



# St Gerard Majella School

PARENT HANDBOOK

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St Gerard Majella School will be a place where relationships with God and within the community will be fostered.

An education will be offered to develop the whole child - spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, culturally and physically.

All students will be challenged to develop and achieve their potential.

Parents will be involved and share in policy making.

### **Values on which this Mission Statement is based:**

- ✓ Faith
- ✓ Justice
- ✓ Inclusion
- ✓ Compassion
- ✓ Respect

## **School Vision Statement**

St Gerard Majella students will follow the SGM Way by being faith-filled, respectful community members who act with justice, inclusion and compassion to reach their full potential.

## **WELCOME TO ST GERARD MAJELLA**

St Gerard Majella is a Catholic Primary School catering for boys and girls from Preparatory to Year 6.

Our school acknowledges that the first priority of Catholic Education is to seek deep personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

We are concerned with people: teachers, children and parents, who together have the privilege and responsibility of building a Christian Community.

The school fully recognises the role of parents in the educative process of the child and the desirability of high correlation between home and school values. Hence the co-operation and consultation in home/school relations are highly prized and encouraged. It is therefore our role to create a family atmosphere inspired by love, a concern for one another and a relationship with God.

The goal of this school is to work with parents to develop our children spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, physically and culturally.

We at St Gerard Majella look forward to working with you in the education of your children.

## **HISTORY**

St Gerard Majella Primary School was established in 1988 to cater for the needs of the Catholic population in the Woree section of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Earlville. The school, therefore, forms an integral part of the parish and parish life.

The Franciscan Sisters were given the responsibility of establishing the school with Sister Celine O'Donovan being the first Principal.

In 1992, St Gerard Majella became a systemic school under the direction of the Cairns Diocesan Education System with Mr. Gerard Kearney as Principal. Mr. Kearney guided the school during the next decade as it grew in student numbers and status in the community.

Today the school has an enrolment of over 380 pupils and is staffed by 25 teachers and 16 ancillary staff, all of whom are totally committed to the philosophy and ideals of Catholic Education.

The present Parish Priest is Father Martin Kenny. Fr. Kenny plays an active part in the liturgical life and pastoral care program within the school. The school's motto is "The Lord is my Light" and this indicates that our guiding force in all we do is the Lord who lights our way through life.

## Important Symbols at St Gerard Majella School

### 1. School Logo - Logo Elements

School frontage - Welcoming and inviting, wanting you to be a part of this school and environment.

Mountain behind - Christ is at the centre of our school through the natural features around us. Scripturally a mountain represents a place where you are closer to God.

Building growing behind the cross - Show an element of growth in your learning, spiritual growth, guidance, faith and compassion.

Windows - Open windows to enter with families and friends - inviting & inclusive. Representing the light that enters our school through the parents, students and teachers. Staff of SGM are here to guide and develop the souls that enter these gates. The dark and light part of the windows exhibit how we are all dark and light, to have a balance of good and bad. The 8 windows represent the 7 grades in the school, Prep - Year 6 and one for staff.



2. The Franciscan Cross. This cross located at the entrance of our school in the breezeway, represents the origins of our school's Franciscan charism. The school opened in 1988 with Sr Celine O'Donovan Franciscan Sister of the Immaculate Conception, as the first principal.



3. Murals. These were painted by a local artist – Dan Wallwork. Students of SGM provided ideas for the walls. They incorporate our school logo and where our rainforest meets the reef. One of the smaller murals represents the “SGM Way” and our school values of Faith, Inclusion, Justice, Compassion and Respect and the other represents our colour houses names and logos. Students voted on the sporting house names and logos back in 2014 and they were chosen from famous Australian sporting people.





St Gerard Majella – **Parent Handbook**

4. St Gerard Majella Mosaic. It consists of St Gerard Majella, our patron saint, the Franciscan cross and Australian Franciscan logo as well as the year our school opened. It was kindly made by a parent of our school, Manuela Henwood, an art teacher from St Mary's.



5. Raintree – This raintree was donated by a past family around the time the school opened. The Splatt family lived in the local area and generously donated the tree, the transport and the replanting of the tree to the school grounds.



## **ENROLMENT**

Enrolment is open to all students whose families genuinely seek to participate in the life of the local Catholic community and who are committed to the support of the school’s Mission Statement.

### **1. Enrolment Procedure**

1. Obtain an Enrolment Application Form from the school office or via the school website
2. Submit the completed form to the office with application processing fee (non-refundable).
3. An interview is necessary to complete the enrolment process.
4. Enrolment will be dependent upon vacancies and the school’s physical and human resources available at the time.
5. Before enrolments can be accepted, birth certificates **MUST BE PRESENTED**.
6. We also require an extract or copy of your child’s Baptismal Certificate for future sacramental preparation.

