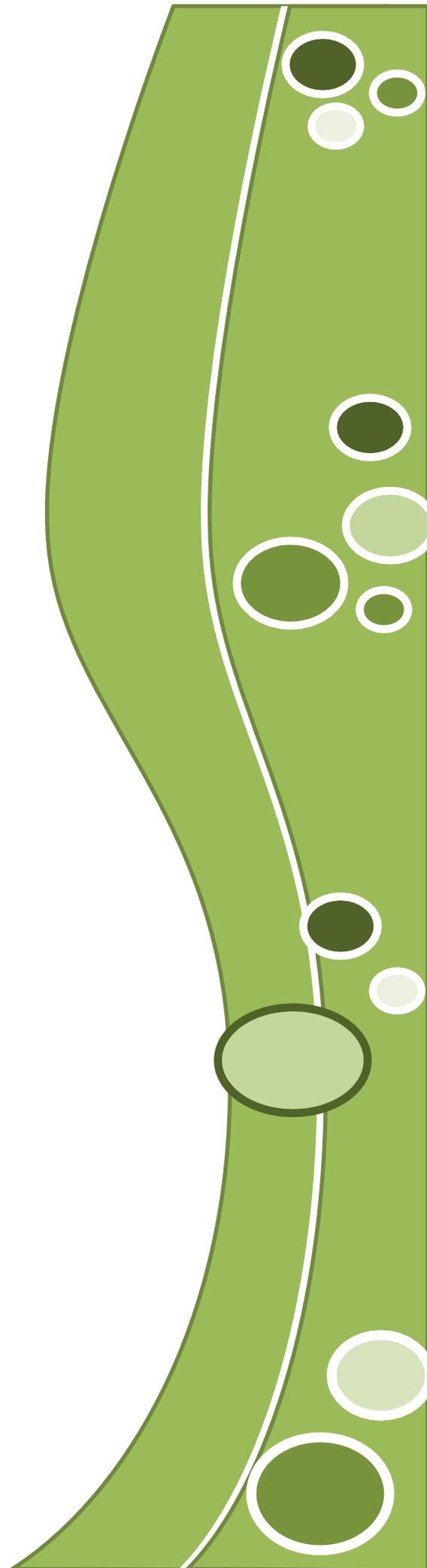




## St Mel's Parent Handbook

School (03) 5821 3163  
Kindergarten (03) 5821 9982  
OSHC 0438 213 163  
35 Hamilton Street, Shepparton, 3630  
[principal@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au)  
[www.smshepparton.com](http://www.smshepparton.com)



**St Mel's Parent Handbook**  
**Information for families enrolling at St Mel's Kindergarten, School**  
**and OSHC**



## "CHRIST OUR LIGHT"

We hope all people everywhere,  
especially the members of St Mel's community,  
will always see Christ as their guiding light,  
showing them the way towards God.

**School Principal: Chris Summers**

35 Hamilton Street,  
SHEPPARTON 3630

Email: [principal@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au)  
[www.smshepparton.com](http://www.smshepparton.com)

Phone: (03) 5821 3163

Office Hours 8.45am – 4.45pm Mon to Fri

**Kinder Director: Miriam Stewart**

200 Archer Street  
SHEPPARTON 3630

Email: [kinder@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au](mailto:kinder@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 5821 9982

**Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)**

Director: Veronica O'Toole  
0438 213 163

Email: [oshc@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au](mailto:oshc@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au)

**ST MEL'S PARISH**

18 HAMILTON STREET, SHEPPARTON VIC. 3630  
TELEPHONE: (03) 5831 2194

Email: [sheppartonsouth@cdos.org.au](mailto:sheppartonsouth@cdos.org.au)

**Parish Priest:** Fr. Peter Taylor  
Christ the King Church



**Mass Times**

**Sunday:** 9:30 am and 5:30 pm

**Weekdays:** Tue, Wed & Thur. 8am, Fri 9.15am (1<sup>st</sup> Fri. 5pm Holy Hour, 6pm Mass)

**Parish Office Hours:** Tue to Thur: 9.30am – 2.00pm, Fri: 9:30am to 3.30pm

Dear Parents, Friends and Families

Welcome to St Mel's.

St Mel's has been educating members of our community since 1957. St Mel's community is built on the foundations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and we endeavor to open the doors to all those who seek to be a part of our community.

Serving the many people who have settled in Shepparton South, St Mel's has a rich association with many nationalities. From our Irish roots to the Italian heritage and culture, the woven fabric of this community is vast and exciting.

Through the changing face of our Australian society St Mel's strives to provide a quality education that goes beyond numeracy and literacy but aims to help individuals to become independent and contributing members of our wider world.

At St Mel's our Kindergarten and School aims to create a learning environment that goes beyond the classroom walls. We recognise the diversity in learning styles and acknowledge that no one individual has the answer to life's many challenges. Learning is organic and cannot be plotted on a linear scale. Learning is robust. It allows one to think outside the square. Learning requires differentiation. It can be hands on or read from a text. Learning is playful. It is meaningful and has a purpose. Learning leads to discovery. It builds on prior knowledge and extends outwards and sideways. Learning is inquiring. It allows for wonder and awe. It is our hope that we can help individuals reach their potential and enjoy the success that comes with individual achievement.

It is with an open heart that we invite you to explore our dynamic school and kindergarten and look forward to building the relationships that are needed to help sustain us.



Chris Summers  
Principal

### **COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY**

All students enrolled at St Mel's, and any child visiting, have a right to feel safe and be safe.

The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse.

We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.



**St Mel's is a proud Catholic school and kindergarten  
striving, learning and achieving together, through  
Christ our light.**

## OUR VISION STATEMENTS

We are a community illuminated by our Catholic Tradition and grounded in the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

We nurture the spirit, mind, and body of each learner.

We create learning environments that invite learners to inquire, explore and discover.

We embrace all families working in partnership with parish and community to engage a wide range of life long learning.

