carer or other adult.

Responding to risk of harm

All school staff are mandatory reporters. This means that if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of 'significant harm' from abuse or neglect, then a report must be made to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline (CP Helpline).

School staff are expected to inform the Principal if they are concerned that a child may be at risk. It is the role of the Principal (or delegate) to make the report to the CP Helpline.

In making a report the Principal will consider all of the information and seek appropriate advice from the CSO's child protection team (CP team). Any information about a child at risk is kept confidentially by the Principal.

In situations where a child is considered to be at risk the school will work with the child and family to assist them as much as possible.

If you have concerns about a child who you consider may be at risk, please discuss your concerns with the Principal as soon as possible and maintain confidentiality.

APPENDIX 2:

MAINTAINING PROFESSIONALISM

All staff are expected to act professionally and in accordance with the school's expectations regarding staff conduct toward children. Members of staff receive guidance and professional development in relation to appropriate interactions with students, how to exercise duty of care and how to maintain professional boundaries.

We understand that staff have a duty of care to:

- Ensure no child is exposed to foreseeable risk of harm
- Take action to minimise risk
- Supervise actively and
- If we see others acting inappropriately with children, report concerns to the Principal or seek further advice

School staff also understand that they are in a position of trust, authority and influence in relation to children and that it is important that we do not take advantage of that position to mistreat or misguide students either intentionally or inadvertently.

Staff strive to:

- Demonstrate appropriate relationships with children that cannot be misinterpreted as overly personal or intimate;
- Remain within the responsibilities of their roles and allow those appropriately trained to deal with student welfare concerns;
- Minimise physical contact with children unless it is necessary to exercise appropriate duty of care;
- Follow the school's policies and procedures relating to pastoral care and wellbeing including serious incidents and reporting risk of harm.

Addressing complaints of inappropriate behaviour by staff

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for both students and staff. This includes addressing complaints of inappropriate behaviour by staff towards any child or young person.

Such complaints are handled differently to other types of complaints which may arise in the school because of legal obligations established by the NSW Ombudsman Act 1974. The NSW Ombudsman is a government agency which requires schools and other organisations working with children to ensure systems are in place for recording and responding to all allegations of a child protection nature against staff. You should be aware that 'staff' includes volunteer helpers as well as paid staff

If you have concerns about alleged inappropriate behaviour by a staff member towards any child or young person it is important that you discuss your concerns with the Principal who in turn will consult with the CSO's Child Protection Team.

All complaints are investigated and resolved through a fair and confidential process which involves listening to 'both sides of the story' and giving all involved an opportunity to be heard. If the concerns involve alleged criminal behaviour they will be reported to

the Police and the CSO will wait for the outcome of the Police investigation before continuing its own investigation.

At the end of an investigation a finding will be made and appropriate follow up determined. In relation to the staff member this may include no action, increased support, professional development, increased supervision/monitoring or disciplinary action, removal from duties or termination of employment.

If harm has occurred to a child, counselling or other support will be offered to the child.

APPENDIX 3:

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

Screening of those working in schools

Working With Children Checks are undertaken by staff working in our school. External tutors and coaches working with students in dance, music, sport, art etc are also expected to obtain a check which is verified prior to engagement.

The purpose of the check is to exclude people from working with children who are not suitable. A person who has been convicted or found guilty of a listed serious offence against children (whether in NSW or elsewhere) is prohibited from working in a child-related role.

The participation of parents and close relatives of students at the school as volunteers is welcome and appreciated for various activities both in school and on excursions. It is important that all volunteers are aware that they are subject to child protection legislation. This means all volunteers must:

- sign on at the front office, be inducted and get a visitors badge from the office as per school procedure.
- check with the school what the current legal requirements are for working with children.
- not engage in any inappropriate behaviour towards any children. In particular although volunteers are technically not employed by the school, they are considered to be 'staff' for legal purposes and need to be aware that complaints about inappropriate behaviour towards any child or young person must be investigated.

Volunteers who are not the parent or a close relative of a child at the school will be expected to undertake a Working With Children Check.

- A 'parent of a child' includes a carer or person who has legal responsibility for a child.
- A 'close relative' includes a spouse or de facto partner, child, step-child, parent, step-parent, sibling, step-sibling, grandparent, step-grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew. In the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, a close relative includes people who are part of the extended family or kin of the child according to the indigenous kinship system.

Similarly, any volunteer working in a high risk role will be required to undertake a Working With Children Check. High risk roles are those where volunteers are working with particularly vulnerable children:

- Providing personal care with intimate contact to children with disabilities
- Providing mentoring services

Further information on the Working With Children Check can be found on the website for the Office of the Children's Guardian at <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/>.

If you would like further information regarding any of the above please speak to your Principal first or feel free to contact the CSO Child Protection Team on:

Phone: 9847 0618 or Office Fax: 9847 0611