### **2. Entry Requirement**

#### **Prep**

The Preparatory (Prep) Year is the first year of full-time schooling. Prep is offered in all Diocesan primary schools to families seeking to commence their child’s schooling in the Catholic tradition.

From 2017, it will be compulsory for all Queensland children to undertake Prep, prior to commencing Year 1. To minimise disruption to schools and families, the new requirement will not apply to children already enrolled in Year 1 for 2017.

The changes have been made by the Queensland Government to establish the importance of Prep as the first year of schooling.

While Prep is now compulsory, there are some exceptions including circumstances where:

- the child has undertaken education in another jurisdiction that is equivalent to Prep;
- the child was registered for home education in the year prior to enrolment in a state or non-state school; or
- the principal is satisfied the child is ready to be enrolled in Year 1 taking into account the child’s attributes.

To enrol in Prep, children must be aged five years by 30 June in the year of proposed attendance.

Birth date	Eligible for Prep year in:	Eligible for Year 1 in:
Child born 1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015	2020	2021
Child born 1 July 2015 - 30 June 2016	2021	2022
Child born 1 July 2016 - 30 June 2017	2022	2023
Child born 1 July 2017 - 30 June 2018	2023	2024



## **Getting your child ready for school**

Starting school can be an exciting but stressful time for you and your child. For some children it may be the first time that they have been away from their parents. They may be going into a strange environment with unfamiliar people and things around them. Encouraging your child to be independent by practising routines at home will help your child's time at school to be more enjoyable and relaxed.

## **Year 1 - 6**

Enrolments may be taken at the beginning of or during the school year.

In addition to the information contained on the Enrolment Form, parents should notify the school of:

- Reports from previous school/schools attended;
- Details of anything out of the ordinary in respect of the child's health, e.g. any special hazards, treatment, allergies, disabilities;
- Details of any medicine to be taken while at school; (refer to Administration of Medication)
- Any reasons why the child might not be performing as well as he/she should.
- This information is essential for the school to provide the best possible educational environment for your child.

## **3. Media Consent Form**

Media Consent Forms are signed on confirmation of Enrolment.

## **4. Transfer**

Ample notice of intention to transfer children to other schools should be given so that the teachers can make up to-date reports on progress for presentation at the next school. The administration also needs to write up a transfer form to pass onto the next school.

## **5. Family Law & Custody Matters (Refer also to the School's Custody Policy)**

*Cairns Catholic Education Services/St Gerard Majella School* recognises that some families will be subject to family breakdown. In the absence of any notification to the contrary, it will be assumed that both parents retain a shared and equal parental responsibility for their children. This means that the school will recognise that each parent has equal duties, obligations, responsibilities and opportunities in relation to matters involving the school.

If any changes occur in your family relationships which have the potential to impact on the relationship between the school and your family, you are required to advise the school immediately. This includes providing copies of any court orders that may be obtained.

## **TUITION FEES**

The Director of Catholic Education, Cairns, determines tuition fees. School fees at Catholic Schools comprise of Tuition set by Cairns Catholic Education and levies set by the School.

**Accounts are forwarded at the beginning of each term** (4 terms per year). Term fees are due 14 days after statement date. Payment methods include cash, BPay, EFTPOS, Centrepay or Direct Debit. Direct Debit forms are available from the school office. Should you experience difficulties paying your school fees please contact the school accounts department.

Contact the office for current copy of tuition fees and School levies.

### **Levies**

#### **1. Capital Levy**

This levy is charged per year per family and is compulsory for all families. This levy includes maintenance costs, capital expenditure, furniture and equipment and is not tax deductible.

#### **2. Resource and Technology Levy**

This levy covers:

- Booklists, iPad costs, resources for student learning, library and technology equipment and maintenance

#### **3. Activities Levy**

This levy includes diaries, reading logs, online subscriptions etc.

#### **4. General Levy**

This levy includes one free bus per class per year, Arts Council and classroom consumables.



## **Parish Funding**

The school is a part of the Our Lady Help of Christians Parish. It was originally built by the parish and Federal Government Capital Grants. The P & F currently donate a percentage of the proceeds from the school fete to the Parish. The main source of income for the parish is the Planned Giving Program. This fund can only be spent on parish programs and parish maintenance.

Your contribution to the Parish Planned Giving will be of your choosing and additional to that of the St Gerard Majella Building Levy. If you wish to contribute you can contact the Parish secretary.

## **SCHOOL STRUCTURE**

### **1. School Staff**

All teachers are registered with the Queensland College of Teachers and are accredited by the Diocese of Cairns to Teach in a Catholic School or to Teach Religion. School Officers have qualifications in School Support and Suitability Cards for Child related employment.