We rejoice in the diversity of our community and celebrate the uniqueness that makes us St Mel's

We acknowledge the **Yorta Yorta Nation**, whose clans include:

*Bangerang, Kaitheban, Wollithiga, Moira, Ulupna, Kwat Kwat, Yalaba Yalaba and Ngurai-illiam-wurrung, as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our Education Community is situated.*

## GRADUATE OUTCOMES

We strive for our leaving Year Six students to be successful, thoughtful, appreciative, and responsible – STAR's. This can be achieved by:

- Demonstrating openness to our faith and a willingness to be socially just,
- Expressing their spirituality through different forms of prayer,
- Being curious, engaged learners who enjoy learning and thinking about new and varied things,
- Being confident and reflective users of English and Mathematics
- Knowing themselves and how they can be their best in different environments or situations
- Understanding their responsibility to be a Steward of God's creation
- Showing an understanding of our diverse world and how we can live in harmony; respecting, cooperating, communicating and working with others
- Welcoming all and celebrating being community

Be a St Mel's **S.T.A.R.**: **S**uccessful **T**houghtful **A**ppreciative  
**R**esponsible

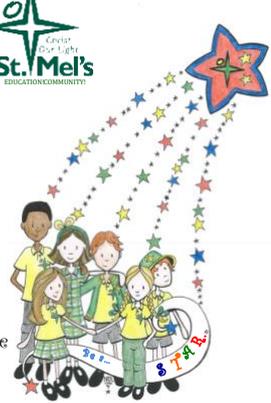
Be a St Mel's

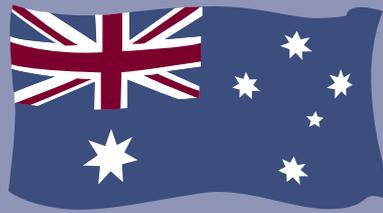
**S.T.A.R.**

St. Mel's  
EDUCATION COMMUNITY

Respect our school.  
Do your best.  
Help others succeed.

Successful Thoughtful Appreciative Responsible





# VALUES FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING

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## **Care and Compassion**

Care for self and others

## **Doing Your Best**

Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence

## **Fair Go**

Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society

## **Freedom**

Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others

## **Honesty and Trustworthiness**

Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

## **Integrity**

Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds

## **Respect**

Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view

## **Responsibility**

Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment

## **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion**

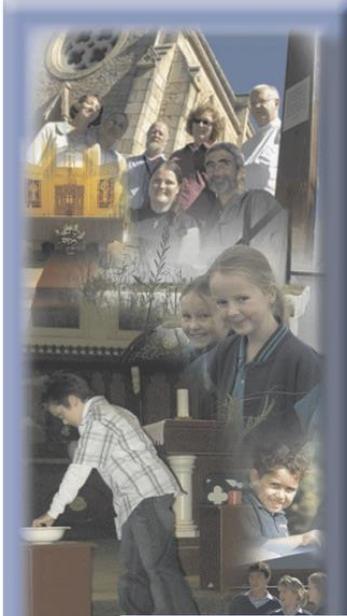
Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

**CHARACTER IS DESTINY**

— George Eliot

# SANDHURST CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

## OUR VALUES



### **Love and Compassion**

We seek to celebrate life as a gift from a loving God and, with Jesus as our model, to inspire the courage and confidence to serve others, especially those less fortunate than ourselves.

### **Reverence and Awe**

We celebrate the presence of God in our midst in the wonder and gifts of each person, in the beauty and awe of God's creation, in the daily events of our world. We strive to live in right relationship with the earth and all God's creatures.

### **Joy, Optimism and Creativity**

We rejoice in the creativity and gifts of the Spirit in each person.

We believe God is present in each of us – in our working, our praying and our being together.

### **Peace, Justice and Honesty**

We seek to make justice visible by living simply and justly, by being honest and fair and by building peace through relationships and care of each other.

### **Generosity in the Service of Others**

With Jesus as our model, we celebrate our vocation to develop each person's potential, to be consciously transformational, serving God in the Church and in the world with a committed and practical concern for the poor.

### **Commitment and Faithfulness**

We seek to enable students to find God in all things, to live out their vocation in life with joy in the service of others. We are committed to covenant relationships.

### **Understanding and Inclusion**

We promote the God-given dignity of each person, honouring the cultures and faith traditions of all. We value the richness of diversity and difference.

### **Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

We seek to support one another, to deepen the bonds of community which unite us, by promoting mutual understanding and reconciliation.

### **Respect and Responsibility**

We strive to build a community committed to personal and communal growth, founded on justice where we take responsibility for each other, and we are accountable for our own actions.

### **Integrity and Self Discipline**

We value each person as being essentially good, with freedoms, rights and responsibilities.

We are dedicated to students and value life-long learning.

We provide opportunities for our students to be open to a personal relationship with God.



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## OUR STORY SO FAR...

St Mel's is a parish primary school catering for the educational needs of the community of South Shepparton.

Father M. O'Reilly founded the Parish in 1955. In 1956 the first building, a Church and School, was blessed and opened on 9th December.

St Mel's School was established in 1957. The school was in the care of the Mercy Sisters who have dedicated their lives to educating and caring for the sick and needy. In 1991 the Mercy Sisters handed over the running of the school to the Parish and the first lay principal was appointed.

In 1969, Bishop Bernard Stewart welcomed the Daughters of Divine Zeal to St Mel's Parish in Shepparton. At that time, Bishop Stewart said, "The opening of this new Kindergarten at St Mel's is a day of rejoicing, thanks to the Daughters of Divine Zeal. Some mothers need to become breadwinners and this new Kindergarten in the Parish will provide help."

The Scalabrinian Fathers played a very important role in the development of St. Mel's Parish. The Scalabrinian's arrived in 1962 and administered to the needs of the many migrant families established in the area, especially the Italian community.

### Who was St Mel?

**mæL**

Most of the accounts of the life of St. Mel (Mael) emphasize his connection to other saints, especially the two patron saints of Ireland, Patrick and Brigid. It is not known exactly when or where Mel was born, but it is recorded that his father's name was Conis or Chonis and his mother's name was Darerca. St. Darerca was a sister of St. Patrick and was known as the "mother of saints" because all of her children (seventeen sons and two daughters) entered religious life, all were later recognized as saints, and all of her sons became bishops.

Mel and his brothers Melchu, Munis and Rioch accompanied their uncle Patrick to Ireland and helped him with his missionary work there. Mel and his brother Melchu were both reportedly consecrated bishop by Patrick himself. After St. Patrick built the church at Ardagh, he appointed Mel as Bishop of Ardagh, but according to the Life of St. Brigid, Mel is said to have had no fixed See for most of his life in ministry, which fits with other accounts of his being a travelling missionary and evangelist. Acting upon the apostolic precept, Mel supported himself by working with his hands, and what he gained beyond bare necessities, he gave to the poor.

