

St Mary's College



Kinder handbook



ST MARY'S
COLLEGE



SCHOOL BADGE AND MOTTO



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God is the Fountain of all Knowledge
Deus Scientiarum Dominus Est

HISTORY

The sandstone convent of St Mary's College was designed by the colonial architect Henry Hunter to sit astride a grassy rise commanding a charming view of Hobart Town. Today this iconic building, with its sandstone façade and dormer windows, looks across the modern landscape of city and port.

The original building was the first Presentation convent in Australia. In 1866, Bishop Daniel Murphy laid the foundation stone of the convent while he awaited the arrival of the intrepid band of Sisters.

After a short stay at Richmond, Mother Murphy and her Sisters were in residence at St Mary's by 1868. Amid great excitement in the town, the little school of Mount St Mary's received its first pupils on 3 February 1868.

From this small, hopeful beginning grew St Mary's College as we know it today.

A respected and flourishing educational institution, it has nurtured the spiritual, cultural, academic and sporting lives of many thousands of students over three centuries.



KINDER WALLABIES AND KINDER PLATYPUSES STAFF



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WELCOME TO THE ST MARY'S COLLEGE KINDER PROGRAM

Our Kinder is a wonderful place for children. It offers countless opportunities to discover, think, plan and play in a nurturing, trusting and caring environment.

Our aim is to deliver a play-based educational program that builds on the College's vision statement and is guided by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Our program is planned and implemented, taking into account the different interests, cultural backgrounds and developmental levels of all children. Our focus is on enhancing their strengths, recognising that all children are allowed to develop at their own pace to reach their individual potential.

As a Catholic school we value the uniqueness of each child and aim to build and nourish their personal relationship with Jesus.

The St Mary's College Kinder team is looking forward to working with you and your child with great anticipation. We hope that you will have a wonderful Kinder year with us.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. When children play with one another they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings. Play provides a supportive environment where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking. Play can expand a child's thinking and enhance their desire to know and to learn.

As teachers, we take on many roles in play with children and use strategies to support their learning. We engage in sustained shared conversations with children to extend their thinking. At St Mary's College we provide a balance between child-led, child-initiated and supported learning. We recognise spontaneous teachable moments as they occur and use them to build on children's learning. We actively support the inclusion of all children in play, help children to recognise when play is unfair and offer constructive ways to build caring, equitable and inclusive environments.







THE KINDER PROGRAM

At St Mary's College, we follow the National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to work in partnership with families (a child's first and most influential educator) to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities, and recognise that children learn through their play.

EYLF for children from birth to five years old informs the teaching and learning program at St Mary's College. The EYLF has been developed to ensure your child receives high quality education programs in their early childhood setting. The Framework's vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

FRAMEWORK FUNDAMENTALS

Fundamental to the Framework is a view of children's lives as characterised by belonging, being and becoming.

Belonging – Acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. Belonging is central to being and becoming, in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

Being – Recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities and meeting challenges in everyday life.

Becoming – Reflects the process of developing children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships changing during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances.

The EYLF Learning Outcomes broadly describe the development of children's learning, and these are reflected in the aims of our program:

- To provide an enjoyable, cooperative and safe environment where each child feels valued and supported.
- For each child's unique worth to be valued and their self-esteem strengthened.
- For each child to be given the opportunity to develop their social, emotional, intellectual and physical self to its fullest potential.
- For each child to develop confidence in their own ability to function as a member of a caring and loving group.
- For each child to be aware of, and express appropriately, their own needs, feelings and ideas and to recognise these rights in others.
- For each child to be encouraged to develop a sense of independence and responsibility.
- For each child to continue their faith journey.
- For parents and carers to be welcomed into the Kinder community and their unique relationship with their child to be recognised and valued.
- To encourage parents and carers to participate in the Kinder program.
- To communicate with parents and carers on an ongoing basis about their child's development.
- To have each child and the Kinder community value and respect differences of culture, gender and ability.



SPECIALIST LESSONS

Our specialist lessons include:

- Library
- PE (Physical Education)
- Music
- Gross Motor Program
- Early Learning Languages Australia Program – an online language learning program that introduces children to the Chinese language.

During Library sessions your child will borrow a book to bring home until the following week. Please ensure this book is returned and your child's library bag is at school on the designated day.

OUR DAY

The Kinder Wallabies class runs on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The Kinder Platypuses class runs on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The Kinder door opens at 8.30am and parents and carers are welcome to join us for a play, a story or look at displayed work before class commences at 8.45am.

As both Wallabies and Platypuses classes share the Kinder room on Wednesdays, we ask that parents are conscious that each group starts the day at 8.45am on their designated side of the glass partition. The bag area will correlate with this.