**Principal**

Mrs. Lea Martin

**Parish Priest**

Father Martin Kenny

**APRE**

Ms. Gaby Donnelly

**APA & CST**

Mrs. Kelly Sheppard

**Class Teachers**

There are 2 streams of each year level from Prep – Year 6

**Information Communication**

**Technology Teacher**

1 Part time

**Learning Support Teachers**

2 Part time

**Early Intervention Teacher**

1 Part time

**Specialist Teachers**

The Arts, HPE, LOTE

**Administration Officer - Finance**

Mrs. Margaret Markovinovic

<b>Administration Officer</b>	Mrs. Sarah Rankine (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) Mrs. Mary Robertson (Thursday and Friday)
<b>Student Learning Officers</b>	7 Classroom support 1 Resource Centre
<b>Counsellor</b>	1 Part Time
<b>Tuckshop Convenor</b>	1 Full Time
<b>Indigenous Liaison Officer</b>	1 Part Time

## 2. Professional Development

The Director of Catholic Education has indicated that each year there will be seven days designated for staff only activities. Only one of these days will occur during term time.

This day is advised in the school calendar and newsletter.

The Teaching Staff attend five days of Professional Development before the beginning of the School Year and any other day, which the Director advises.

## 3. Daily Routine

Bell Times (Preparatory to Year Six)

8:15am	Play Bell
8:30 am	Bell - play ceases
8:35am	Lessons begin
10:45am	Lunch break P-3 eating time, Yr 4 - 6 play time
11.05am	P – 3 play time, Yr 4 – 6 eating time
11:28 am	Bell - play ceases (wash bell)
11:30 am	Bell - Lessons begin
1:30 pm	Lunch Break P – 3 eating time, Yr 4 - 6 play time
1:40pm	P – 3 play time, Yr 4 - 6 eating time
1:48pm	Wash bell
1:50 pm	Bell - Lessons begin
3:00 pm	Bell - classes cease for the day.

There is no play after school. Students wait at the Stop, Drop and Go zone to be collected from school. A Teacher remains on duty until 3:20pm.

## 4. Attendance

Regular attendance is necessary if pupils are to gain the greatest possible benefit from school activities.

Parents whose children will not be attending school that day or will be late must contact the school to advise staff **BY PHONE, BY EMAIL OR IN WRITING**. If a child has not arrived for school and the school does not know of the child's whereabouts, parents will be sent a SMS text message to their mobile phone (to the Main Contact as nominated on the Enrolment Form). It is the responsibility of the parent to then inform the office immediately of the reason for the student's absence.

## 5. Arrival and Departure

Children should arrive at school by 8.30am when the first bell rings, to unpack school bags and to get ready for the day's work. Students arriving before the 8:15am play bell wait in the Activity Centre. The grounds are not supervised by rostered teachers before 8:15am. We ask that students not arrive at school before 8:00am.

Late arrivals – students arriving after the 8.35am bell **MUST** be signed in at the front office by an adult and take a late slip to their class teacher.

Upon dismissal at 3pm, children are obliged to leave the school grounds immediately unless waiting for the arrival of parents or buses. The pick-up area, which is a designated 'Stop, Drop and Go Zone' (this applies before and after school) is in front of the school. Parents may park in the parking bays opposite the school. The children going home by bus or waiting to be collected by parents are supervised until 3:20 pm.

Please ensure that all children are picked up by 3.20 pm. This also avoids competing with traffic from St Mary's Catholic College students as they are dismissed at 3.15 pm.

For parents who may experience difficulty with the pick- up times the school provides an 'Outside School Hours Care Program'.



## 6. Leaving School Grounds

Children are not permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. On collecting the child the parent/caregiver is required to inform the class teacher and school administration. All students must be signed out at the school office prior to departure. If going for an appointment and returning to school, students must be signed back in at the office.

## 7. Out of School Hours Care

An After School and Vacation Care programme is offered for children at St Gerard Majella. (Refer to the OSHC brochure for further information).

### Hours of Operation:

After School	2:30pm – 6:00pm
Vacation Care & School holidays	7:00am - 6:00pm

Additional fees are charged for these services. Information is available from the school office or by telephoning Outside School Hours Care direct on 4033 7288.

## **CURRICULUM**

The curriculum represents what students are taught. This is informed by the Australian Curriculum and syllabi set out by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, which outline the core knowledge, understanding, skills and general capabilities important for students. The curriculum describes what young people should learn as they progress through schooling and forms the foundation for high quality teaching to meet the needs of students. The curriculum plays a vital role in forming attitudes and skills necessary to become responsible, active and informed citizens of Australia’s future generations.



Our view about learning and teaching is informed by the Diocesan Learn Framework that describes the key elements, which inform curriculum planning and decision making, along with the delivery and evaluation of curriculum in classrooms.

**As defined in our Diocesan Learning Framework we seek to nurture students who aspire to be and become:**

- ✓ People of hope, joy, courage and wisdom
- ✓ Communicators who are effective and creative
- ✓ Learners who are inquiring and reflective, seeking truth
- ✓ Participants and producers who are independent and interdependent
- ✓ Citizens of the world who are responsible, ethical and resourceful
- ✓ People enriched by a spiritual appreciation of self, God, neighbour and life.