For some time, Mel lived with his aunt Lupait, and slanderous tongues spread serious accusations against them. St. Patrick himself came to investigate their conduct, but Mel and Lupait were cleared of the charges by supernatural means. When Patrick arrived, Mel was standing in a field plowing, but he reached into the dirt and picked a live fish out of the ground as easily as if he had lowered a net into the water. Lupait established her innocence by carrying glowing coals without burning herself or her clothing. This supernatural evidence satisfied Patrick, but he told his nephew in future to do his fishing in the water and his plowing on the land, and he also enjoined Mel and Lupait to avoid further scandal by living and praying far apart from one another.



According to ancient tradition, the most significant event in Mel's life is that he was the bishop who professed St. Brigid as a nun. During the rite, a mysterious manifestation of the Holy Spirit caused him to inadvertently read over her the episcopal consecration, about which St. Macaille protested. Mel, however, was convinced that it happened according to the will of God and insisted that the consecration should stand.

St. Mel died in approximately the year 489 his feast day is celebrated on February 6.

### The Sisters of Mercy



The Sisters of Mercy were founded in Dublin, Ireland, in 1831 by Catherine McAuley. On December 12, 1831, Catherine, with two companions, Elizabeth Harley and Mary-Anne Doyle, made their religious profession in the Presentation Convent of Georges Hill, Dublin where they had spent the previous year of the novitiate. On that day Archbishop Daniel Murray formally blessed the first Convent of Mercy at the House of Mercy in Baggot Street which Catherine had built with her inheritance from the Callahan Estate and opened in 1827. He appointed Catherine as superior, and a month later, received as the first Mercy novices seven of Catherine's companions who had worked with her from the beginning of ministry in the House of Mercy.

### The Daughters of Divine Zeal

The Daughters of Divine Zeal (*Figlie del Divino Zelo [FDZ]* in Italian) is an international Catholic religious institute of women who offer service to the needs of the Church in various parts of the world.



They wear the emblem of the divine Heart of Jesus along with the words "*Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest.*" This is his divine command to us all and forms our institute's distinctive character.

### The Scalabrini Priests

The Scalabrinians work for justice and the possibility that migrants have an opportunity to seek development in life. But they remain convinced that true development originates from the spirit. Economic achievement is not the ultimate goal in life. The true objective in life is to become what we are, children of God, no more scattered but reunited in one family. Dispersed migrants long for community and in building community the Scalabrinians contribute to advance in the direction of fulfillment and joy.



## EXPECTATIONS OF ST MEL'S COMMUNITY MEMBERS

*Everyone has the right to feel safe and be safe.*

Therefore we expect:

- Politeness
- Respect – for other people's opinions
- Fair treatment
- Acceptable and helpful language
- Settle problems without fighting
- Care – for others and other's property
- Co-operation, taking turns and sharing
- Kindness
- Personal space
- Responsibility for own property
- Quiet talking
- Staying on task
- Letting others get on with their work
- Careful listening

### **We ask our students for:**

- Participation in all activities, including those of a spiritual nature.
- Respect for each other, adult or child, as demonstrated by the use of good manners, appropriate dress [including the correct wearing of school uniform], and compliance with school rules and regulations as set by the Parish Education Board, and by the Principal and staff.
- Pride in their personal contribution to the community.
- Loyalty to the school community.
- Care about our classrooms, gardens and grounds.

### **To our friends and families we request:**

- Encouragement, understanding and support for the St Mel's programs.
- Active participation in the life of St Mel's community, including our decision-making process, as well as participation in a wide range of voluntary activities.
- Co-operation with other members of St Mel's parish community.
- Acceptance and active support of the Catholic ethos of St Mel's community.
- Participation in the child's spiritual, sacramental and pastoral education processes.
- The fulfillment of all financial obligations to St Mel's community.
- Participation in keeping St Mel's clean, i.e. limiting plastic wrappers, etc.
- Assisting children with homework.
- Pro-activity in school's progress – approach Principal rather than discussions amongst selves.

### **From St Mel's staff we require:**

- Commitment to the Catholic faith and ethos.
- Loyalty to St Mel's community.
- Integrity and professionalism.
- An overriding personal commitment to each individual child under their care.
- Sensitivity to the needs of families and parents.
- Commitment to professional and personal development.
- Commitment to school and personal 'review and development'.
- Support and encouragement of each other.

## **SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

As a Catholic school, we proudly proclaim our Catholic traditions and teach Religious Education using “Source of Life” as our core curriculum.

Our school, along with all other schools in Victoria, follows the Victorian Curriculum. The Curriculum is broken into levels of achievement; each level consists of a series of outcomes.

Parents and teachers all know that individual children vary enormously in their capacities and in their special talents. Thus some children will be at levels either above or below those set out in Victorian Curriculum. The majority of children will be strong in some curriculum areas and less strong in others. We recognise this in both our teaching and our expectations, while always striving for the highest possible standards.

### **Digital Technologies**

St Mel’s has a 1:1 iPad program where all students have access to their own device. Students are able to access their iPad to be creative in the ways in which they express their learning and understandings. The use of Digital Technology spans across all areas of the curriculum. Students are able to create, share, discover, investigate, study and explore the world through the lens of digital technology.

## **KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

St Mel’s Kindergarten is committed to

- Promoting the wellbeing and development of each individual child.
- Providing a child and play initiated emergent curriculum.
- Creating a love of learning.
- Creating a culturally diverse program.
- Promoting equal opportunity and access to activities and equipment for all children.
- Providing a program that is developmentally suitable for the children.
- Providing a program that is developed to suit the individual needs of the children in the kindergarten.
- Providing a program that is stimulating and challenges the children’s interests and skills.
- Providing a program that develops all areas of a child’s development.
- Providing a pleasant and stimulating environment.
- Providing a play based, emergent curriculum based of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)

Staff plan a program based on observations of children and is developed to reflect individual needs, abilities and interests.

The staff will provide a reflection journal which indicates how and what the children are learning and how their learning is reflected in the (VEYLDF), this will be on display at the kindergarten.

The program will include both indoor and outdoor experiences.