Children not staying for Outside School Hours Care should be collected promptly at 2.45pm, when our day concludes.

SETTLING INTO KINDER

In the first two weeks of the school year, separation from parents or carers can cause anxiety for some children (and some parents and carers as well). During this period, there will be a series of shorter school days to introduce your child to the Kinder classroom and students. Often it will help your child if you follow the same drop-off routine each day.

When you arrive in the classroom with your child, assist them in getting their things organised and encourage your child to greet staff and become involved in an activity. When it is time for you to leave, always say goodbye and tell your child when you (or whoever is collecting them from school) will be returning. Be firm about leaving when you say goodbye. If your child is clingy or distressed a prolonged goodbye will often make things more difficult for you and your child. Staff are very aware of the potential for anxiety at drop-off time and even when we look busy, we are poised to help alleviate distress. Remember, good feelings are contagious! Be enthusiastic about your child attending Kinder and this will be communicated to them.

OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Once full-time school commences, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) is available on site daily from 7.00am in the morning and 2.45pm each afternoon, through CatholicCare Children's Services. Students registered for OSHC are collected by OSHC staff each day from the classroom.

To make enquiries, check availability and register your interest please contact CatholicCare Before School Care on 1300 119 455 or via www.catholiccasetas.org.au/programs/st-marys.



FRUIT BREAK, RECESS AND LUNCH

During the shorter introductory days, please be aware that children only require fresh fruit or vegetables and morning or afternoon tea on their first day, and lunch on their second and third day when they stay until 12.30pm.

During the year, Kinder will fall into line with the Junior School recess and lunch organisation. Junior School break times are a fruit/vegetable break, a recess and lunch break. The option to order from Murphy's Café commences in Prep.

As part of our Move Well Eat Well program, we have a mid-morning fruit/vegetables break, so please provide your child with either a piece of fresh fruit or vegetables for this snack time. In the morning your child can place their fruit in the fruit basket. In accordance with Move Well Eat Well, please only provide water in your child's drink bottle. We request you do not send chips, chocolates or sweets to school.

Please encourage children to be aware that some food in their lunchbox is for lunch and some is for their recess. Discussing this at home will help both your child and the staff at eating times. It's also a great help to encourage your child to practise packing their lunchbox and drink bottle into their school bag in preparation for independent organisation.

UNIFORM

Throughout the year all combinations of the sports uniform are acceptable. It is always good to have a rugby top or jacket at school, especially as mornings are sometimes fresh. The Kinder room gets plenty of sun and is warm during the day, and children in long sleeved polo shirts or track pants get hot very quickly. Please ensure that all items of uniform are clearly named and regularly check (e.g., once a term) that uniform name labels have not rubbed or washed off. A spare pair of underwear and socks in your child's bag is always a good idea.

Children will also need an individual hand towel with a loop for hanging on their peg.

BAGS

Please encourage your child to be responsible for their own bag and clothing (especially at the beginning of the school year). Bags will be kept on the floor beneath students' pegs. Your child's personal hand towel and red hat should be hung on the peg.

As all Kinder bags are the same it is useful to put a ribbon or keyring on the outside of your child's bag to enable them to find it independently.

Children are asked not to bring toys or items of value to Kinder.

PARENT/CARER PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

We are committed to working in partnership with families and you are encouraged and welcome to participate in every aspect of Kinder life. Families are important to children for many reasons; each child comes from within an individual and unique family group. We share the responsibility of the care and education of their young children with families, as we believe families are the primary educators of their children. Your child will benefit from your interest and participation, and by talking and working together parents and teachers can help each other to appreciate each child's individual needs, characteristics and interests. Possibilities for help include reading stories to children, assisting with small group activities, gardening, and preparing materials and resources.



LEARNING JOURNALS

All Kinder students at St Mary's College contribute to an individual Learning Journal throughout the year. The journal contains examples of your child's learning, experiences, ideas and thinking. It provides a record of development and personal memories for your child. The Learning Journal is a requirement of the Kinder year and takes the place of a twice-yearly written report.

The Learning Journals are not a collection of 'best work' but a record of achievement. Journals are available for children and parents to look at and reflect upon at the end of Term 1. Journals will be sent home periodically throughout the year for child-parent contributions; more information on this will be included with your child's Journal. At the end of the school year Journals will be sent home as a permanent record of your child's Kinder year.

As our Learning Journals begin to be collated these will be stored in a basket near the bags for easy access and viewing.



SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

The school newsletter, *The Fountain*, will be distributed to families by email every second Wednesday, beginning on the first Wednesday of each term.

SEESAW APP

Seesaw is an online journal which complements our Learning Journals. Seesaw will give you a window into your child's learning in Kinder. When staff add new learning you will receive a notification to see, hear and respond to your child's learning journey. Your child's individual page is completely private, only you have access to the page and all of the content is stored securely. The online access to Seesaw is only available for parents, and instructions will be provided during Term 1. Whole school formal information is sent via email and day to day class information is sent via Seesaw.