**The Key Learning Areas at SGM are:**

- ✓ Religion
- ✓ English
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Science
- ✓ Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)
- ✓ The Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama and Media)
- ✓ Health and Physical Education
- ✓ Technology (Digital and Design)
- ✓ Language Other Than English (Japanese)



Our school based programs are developed to meet the interests, needs and abilities of all our students. Continuous monitoring of children’s progress informs our planning. Teachers are supported in providing an exciting and relevant curriculum through staff professional development, networking and collaborative planning time.

## 1. Learning Areas

### (i) Religious Education

#### Religious Education and Religious Life of the School

The vision for Religious Education for schools and colleges in the Diocese of Cairns is to *‘aspire to educate and form students who are challenged to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and who are literate in the Catholic and broader Christian tradition so that they might participate critically and authentically in faith contexts and wider society.’* (Religious Education Curriculum).

The Vision emphasises the two distinct yet complimentary dimensions of Religious Education:

- **The Religion Curriculum:** the classroom teaching and learning of religion to develop students’ religious literacy in the Catholic Christian tradition. Units of work incorporate the strands of Sacred Texts, Church, Christian Life and Beliefs.
- **The Religious Life of the School:** the celebration of the Catholic faith through prayer, liturgy, the sacraments and social justice activities:
  - Prayer is an important part our school life. Students are taught traditional Catholic prayers as well as informal prayers such as prayers of thanks, praise and blessing. Classes also take time for Christian Meditation as a form of prayer.
  - Our whole school celebrates liturgies (either Eucharistic or non-Eucharistic) at significant times throughout the year. Year level liturgies occur once per term. Students in Year 4, 5 and 6 receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at various times throughout the year. All parents and caregivers are warmly welcome to attend any of these celebrations.
  - In our parish of Our Lady Help of Christians, a parish-based Sacramental program is in place to help families prepare their children for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. This program focusses on the parents taking responsibility for their child’s faith development. Students can enroll on the Sacramental Program in Years 4-6.
  - At St Gerard Majella we support the Social Justice teachings of the Church by participating in fundraising activities which support Caritas Australia’s Project Compassion, Catholic Mission and St Vincent de Paul’s Christmas Appeal.

### (ii) The Arts

The Learning Area of The Arts, which incorporates, Music, Dance, Drama and Media is taught in all year levels by a specialist teacher. The individual areas are taught for one hour per week for one term during a school year. Classroom teachers provide activities in the classroom for the Visual Arts strand.

#### • Music

Instrumental tuition is available through a set program provided by teachers of St Mary’s Catholic College. Arrangements are made at the commencement of the new school year and the program caters for children from Years 2-6. Students can also choose to have piano lessons, which are provided by a private teacher who visits the school. Additional fees apply.

The school aims to give children the maximum opportunity to develop their musical and artistic abilities through School Concerts, Cultural Festivals, Eisteddfods etc. St Gerard Majella Junior and Senior Choirs perform for school events.

### **(iii) HPE and Sport**

Prep - Year 4 have specialist PE lessons once per week plus other time to implement the PE curriculum. Years 5 and 6 teachers take their own PE class and train the students for the Cross Country and other sports days.

Every child is required to participate in school PE lessons and sport unless the parents/caregivers have notified the class teacher of a medical condition affecting participation.

At St Gerard Majella our philosophy is to encourage the development of positive attitudes of good sportsmanship, fairness and a spirit of teamwork. The school is a member of the Cairns & District Independent Primary Schools Sport Association.

The school assigns children from the same family to a particular sporting team. These are Fraser (yellow), Pearson (red), Freeman (blue) and Strickland (green). Children wear their school sports shirt on their designated HPE day and on annual sports days during the year.

### **(iv) Digital Technologies**

Teachers and students are supported by a Teacher Librarian, who assists classroom teachers, to integrate Digital Technologies into the Curriculum. Each year level is equipped with 10 laptop computers and two classroom computers. Years 3-6 are 1:1 iPads, and Prep – Year 2 classes have access to iPads and iPods. The school currently has Interactive White Boards (IWB) in most classrooms.



### **(v) Extra-Curricular Activities**

Extra-Curricular Activities include but are not limited to the following: -

Numerous sporting opportunities (including Rugby League, Cricket, Netball, Futsal)	Inter-house cross country and athletics	Visiting sporting clinics (Netball, Tennis, AFL, Soccer)
Visiting school performances	School camps and excursions	Calanna Speaking Competition
Justice Squad	Maker Space Coding and Technology Activities	Choir
Buddies Program	Writers Club	Book Week activities
Bootcamp before school	Chess Club	Garden Club

## 2. Communicating Student Progress

Since education is a partnership between the home and school, regular communication is essential.

A Parent Information Evening is held at the beginning of every school year, where teachers outline the Curriculum and inform parents about home learning expectations, camps and any other special events.