The program will include individual and group experiences.

Parent’s Participation, suggestions and ideas are important aspects of our programs.

## **SACRAMENTS AND LITURGY**

At St. Mel's our preparation for Sacraments, in line with Sandhurst Diocesan policy, is seen as a task that should be the responsibility of parishes and families, while being actively supported and assisted at school.

The Catholic Church believes that the primary job of preparing children for sacraments belongs to parents. This has led to a Sandhurst Diocesan Policy called 'Steps In Faith' that has been in operation for several years. The 'Steps In Faith' Policy has meant a shift from school-based sacramental programs to parish-based sacramental programs, with a strong emphasis on parental commitment and involvement. The school will still support the sacramental preparation of the children in its regular Religious Education lessons.

Throughout the year there will be a number of whole school masses, opportunities for children to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation, and regular class masses - usually one per term.

## **LEARNING FEEDBACK: Learning conferences, interviews and reports.**

### **Term 1**

Student / Parent / Teacher "Get to Know You" learning conversations are held early in the year. Appointments run for 15 mins, where parents, children and teachers get to know each other and set some goals for the first half of the year.

### **Term 2**

Written reports, Student Report Folios will be sent home with the students in the last week of Term Two.

### **Term 3**

Student / Parent / Teacher learning conversations are held with the child leading the dialogue. Appointments run for 15 min, with either teacher or parents able to request part of the interview to be held without the child present. Goals for student progress will be set at this meeting.

### **Term 4**

Written reports will be sent home with the students in the second last week of Term Four. Student Report Folios, displaying samples of each child's work, will be sent home as a part of the written reports.

## **Kindergarten**

Staff will keep individual sample and work portfolios on each child plus dairy entries, anecdotal records, profiles, checklists, significant child/teacher or parent/teacher communications and other things as necessary.

### **Term 1**

Staff will organise and plan in consultation with the Parent Committee a getting to know you evening for all families and staff.

### **Term 2**

Parent/Teacher Meetings will be held towards the end of term two for four-year-old children.

### **Term 4**

Parent/Teacher Meetings will again be held towards the end of term four if needed. This will be in consultation with school staff where possible.

At any stage during the year parents or teachers may request interviews if needed. This is particularly important in cases where students are performing below normal expectations or well above normal expectations.

## **HOMELEARNING**

Recent research supports the view that homework is interfering with family life, which is already rushed and pressured. Research also shows that reading regularly at home remains a very important activity; however, there is very little academic value in doing other academic types of homework for primary school aged children. An expert in the field, Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, believes time would be better spent on more family-friendly activities.

Children are still required to complete their reading a minimum of four nights per week. In addition to this, other activities would be family and interest based of a practical or fun nature that children can do with other family members. Throughout the year the school will provide homework suggestion lists in the newsletter. Lists might include things such as: draw a map to school, visit and borrow a book from the Shepparton Library, make your own school lunch, play a board game together, walk the dog, write or email your cousins or grandparents, etc.

Our homework expectations are:

### **Prep, Year 1 and 2**

- Child reading to an adult / adult reading to the child for approximately 15 minutes, four times a week.

### **Years 3 and 4**

- Reading for approximately 20 minutes, four times per week, with spelling and number fact practice.

### **Years 5 and 6**

- Reading for approximately 30 minutes, four times per week, with spelling, number facts and possible project work.
- Development and use of an on online diary and timetable for daily organisation.
- Occasionally asked to complete minor piece of work for journals.

## STUDENT MANAGEMENT

We aim for the students:

- to be self directed and life long learners,
- to act responsibly and to accept responsibility for their own actions,
- to help each other with a spirit of friendship and cooperation, and
- to develop and use their skills of problem solving and conflict resolution.

Staff have a uniform approach to address student management using the PBIS framework. PBIS involves an emphasis on positive strategies and clear expectations. There is a clear step-by-step process for student management.

We provide a number of passive spaces for quiet play and time to be away from the busyness of the playground. An alternative social skills program is offered during lunch times to provide those children who need to explore the norms of play in a less confronting manner.

At St Mel's we believe that all people who participate in our community have the **right** to feel safe and be safe. With that safety comes the sense of belonging, being happy and the opportunities to succeed. It is also our **responsibility** that we make others feel safe.

Our anti-bullying policy provides the structure to explore appropriate school and social behaviours and to address unwanted behaviours as they may arise. We work together using conflict resolutions skills to solve any issues.

Should you or your child feel that in any way you have been the victim of bullying we strongly encourage you to speak to someone at school about it, whether it be your child's teacher, the Principal or our Pastoral Wellbeing Officer.

## **PARENT / GUARDIAN CONCERNS**

Should a Parent or Guardian have concerns about their child please contact the classroom teacher. If the issue remains unresolved please contact the Principal.

To raise issues of a more general nature, or to provide suggestions on the running of the school or other like matters, contact the Principal or the Parish Education Board Chair.

## **PARISH EDUCATION BOARD**

The Parish Education Board provides advice to the Parish Priest and Principal in the following areas:

- Catholic Identity
- Teaching and Learning
- Stewardship of Resources
- Leadership
- Pastoral Wellbeing

The Parish Education Board is made up of parents from the School and the Kindergarten, the Parish Priest, Principal, Deputy Principal and the Kindergarten Director.

Meetings are normally held in the evenings in weeks four and eight of each term. New members warmly welcomed.

## **ST MEL'S PARENTS SOCIAL CLUB**

This group consists of volunteer parents and other members of our community (e.g. grandparents, former parents, staff members, aunties, etc.) whose aims are as follows:

- To cater for the general welfare of the school community.
- To liaise and co-operate with the Parish Education Board and the parish community as a whole.
- To raise funds to assist with purchase of equipment and resources for the school. This amount helps keep school fees down and, in fact, the Sandhurst Diocese has the lowest school fees of any Catholic Diocese in Australia.
- To foster and develop a spirit of community among parents and friends.

All parents and friends are welcome to attend meetings. Details of time and venue of meetings will be available in the school newsletter.

## **WORKING BEES**

These are conducted as the need arises. We would like each family to make an effort to attend at least one working bee each year.