DAY-TO-DAY INFORMATION

Any day-to-day information that parents need to convey (e.g., changes to who is collecting your child; changes of contact details) can be passed on to one of the staff during the time between 8.30am – 8.45am.

If you require a longer or more formal meeting with your child's teacher than is possible before school, please come in to arrange a time before or after Kinder. Our door is always open and we welcome parent communication.



*We are committed
to working in
partnership with
families*



INFORMATION EVENING

An information session will be held in Term 4 in the year prior to your child commencing Kinder. This session will outline the Kinder framework, our program and the holistic development of your child in their Kinder year. There will be an opportunity to informally meet the staff and have any general questions answered. Parents and carers are strongly encouraged to attend this session as information will be useful throughout the year.

LEARNING CONFERENCES

We value sharing the individual learning journey of your child. We enjoy touching base with parents casually at the beginning and end of the school day. Parents are welcome to arrange for longer meetings at any time. Scheduled Individual Learning Conferences are held in June. Invitations to make an appointment will be sent electronically and parents will be able to book a convenient meeting time online.

YEAR 5 BUDDIES

In mid-March we commence our Buddies Program. This mentoring program involves the Year 5 students spending time with the Kinder children on a one-to-one basis. Buddy selections are coordinated by the teaching staff and Kinders will have a specific buddy (or two) for the duration of the year. The focus of this program is to foster and extend relationships between Year 5 and the youngest students. Both Years work together in groups to undertake a variety of activities and spend quality time together. Students will continue with the same buddy when they move to Year 6 and Prep the following year.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Children who are unwell are unable to enjoy and benefit from our Kinder program and if they attend they run the risk of spreading illness. Children recover much faster at home and reduce the risk of reinfection to themselves and others. Teach your child to blow their nose and encourage frequent hand washing. Should your child become unwell during the day, you will be contacted and asked to collect your child.

We ask that you be vigilant in checking your child's hair and let us know immediately if head lice are detected. Children with head lice should only return to school once fully treated.

Information regarding your child (e.g., asthma, allergies) can be passed on to your child's teacher as soon as possible. Any medication required must be handed in at Student Services, with an authorisation note (available at Student Services), including instructions on doses.

Due to allergies children may have, Kinder endeavours to be a nut free zone. This includes peanut butter spread and muesli/yoghurt bars with nut content.

BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Our practice across the school is to celebrate children's birthdays in a different way in each class. In Kinder part of our celebrations include being sung to, delivering the attendance register to the office and leading other special jobs. With equity in mind, we ask that parents reserve cakes, treats and toys for celebrations at home.

We welcome celebrations that are significant to your child and family. We would like to acknowledge these in ways that are appropriate, meaningful and reflect the diversity of cultures. If there is anything in particular that you and your family celebrate in the year, please let us know so that we can meet the needs of your child and your family.



HELPING IN THE CLASSROOM

Once routines are up and running in Kinder we will welcome parent, carer or grandparent help. Please let us know if you are keen and able to help and what days are preferable for you. In due course a calendar will be available on the Kinder noticeboard to sign up for a session or two, or a whole morning (whatever suits you best). Kinder helpers may be asked to contribute in a variety of ways - playing games, supporting activities, supervising water play. If you, as a volunteer, have any preferred activities please let us know.

All helpers are required to have completed a registration to Work with Vulnerable People. The school must have sighted this registration before you can be considered for parent help either in the classroom or on an excursion. Please complete your Working with Vulnerable People registration online and view our Volunteer information here www.smc.tas.edu.au/community/volunteers-and-families/.

LEARNING ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Our Learning Engagement Framework outlines an aspirational vision for St Mary's College. For our girls to be savvy young women, articulate problem-solvers, creative thinkers and successful learners who confidently build their futures, we need to create an educational environment centred around engagement; and behavioural, emotional and cognitive development.

When our girls are engaged on these levels, they are more likely to exceed academically, build close connections with their community and have a more positive sense of social and emotional wellbeing. Our specific areas of focus and key teaching strategies are embedded in each Element – Inspire, Learn and Grow.

A FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Inspired by the Presentation charism, our vision is that St Mary's College offers a dynamic environment in which young people can fulfil their spiritual, academic and personal potential.

Our Framework for Learning Engagement illustrates the way we:

INSPIRE We are thinkers and learners together – students, teachers, and our families.

LEARN We value knowledge, learning, and collaboration. We work together to explore innovative ideas and identify new possibilities.

GROW We build partnerships based on a shared understanding of community, learning, wellbeing, and our Presentation values.





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