### Accountabilities to parents are reported by:

1. A written report at the end of each semester which:
  - a. Includes comments about a student's strengths, weaknesses and recommendations to assist improvement.
  - b. Uses A – E (or equivalent) descriptors
  - c. Provides parents with an opportunity for an interview if required.
2. Oral Interviews are conducted at the end of Term 1 and can be booked via PTO (Parent Teacher Online). Oral interviews are available to parents at any time on request.
3. National Assessment Program – English and Numeracy (NAPLAN) reports for Years 3 and 5.

Parents are welcome to make an appointment to meet with a class teacher/s. In many instances this will have to be in advance as teachers often make other commitments before or after school. Many students have a home learning diary and this may provide an avenue for communication between home and school. If you wish to contact class teachers please leave a message at the office or make an appointment to see them. Emails may be forwarded via the School Administration Officer.

## 3. Home Learning (Refer also to the School's Home Learning Policy)

Home learning should help to develop good study habits, to reinforce work done at school, and provide an opportunity for parents to share in the educational process.

Each child will be assigned home learning on a regular basis. The amount of home learning will vary according to the age, learning needs and home circumstances of each child.

Parents may be asked to sign a home learning sheet or diary. Home learning may be on a contract basis. Some classes may have assignments/contracts, which will require home learning on the weekends.

Reading is an essential part of home learning. All children should be encouraged to spend at least 10 minutes of their home learning time on reading activities each night.

Children should read books sent home by the classroom teacher, books from the school or city library or a book from his/her personal collection.



Reading activities could involve the following:

1. Listening to your child read the book sent home by the class teacher;
2. A parent/caregiver reading to the child and discussing the story;
3. A parent/caregiver listening to the child reading their library book, newspaper articles, or magazines and discussing the stories, looking at difficult words, asking questions about the story, or closely examining the pictures or illustrations and discussing them.

## **4. Social – Emotional Learning**

Education’s main purpose is to provide all children with the foundations for achievement and social/emotional well being in school, work and the world tomorrow. At St Gerard Majella we follow *Program Achieve*.

- Our core value is the development of the potential of all children (academically, intellectually, interpersonally and emotionally) through improving in children 5 foundations – Emotional Resilience, Confidence, Persistence, Organisation and Getting Along – that research indicates as determining the extent to which children achieve and experience social and emotional well-being.
- Central to the development of these 5 Foundations is explicit instruction in Habits of the Mind: Accepting Myself, Taking Risks, Setting Goals, Planning my Time, Being Tolerant of Others, Thinking First, Playing by The Rules and Social Responsibility.
- The Life Perspectives of Jesus or Gospel values underpin these foundations in the Catholic School context.
- Circles Solutions and Second Steps are supplementary programs used.

The purpose of Program Achieve is realised in the following core benefits and action:

- Children’s belief in their capacity to positively influence their achievements in all areas of life and to cope with the pressures of growing up by learning and applying the 5 Foundations.
- Parents’ belief in their capacity to positively influence their children’s achievements in all areas and their active involvements in the process of developing the 5 Foundations in their children.
- Educators’ belief in their capacity to positively develop all children’s potential, regardless of any negative influences from home background and/or peer culture and their active involvement in the process of teaching the 5 Foundations.
- Administrators belief in the capacity of school culture to positively develop the potential of all children and their active involvement in providing the opportunity for the 5 Foundations to be incorporated by teachers, parent and children into school programs and ethos.

*(Bernard, M. Program Achieve & A Guide to Working with Teachers and Parents)*

## **5. Excursions and School Camps**

Excursions and school camps are important learning and socialising experiences and are part of the school program. All year levels participate in excursions during the year whilst school camps are limited to Years 5 and 6. Parents/Guardians will be advised by class teachers when an excursion or school camp is being planned. Such advice will explain the nature of the activities, the time and venue involved, the materials required, transport arrangements, costs and clothing requirements.

Parental refusal without good reason will be seen as parental failure to co-operate with the school in its attempt to provide a total, well balanced and relevant education for children. All requests for exemption must be referred to the Principal in writing. Parents experiencing financial difficulty in regard to such activities should contact the Principal personally.

## **6. Resource Centre**

An excellent Resource Centre has been established at the school. Borrowing facilities are available to children. Loans are limited to two weeks and children are expected to supply a library bag, which will protect books in transit. It is expected that books damaged or lost will be replaced or paid for by parents. Parents are welcome to browse or borrow. Please see the Library Personnel if you wish to use this facility.

A Green Room is located in the Resource Centre and is used by students to create visual presentations.

A digital display is located on the Resource Centre wall (and is visible as you walk along the main concourse), which is uploaded with current activities and other events happening in the school.

## **7. Student Leadership**

The School Captains, Vice Captains and Sports Captains form the Student Leadership Team. The Student Leadership Team raises students' concerns with School Leadership Team, initiates school activities for students, represents the school at interschool functions and provides service to the school.