## EXCURSIONS, INCURSIONS AND CAMPS

Excursions, incursions and camps are an integral part of the curriculum. They are a way to extend each child's understanding and knowledge of the wider world, and at the same time to introduce, consolidate and enrich particular areas across the curriculum. Students who miss camps and excursions are placing themselves at a disadvantage, both academically and socially. Camps are quite expensive to run; therefore we require all families to pay the camp levy (no child will be prevented from attending any excursion or camp due to an inability to pay). If there is a medical emergency or family crisis that prevents a student from attending, then the camp levy may be rebated. Excursions, incursions and camps are a compulsory part of the curriculum.

Legally St Mel's requires a separate consent form to be completed for each excursion in which a student participates. Consent forms are given ahead of time, along with detailed information about the proposed excursion. Regrettably, any student whose form is not returned will not be allowed to participate in the excursion.

## Volunteering At St Mel's

A school volunteer is anyone who helps at school supervise, assist student learning or attends camps / excursions. As part of our commitment to keeping all students safe, all volunteers MUST have a current Working with Children's Check (WWC), have signed a parent code of conduct and volunteer's application form. These documents can be downloaded from our school website or collected from the school office.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at St Mel's please take the time to read our Volunteer's Policy and complete the required documentation.

To apply for an online WWC please visit:

[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

We would like to encourage all parents to participate as fully as they can in the life of the school. There are a range of ways parents can become involved, including:

- Visiting the rooms
- Assisting with excursions, physical education activities
- Hearing children's reading and conferencing their written work
- Covering books
- Helping out in the canteen
- Volunteering for school gardening projects or to do maintenance work
- Joining the Parent Social Club
- Joining the Parish Education Board
- Assisting at school fundraising activities
- Attending assemblies
- Attending working bees
- Coaching / managing sporting teams

## **SPORTING PURSUITS**

The school has an 'Incorporated Sports Body' which actively encourages and supports participation in several community based sporting pursuits. These sports include Netball, Basketball, Football and Soccer. The Incorporated Sports Body is supported by parent volunteers. All sports are based on modified rules and fun healthy participation.

Most of these activities are highly dependent on a ready supply of volunteer coaches, supervisors, officials, referees, umpires, and from time-to-time, drivers. Please help if you can.

## **HOUSE TEAMS**

St Mel's has four House Teams. These teams participate in a variety of co-curricular activities such as school athletics, Christmas craft activities and social justice activities. The houses are named after prominent members of our Parish Community being:

Mercy House	Blue
O'Reilly House	Red
Scalabrini House	Yellow
Mel House	Green

*Students are placed in teams with family members.*

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

### **Kindergarten**

#### **Four Year Old**

Kindergarten sessions for four-year-olds are for 15 hours per week. The groups are generally spread over the week, with two full days and one half day.

#### **Three Year Old**

Three fun Group sessions are offered. Two groups running for four hours per week and one group for three hours per week. You have the option of selecting two sessions.

## School

### TIMETABLE

<u>Morning Bell</u>	Children should be at school by 8:45, ready to begin at 8.55
<u>Fruit snack</u>	10:00 a.m. – small apple, something simple and manageable
<u>Lunch Time</u>	11.15am - 11.55am Playtime 11.55am – 12.05pm Supervised eating
<u>Afternoon Recess</u>	1.55pm – 2.05 pm Supervised Eating 2.05pm – 2:25 pm Playtime
<u>Dismissal</u>	3.20pm



Note: children are not permitted at school before 8:30am, unless they are bus travellers.

### **Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)**

Monday to Friday 3:20 until 6:00 p.m. sharp

### **Office Hours**

Our school administration office is open Monday to Friday from 8:45am to 4:45 pm.  
An administration officer is at the Kindergarten on Wednesday.

### **NOTICES & NEWSLETTERS**

A school newsletter is published every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday and is emailed to all families and community members. Items for inclusion should be emailed to [newsletter@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au](mailto:newsletter@smshepparton.catholic.edu.au), no later than 12:00 noon on Wednesday. The newsletter is also published on our website and on the School Stream App.

The School Stream App can be downloaded from the App Store to your mobile phone. Then simply select St Mel's from the directory.



Notices (if they are whole school notices) will be sent home with the eldest child from each family or via School Stream. We suggest that you regularly check school bags.

### **ASSEMBLY**

Our fortnightly assembly commences at 9.00am every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in our Hall. Assembly is a time when we pray together as a whole school. It is also a time at which we share our pride in the special achievements of children. Awards are handed out, sporting achievements are celebrated and general announcements are made. Parents and visitors are always welcome at assemblies.

## NATIONAL ANTHEM and BIRTHDAYS

Each Monday morning the school gathers in the courtyard to sing the National Anthem and raise the Australian and Indigenous flags. Students and staff members celebrating a birthday for the week are recognized.

## FEES & LEVIES

The annual family fee and levies are normally set in Term four after consultation with the Parish Education Board. The actual figures are taken from recommendations made by Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd.

### The school fees consist of:

- a family fee;
- a student levy;
- a capital levy;
- an ICT levy;
- a camp levy (Years three to six)

Every effort is made to keep fee rises affordable while providing the resources needed to ensure the quality educational programs offered by St Mel's are ongoing.

The levy covers all books and stationary, sports / PE costs, computers, visual arts as well as most of the costs for special events and excursions.

St Mel's policies clearly state that no child will be excluded from school if families have a **genuine** financial difficulty. Families experiencing financial difficulties should contact the Principal so that alternative arrangements can be made. Such arrangements are strictly confidential.

Accounts for school fees and levies are due as follows:

TERM 1:	Levies and capital fee (and school camp, if applicable)
TERM 2:	One third of annual family fee
TERM 3:	One third of annual family fee
TERM 4:	One third of annual family fee

NOTE: Monthly or fortnightly payments of accounts can be organised, if that is preferred. The school has EFTPOS and Direct Debit facilities available.

We would prefer that cash payments for fees are not sent to the school with children. Cash payments may be made at the school office between the hours of 8.30am and 4.30pm

Camps, Sport and Excursions Fund (CSEF)– if you have a Family Health Care Card or pension card, please enquire at the school office.

Aside from these annual Fees and Levies we ask for no other financial contribution to the school, however we do undertake fund raising projects through out the year and may ask for social justice donations e.g. Caritas Australia's Project Compassion.

### **Kindergarten and Fun Group**

Invoices will be sent out by 2<sup>nd</sup> week of each term, fees are payable within 14 days of invoices being received.