During Year 5 students participate in a leadership program and following this process School Captains and Vice Captains are elected at the end of the school year. Once the School Captains have been elected, elections are then held for Sports Captains. The School Captains help the Leadership Team to run Assemblies and represent the school when necessary.





## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

Please refer to the SGM Way. The SGM Way is a school wide positive relationship framework.

### **1. Conduct**

Parents and teachers expect a high standard of politeness and behaviour at all times. This is true not only during school hours but in moving between home and school by either private car, bikes or bus transport. Students in school uniform not only represent themselves but also their family, their school and their church.

St Gerard Majella School Policies are available on the school website and Parent Portal. The responsibility of monitoring behaviour and disciplining children rests with the parents. The primary function of St Gerard Majella School is to assist parents in helping their children grow and mature in mind, character and spirit.

Breaches of the school code of behaviour will be primarily handled by the class teacher in conjunction if necessary with the Assistant Principals and/or Principal. Inappropriate behaviour will be discussed and a plan of action to correct the behaviour will be implemented.

It is extremely important that parents support the school and hold their child accountable for what he or she does at school. Without this partnership between parents and school, children can come to think that home and school are unrelated areas of authority. We can best serve the children by working together.

There will be at times differences of opinions and situations that need discussion. When these occur, please contact the school to discuss the problem or arrange for an appointment to talk things over. Parents are expected to refrain from questioning the school's or teacher's disciplinary actions with or in front of the child, but rather speak privately initially with the teacher and if necessary the Principal to solve any problems. As always a discussion and sharing of ideas, disagreements and/or complaints should reflect our faith in action and will help support the child's respect for all.



### **2. Children's Responsibility**

Children have a role to play in ensuring that St Gerard Majella remains a place, which acts out the Gospel Values.

**Children have the following responsibilities:**

- ✓ The responsibility to allow others to work without being disturbed. This means that children work quietly, make good use of their time and do not interrupt others.
- ✓ The responsibility to help make this school a good place to be. This means being thoughtful, respectful and courteous to others.
- ✓ The responsibility to take care of property and the environment. This means that they take care of their own and school property and respect the property of others.
- ✓ The responsibility to obey school rules. This means observing all safety, playground and classroom rules.



## St Gerard Majella – **Parent Handbook**

- ✓ The responsibility to take school messages home. This means that it is important for children to give all school messages to their parents.
- ✓ The responsibility to practise good personal cleanliness. This means that children come to school clean and practise good health habits at school.
- ✓ The responsibility to show pride in their school by observing correct rules of behaviour to and from school.

## **PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

A copy of this document is available on the school website, Parent Portal and on the CES website. Please refer to Parents and Community-Parental Involvement on the website.



## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

### **1. Parents & Friends Association**

#### **(i) Role**

To participate in the optimum spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of students in the school.

#### **(ii) Membership**

All parents and/or guardians of children attending the school, and the staff of the school are members of the association. The Principal and Parish Priest are ex officio members.

The school needs the interest and involvement of parents in order to provide an enriched learning environment for students. One means of active participation in your child's school is through the activities of the P&F Association.

Our P&F Association is affiliated with the State P. & F. Association. This requires each family to pay an association fee and this will be attached to the first term school fees.

The P&F committee meets in the staffroom monthly. The date and time is published in the school newsletter. All parents and friends are encouraged to attend meetings.

#### **(iii) Activities**

Current operations and activities, which are organised by the P&F, include operating the Tuckshop and Second Hand Uniform shop, holding Fathers' and Mothers' day stalls, organizing a Fete and other social functions during the year.

### **2. School Board**

The school has a School Board that provides a local level pastoral structure for organised co-operation and team work in the ministry of Catholic Education. The board has responsibility in the areas of:

- Policy making and management
- Provision and maintenance of school building
- Budgeting and communication

All parents are invited to consider serving on the Board. Board meetings are held in the staffroom monthly. Dates and time advised in the newsletter.

### **3. SafeST Committee**

The SafeSt Committee is a joint St Gerard Majella/St Mary's Catholic College committee that looks at the issues of transport safety for the schools. The committee meets with representatives of Queensland Transport and Cairns City Council to address major safety issues. Meetings are held once a term and all parents are welcome.

## **4. Tuckshop**

The school has its own tuckshop catering for the children’s lunch.

The Tuckshop operates 5 days per week serving both big lunch and little lunch. Online orders are preferred and must be placed by 8:15am. Lunches may also be pre-ordered using a separate brown paper bag for each order to be placed in the class tuckshop box by 8:45am. Limited items are available for purchases over the counter.

The Tuckshop is run by our P&F and is staffed by a paid convener and volunteers. Parent help is always appreciated so please contact the school if you can assist.

## **5. Classroom Help**

Parents can give valuable assistance around the school. There are many ways in which you can help. Teachers often send home a letter requesting assistance in their classroom for help with: art and craft, sport, listening to reading, writing, publishing stories, literacy activities etc. Through sharing these skills with the students and the staff you are able to provide a wealth of experience for the children. Please do not feel shy in approaching the school as we encourage you to be involved in your child’s school. Volunteers must complete the Volunteers Induction booklet at the office and sign in on the Visitors Register.

Other areas where your participation can be of assistance and encouragement include:

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Class masses            | Book Fair               |
| Sporting carnivals      | Sacramental programmes  |
| Curriculum nights       | Excursions              |
| Parent in-service night | Parent/Teacher meetings |
| Classroom activities    | Working Bees            |
- P&F functions, social gatherings and fundraising

## **STUDENT SAFETY & HEALTH ISSUES**

St Gerard Majella School is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working and learning environment that will contribute to the well being of all employees, students and other users of the school's facilities.

### **1. Administration of Medication during School Hours**

School staff can assist a student with medication under the carer provisions of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation (1996) provided that a written request is received from the student's parent/caregiver and that the medication includes an original pharmacy label detailing the name of the person authorised to take the medication, dosage, time to be taken and medical practitioner's name. Staff must follow the directions on the original label attached to the medication container.

We are required to receive medical authorisation from a prescribing health practitioner (e.g. doctor, dentist, optometrist, but **not** a pharmacist) to administer **any** medication to students, including those bought over-the-counter.

School staff are not to administer prescription medications, unless they meet the accountability of a written request from a parent/caregiver and the medication includes an original pharmacy label detailing the name of the person authorised to take the medication, dosage, time to be taken and medical practitioner's name.

### **2. Accidents and Sick Children**

Minor accidents are treated at the school. If a child is seriously injured while at school the Ambulance is immediately called and parents are notified as soon as possible. If your child takes ill during the day, you will be advised as soon as possible so that the child can be taken home. Until then, the child will be cared for in the sick bay.

### **3. Emergency Contacts**

Please advise the school office promptly of any changes of address, phone number etc. to ensure that you can be contacted if required.

### **4. Contagious Diseases and Illnesses**

If your child contracts an infectious disease (e.g. chicken pox, measles, or school sores) you are required to keep the child at home until the disease is no longer infectious. You will be informed of the period of exclusion by your medical practitioner or when you contact the school.

### **5. Head lice**

Whilst the incidence of head lice is most noticeable in schools, the school itself is not necessarily the source. Unfortunately school becomes an area of contact and spreading, particularly by children sharing hats. Where

evidence of head lice or eggs is noticed, satisfactory treatment must be undertaken. This matter is a parent/caregiver's responsibility. We cannot have head lice eradicated unless everybody fully cooperates. Effective lotions and preventative sprays are available from chemists and hairdressers. This problem has over recent years become frustrating, in that the head lice seem to have acquired immunity to some lotions. Parents will be notified of head lice outbreaks. Children are not to return to school until all eggs and louse are removed from the scalp.

## **6. Dental Clinic**

Free Dental treatment is offered to all students through the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, Oral Health Service. Appointments can be made via their Central Booking Service by phoning 1300 300 850. Your child can receive this treatment by visiting the Dental Clinic at Balaclava State School once an appointment has been made. A skilled team, comprising of a dentist, dental therapists, and dental assistants, provides treatment.

## **7. Weather Considerations**

In the event of heavy storms, cyclones etc, children will be sent home after parents have been contacted. Please listen to police reports via the local radio stations regarding closure of schools.



## **8. SunSmart Procedures**

1. Students and staff will be encouraged to protect themselves from the dangers of the sun by wearing broadbrimmed hats, appropriate protective clothing and 30+ sun screen when out in the sun. All students to wear the St Gerard Majella Bucket Hat (part of uniform).
2. Staff and parents will be encouraged to wear broad brimmed hats.
3. The school and P & F will consider sun protection when reviewing school uniform.
4. Sun Protection Awareness will continue to be promoted through health lessons and integrated into subject areas.

5. The Staff, parents and visitors to the school will model sun safe behaviour.
6. Students will be educated so they will ultimately take responsibility for their own sun protection.
7. Students are responsible for applying their own sunscreen protection for daily application.
8. There will be suitable shade areas provided in the school grounds, including basketball court.
9. Parents will be encouraged to support the school in the promotion of sun safe behaviour.
10. Outdoor activities will be limited where possible to 60 minutes or less when in direct sunlight. Considerations will be given during extended periods e.g. Athletics Carnival Day. Where practicable, outdoor activities will take place before 10am and after 3pm.

### **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

1. **Sport** - Minimum sun protection standards for participation will include: No school hat - no school sport. Approved school uniform designed to protect students is to be worn. Teachers will also recommend to children that they apply sunscreen to exposed areas for their personal protection.
2. **Lunchtime Play** - Minimum sun protection standards for participation away from shaded area: No school hat - no outdoor play.
3. **Outdoor Learning Activities** - In any instance where children are directed outdoors for learning activities minimum sun protection will apply as for Lunchtime Play.
4. **Excursions** - When children are taken away from school, all class members and teachers will be required to take a hat and comply with minimum sun protection standards.