There is a concessional rate for Health Care and Pension cardholders. It is the responsibility of the holders to:

- Produce card and number to the director or administrator to record at the beginning of each Term to be eligible for a discount.
- Notify the Director or administrator of new information.

An Excursion levy, for Four Year Old Kindergarten group, is payable in addition to fees at start of the year.

### **Payments**

Accounts are placed in each child's mail pocket.

Correct money or cheques should be placed in a sealed envelope, clearly labelled with the child's name and amount enclosed. This can be placed in the fee box at Kinder or paid directly at the school office. EFTPOS is also available for Fee payment at the school office. Direct Deposit is also available; please use you child's name as reference.

Cheques made payable to St. Mel's Kindergarten.

Weekly, fortnightly or monthly direct debit is also available –for information talk to our administration.

### **Cancellation**

Parents / Guardians are required to notify the Director of cancellation from Kindergarten or Fun Group.

Fees are payable up until the date of confirmed cancellation.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Students are marked on a daily roll, which is maintained electronically in the administration office. Such rolls are mandated by Government authorities and are considered legal documents.

It is expected that students attend daily unless sick or have legitimate reasons e.g. family holiday, to attend funerals or other significant events.

### **Absences**

If your child is going to be absent it is a requirement of our Child Safe Policy that you contact the School Office on the morning of the absence before 9.30am. Children who are absent for any reason must bring a note detailing the reasons for the absence, when they return. This is a legal requirement that St Mel's must follow.

If a child is going to be away for an extended period of time, we would like parents to inform St Mel's rather than wait until the child resumes.

Please note: In line with our commitment to child safety **ALL** unexplained absences will be followed up with a phone call to parents.

### **Appointments / absences during class hours**

Students will be permitted to leave St Mel's during learning time if they bring a written note to their teacher (if more than one child is involved each teacher must receive a note).

The adult collecting the student is required to sign the student out at the school office where they will be given a leave pass to be presented to the classroom teacher in order for the student to leave St Mel's grounds.

## **KINDERGARTEN**

### **Signing In And Out**

The attendance book is a legal document that needs to be filled in at the beginning and end of each session. It will be vital in the case of an emergency situation. Please ensure that your child is signed in and out each session. Upon arrival at Kinder please note your child's time of arrival, who will be collecting the child, and your signature. When leaving Kinder the Parent / Guardian must again sign the book and note the time of departure.

### **Picking Up Children**

Prior written or verbal authority must be provided if someone other than the Parent / Guardian is to collect your child (provision for this is made on the enrolment form and attendance book). Always notify the Director if someone else is to collect your child. It is important that children are not left waiting after their session. It is appreciated when families pick up children on time.

### **Supervision of children**

Children who are attending a program that is running are the responsibility of their parents until they are signed into the attendance book and the appropriate starting time comes. The staff will then take responsibility.

## **GENERAL RULES REGARDING SICKNESS**

Children with serious colds, flus or other debilitating illnesses should always be kept home. When children become ill, they will normally be sent to the sickbay first and observed for a little while before parents or guardians are called to collect them.

In cases of serious illness or accident, the school will either call an ambulance or arrange other emergency medical assistance. Parents or emergency contacts will be notified as soon as possible. \*\* If you child is unimmunized then they must stay at home if a communicable disease is notified.

## **PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD IF HE/SHE HAS:**

- **Been prescribed antibiotics for an acute illness** – a child who has been prescribed an antibiotic for an acute illness should be kept home for at least 24 hours.
- **A fever** – a child with a fever of more than 38°C must be kept at home (or will be sent home). Seek medical advice, give child plenty of fluids.
- **Diarrhoea** – a child who has a watery stool should not return until he/she has been free of the diarrhoea for 24 hours. Seek medical advice, give child plenty of fluids.
- **Vomiting** – a child who is vomiting should be kept home **until 24 hours after the vomiting has stopped.**

**In order to make sure we can always ring parents or another emergency person, please ensure that you immediately notify us if there are any changes in address or telephone numbers [work, home or mobile]. Unlisted numbers will be respected. It is essential that you inform us about any potentially serious medical conditions and/or children's medication. This information is confidential.**

## **CHILDREN AND MEDICATION**

If your child requires medication under staff supervision, the school needs the following information:

- A note requesting St Mel's to administer medication,
- The type of medication,
- Dosage rates,
- Time of dosage, and
- Parents/Guardian's signature.

All medications must be in **original packaging**, with pharmacy details if prescribed medications.

## **INFECTIOUS DISEASES REGULATIONS**

**COVID 19** ....please refer to the current DHHS guidelines online or call the coronavirus hotline 1800 675 398

**CHICKEN POX:** Until fully recovered or at least one week after the first outbreak

**CONJUNCTIVITIS** (Acute Infectious): Until discharge from eyes has ceased

**COLD SORES** (Herpes Simplex Vesicles) – the child should be excluded until the sores have healed.

**DIARRHOEA:** Until diarrhoea ceases

**HEADLICE (PEDICULOSIS):** Until appropriate treatment has commenced

**HEPATITIS B:** Until recovery from acute attack

**MEASLES:** For at least five days from the appearance of the rash or until a medical certificate of recovery is produced

**MUMPS:** Until fully recovered

**MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION:** Until receipt of medical certificate of recovery from infection

**RINGWORM:** Until a medical certificate is produced stating that the child is receiving appropriate treatment

**RUBELLA:** Until fully recovered or at least five days from the onset of the rash

**SCHOOL SORES [IMPETIGO]:** Until sores have fully healed. The child may be allowed to return provided appropriate treatment has commenced and sores are kept covered

**STREPTOCOCCAL INFECTION:** Until a medical certificate of recovery has been provided

**WHOOPING COUGH:** For two weeks or until a medical certificate of recovery has been produced

## **CHANGE OF FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES**

If any changes in family circumstance occur that might affect a child's emotional or physical wellbeing and, hence, academic performance [e.g. serious illness, bereavement, divorce or separation, prolonged unemployment or other financial distress], it may be useful to inform the child's teacher and/or the Principal, so that we may discreetly support the child. Such information will be kept confidential.

## **PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION**

A teacher is on supervision duty each morning from 8.30 a.m. in the quadrangle. Before school, all other areas of the school grounds are out of bounds unless children are accompanied by a responsible adult. Students are fully supervised by teachers during recess and lunchtime. Children are supervised while they eat their lunch.

At all times, when children move around St Mel's during instruction hours, they will do so in pairs.

## **Extreme Weather Days**

On wet days and extreme temperature days, children are supervised in their classrooms. Children are encouraged to play quiet games, to read, or to complete tasks.

## After School Supervision

After school bus students are supervised by a teacher until they board their bus. Children waiting for parents must wait in the designated area under the shade sails where a teacher supervises them until they are picked up.

For Prep children, we recommend a parent/guardian, sibling or family friend be available for 'drop off' and 'pick up' during the first few days of school to assist in your child's transition.

Children are not permitted to play on the senior play equipment after school, and are only allowed on the junior play equipment if a parent is there to supervise.

## Outside School Hours Care

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) is provided by St Mel's OSHC, lead by Veronica O'Toole as Director. OSHC staff will collect students and the service operates from within St Mel's grounds. The service will operate from 3:20 to 6p.m. sharp. Children are to be collected and signed out via OSHC staff from the music room (Room 1). For more details contact Veronica O'Toole on 0438 213 163.

**If for any reason you are unable to pick up your child on time after school, please notify the school.**

**Please also advise if you are making any unusual arrangements such as allowing the child to go home with another child, or if someone who doesn't normally pick up the child is picking up the child.**

## BICYCLE SAFETY

Children who ride their bicycles/scooters to St Mel's are expected to abide by all laws governing the use of bikes. We recommend that children do not ride their bikes/scooters unattended by an adult until they are at least ten years of age. They must wear approved safety helmets and bikes/scooters must be locked up in the area reserved for bikes/scooters. Riding of bicycles/scooters in the school grounds is not allowed.

## BRINGING TOYS

Children are not to bring toys from home to use in the playground. Children are allowed to bring appropriate toys to 'show and tell'. Such toys are clearly the responsibility of the child and St Mel's does not take any responsibility for loss or damage.

Toy guns, including water pistols, or any other toy which is deemed to be part of a culture promoting violence or aggression, should not be brought to St Mel's.

Mobile phones, Apple devices and electronic games are not permitted at St Mel's. **Should** your child need a mobile phone it must be handed into the office before school and then collected after school. St Mel's will not be responsible for any phone not handed into the office.

## COLLECTING CHILDREN AND PARKING

There are numerous car-parking areas all within a two to five minute walking distance. We recommend you park your car and walk into the grounds to not only collect your child but also to catch up with the many adults in our community.

There are two official crossings: One in Hamilton Street and one in Archer Street. Both crossings are supervised.

### Kiss and go

Our **kiss and go** works well when we follow the road rules. It is an effective and efficient way of dropping off and collecting children from school.

What is that you may ask? Simply it is a quick, efficient and safe way to drop off and pick up your children. The zone from the school library to the hall in Hamilton Street has been zoned as the 'kiss and go'. There are few steps we need to follow to make this work:

1. 2 minute parking between 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.
2. Move forward so that other cars can park
3. Stay in the car to let your child out or collect your child
4. Always let your child in from the passenger side – never the drivers side
5. If there are no places to park go around the block until a park is available
6. Use other long term parking that is within a short walking distance to the school
7. When picking up your child – get the duty teachers attention and let them know who you are picking up e.g. the Smith children or Mikey Topolino
8. Be patient
9. Observe and follow the rules
10. Safety before convenience

We urge you to teach your children great care when exiting from or entering your vehicle when you deliver or pick them up. We request that you respect the rights of other road users and of the residents who are neighbours of St Mel's, by ensuring they have clear access to their driveways.

## SCHOOL BUS ARRANGEMENTS

Children who live further than 4.8 kms from the school qualify for a conveyance allowance from the State Government; application forms are available at the office. You may check with Dysons Bus Company regarding the nearest bus pick up point for your child

Behaviour on the bus must always be appropriate. If it is not, the bus company has the right to refuse to carry children.

## CANTEEN SERVICE

Our canteen offers healthy lunches Monday to Friday. The canteen manager is responsible for all meals and ensures that a variety of nutritious items are on offer. There are many items on the canteen menu all of which are published in our newsletter each term. To place an order, write the order on a brown paper bag, or reusable lunch bag available from the

canteen, along with name and grade and enclose the correct money in the bag. DO NOT seal the bag. Lunch order must be placed in office tray at the **beginning** of the day and will be delivered to classrooms at lunchtime.

A window service is also available with healthy snacks on sale during recess times. On wet weather days this service is cancelled.

## **PARENT BORROWING OF LIBRARY BOOKS**

Our library has some resources which may be useful for adults. Topics such as Religion and Parenting are available for loan.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM**

Uniform is compulsory at all times. Children who attend school without the correct uniform need to bring a note explaining why.

School uniforms are available from The School Uniform Shop in Corio Street. Clothes must be clearly and permanently marked with the child's name.

Jewellery is not permitted, except for studs or sleepers in the case of students with pierced ears - one per ear only.

If children have long hair it must be fastened tidily - green or gold bands only please. Hair must be the child's natural colour and of an acceptable style. The judgment of this will be left to the discretion of the Principal.

### **GIRLS' SUMMER UNIFORM**

Summer dress

Culottes type shorts, made from the summer uniform material, worn with the school's green and gold polo top [with the embroidered logo] are also acceptable in summer.

Plain, white socks either long or short (micro short socks are not permitted).

School bomber jacket or jumper [as worn with winter uniform]

Green school wide brim or bucket hat with embroidered school logo.

### **GIRLS' WINTER UNIFORM**

Winter Tartan Skirt (Grey/Green pin stripe) with bottle green tights.

Tartan slacks (Grey/Green pin stripe) with plain white socks

Gold skivvy or Green/gold polo shirt, long or short sleeved, with embroidered school logo.

School jumper or bomber jacket

### **GIRLS' SPORTS UNIFORM**

Black sports skirt or black shorts/black tracksuit pants (Winter)

Green and Gold polo top [with the embroidered logo]

Plain white socks (micro socks not permitted)

### **BOYS' SUMMER UNIFORM**

Grey school shorts.

Grey socks, long or short (micro short socks are not permitted).

Green and Gold polo top [with the embroidered logo]

Green school wide brim hat or bucket with embroidered school logo.

### **BOYS' WINTER UNIFORM**

Grey trousers or cords

Gold skivvy or green/gold long sleeved polo top [with the embroidered logo]

School jumper or bomber jackets with embroidered school logo.

Plain grey socks (micro short socks are not permitted).

### **BOYS' SPORTS UNIFORM**

Plain black shorts/black tracksuit pants (Winter)

Green and Gold polo top [with the embroidered logo]

Plain white socks (micro socks are not permitted)

### **SCHOOL SHOES**

Both boys and girls to wear plain black shoes only

While plain, black leather runners are acceptable; ALL other sports shoes are acceptable only for sporting activities. Socks must be worn with shoes. "Blundstone" type work boots are not permitted.

### **WEARING OF HATS**

During Terms 1 and 4 all children must wear a school hat. Children without a school hat will be asked to play in shade areas only, for their own protection.

## **KINDERGARTEN DRESS**

### **Clothes**

We believe that young children learn through play; children are encouraged to explore a wide range of materials and activities, including messy play activities on most days.

Please dress your child so that he/she can participate and enjoy messy play and other areas of the program without restrictions.

Clothes need to be comfortable to allow free movement during play.

Please bring a change of clothes in a bag, in case a change is needed.

Please ensure that all clothes are clearly named.

### **Children's Shoes**

For your child's safety, thongs or clogs are not permitted.

Shoes need to be comfortable, well fitted and suitable for running, outdoor play, climbing, block play and messy play.

### **Weather Protection / Sun Smart Policy**

We aim to make children aware of the notion of caring for their skin.

Children are required to wear a hat at Kinder during Terms one and four for outdoor play.

Please remember to send a named sun hat that protects your child's neck and shoulders from the harmful rays of the sun.

It is the parent's responsibility to apply sun block on your child before coming to Kinder.

In cold weather a warm coat and appropriate footwear is necessary so the children can still go outside to play. Spending time outdoors, during every session is a priority which promotes good health through exercise and fresh air.

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY**

St Mel's logo is *'Christ Our Light'*.

Built on the Catholic Faith our hope is to welcome all to St Mel's community.

St Mel's community acknowledges and recognises the traditional custodians of this land and pays respect to their tribal Elders and honours the memory of their ancestors.

We also honour the Jewish roots of our Christian Faith and welcome the many nationalities and religious beliefs that make us uniquely Australian. Our intention is to learn from each other and to build relationships that foster peace, respect and care.



## Parent/Carers/Guardians ~ St Mel's CODE OF CONDUCT

### Introduction

At **St Mel's** we are committed to nurturing respectful relationships and active partnerships with you as **parents/carers/guardians**. We believe that our students' learning journeys are enriched through positive and reciprocal home and school relationships.

As **parents/carers/guardians**, you act as one of the most influential role models in your child's life. We therefore seek your support in promoting and upholding the core values of the school community and its culture of respectful relationships within a Catholic faith tradition

This Code of Conduct will guide your interactions and communications with staff, other **parents/carers/guardians**, students and the wider school community. It articulates the school's key expectations of both staff and **parents/carers/guardians** with regard to respectful relationships and behaviours. It also specifies the school's position with regard to unacceptable behaviours that breach our culture of respect.

This Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with the school's:

- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy and procedure
- Child Safe Policy
- (Schools to insert other relevant policies)

### Our Culture of Respectful Relationships

Among students, staff and **parents/carers/guardians** we strive to develop the following:

- A respect for the innate dignity and worth of every person;
- An ability to understand the situation of others;
- A cooperative attitude in working with others;
- Open, positive and honest communication;
- The ability to work respectfully with other people;
- Trusting relationships; and
- Responsible actions

In Promoting & Upholding this Culture, we expect that <b>STAFF</b> will:	In Promoting & Upholding this Culture, we expect that <b>PARENTS</b> will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with you regularly regarding your child's learning, development and wellbeing;</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for involvement in your child's learning;</li> <li>• Maintain confidentiality over sensitive issues;</li> <li>• Relate with and respond to you in a respectful and professional manner; and</li> <li>• Ensure a timely response to any concerns raised by you.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the school's Catholic ethos, traditions and practices;</li> <li>• Treat staff, students and other parents/cares/guardians with respect and courtesy;</li> <li>• Support the school in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment;</li> <li>• Understand the importance of healthy parent/teacher/child relationships and strive to build the relationships;</li> <li>• Adhere to the school's policies, as outlined on the school website.</li> </ul>

## Raising Concerns & Resolving Conflict

*(Refer also to our Complaints Policy)*

In raising concerns on behalf of your child, or making a complaint about the school's practices or treatment of your child, *we expect that you will:*

- Listen to your child, but remember that a different 'reality' may exist elsewhere;
- Observe the school's stated procedures for raising and resolving a grievance/complaint;
- Follow specified protocol for communication with staff members, including making appointments at a mutually convenient time and communicating your concerns in a constructive manner; and
- Refrain from approaching another child while in the care of the school to discuss or chastise them because of actions towards your child. Refer the matter directly to your child's teacher for follow-up and investigation by the school.

In responding to your concerns or a complaint, *we expect that staff will:*

- Observe confidentiality and a respect for sensitive issues;
- Ensure your views and opinions are heard and understood;
- Communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful;
- Ensure a timely response to your concerns/complaint; and
- Strive for resolutions and outcomes that are satisfactory to all parties.

## Safety & Wellbeing

The school places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment. We regard certain behaviours as harmful and unacceptable if they compromise the safety and wellbeing of a member of our school community. These behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- Shouting or swearing, either in person or by other means
- Physical or verbal intimidation and or threats
- Aggressive hand gestures;
- Writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a member of the school community (emails/social media);
- Racist, sexist or other denigrating comments or images
- Acts of violence; or
- Damage or violation of possessions/property.

When an adult behaves in such unacceptable ways, the Principal or Principal's nominee will seek to resolve the situation in one or more of the following ways:

1. repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation.
2. exercise our legal right to impose a temporary restriction or permanent ban from the school premises
3. report the incident to the police.

This Code of Conduct is endorsed by Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd.

### **NOTE**

Should you have any questions or queries which have not been addressed in this booklet, we would be more than happy to answer them.

*Enjoy St Mel's as we endeavor to look towards supporting your family on their learning journey.*