## **UNIFORM** (Refer also to the School’s Student Dress Code Policy)

Uniforms are purchased from Uniform Link, MacDonnell St Manunda. A school uniform is important in creating school spirit and bonding the students as a group. It is expected that the correct uniform be worn every day and that students be neat in their dress and appearance. It is expected that all parents will support the school’s requirement that full and correct uniform be worn at all times. Any deviation from this should be explained, in writing, to the class teacher.

**ALL** items of clothing should be clearly marked with the child’s name.

### **1. Girls**

#### **(i) Formal**

**Blouse:** Maroon checks poly/cotton, button through, worn out.

**Skort:** Maroon OR

**Dress:** Maroon and check poly/cotton. Princess line with maroon trim on collar and cuffs. Zip Front.

**Shoes:** Black Leather shoes: lace ups, Velcro or joggers. No colour trim allowed. Brown sandal optional for Terms 1 & 4.

**Socks:** White short socks. Must cover ankle.

**Hat:** Maroon bucket hat.

#### **(ii) Sport**

**Shirt:** School sports shirt with house colour

**Shorts:** Maroon nylon mesh basketball short with blue strip or Skort.

**Shoes:** Joggers

**Socks:** White short socks. Must cover ankle.

**Hat:** Maroon bucket hat.

Sport uniform may be worn only on the days when the class has HPE and annual sports days. Teachers will inform students of these days.

### **2. Boys**

#### **(i) Formal**

**Shirt:** Grey school poly/cotton, button through, worn out.

**Shorts:** Maroon Ruggers – short or long leg.

**Shoes:** Black Leather shoes: lace ups, Velcro or joggers. No colour trim allowed. Brown sandal optional for terms 1 & 4.

**Socks:** Grey short socks. Must cover ankle.

**Hat:** Maroon bucket hat.

#### **(ii) Sport**

**Shirt:** School sports shirt with house colour

**Shorts:** Maroon nylon mesh basketball short with blue strip.

**Shoes:** Joggers.

**Socks:** Grey short socks. Must cover ankle.

**Hat:** Maroon bucket hat.

Sport uniform may be worn only on the days when the class has HPE and annual sports days. Teachers will inform students of these days.

### 3. Other items

**Bike Helmets:** Are a compulsory part of the school uniform for cyclists.

**Hair:**

- Girls: Long/shoulder length hair must be tied back or plaited.
- Boys: Hair to be kept at or above collar length or tied back if longer.

Extreme hairstyles are not permitted. For example: mowhawks, rat tails, tracks and colours. This list is indicative, not exhaustive.

Hair decoration: Kept to a minimum; ribbons should be maroon, navy or white or made from the girls' uniform material.

**Hats:** Compulsory. The school has a "No hat, no play policy" and children who do not have a hat cannot play and are required to sit under the covered areas. (Refer also to the Sun Smart Policy Statement)

**Jewellery:** Small gold/silver/birthstone studs or gold/silver sleepers. Only one earring per ear. A fine gold or silver chain with a religious symbol attached i.e. saint's medallion or crucifix is permissible. Watches are also allowed. No other forms of jewellery are to be worn including bracelets.

**Jumper:** Dark maroon jacket or jumper for winter wear.

### 4. Secondhand Uniform Shop

Secondhand uniforms are available for purchase from the school. Opening times are published in the newsletter. Parents are encouraged to donate any uniforms which are no longer needed.



## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1. Alcohol**

Under current Diocesan policy, the consumption of alcohol by any person participating in school activities in a supervisory role is completely forbidden.

### **2. Parking**

- a. **Parents:** Parents are provided with drop off / pick up points as well as parking bays in front of the school, parallel to Anderson Road.

**The Cairns Regional Council has allocated the bays closest to the school as a Loading Zone from 8:00am - 9:30am and 2:30pm - 3:30pm.** Stop-Drop-Go - The bays in question have been painted yellow and are clearly sign posted.

**Under no circumstances are parents to vacate their cars while in these bays** nor remain parked for over 2 minutes. This area is periodically policed by the traffic branch ensuring the safety of our children.

- b. **Staff:** The staff has an allocated parking area below the school oval and **request parents not to use this area** as a pick up or drop off point for their children. This area is unsupervised and may endanger the safety of your children and motorists.

### **3. Lost Property**

Marked lost property is usually easy to locate. A lost property rack is located in the Activity Centre. This rack is emptied periodically and unclaimed articles are sent to St Vincent de Paul.

### **4. Mobile Phones (Refer also to the School's Mobile Phone Policy)**

Whilst the school acknowledges that mobile phones are important modern day communication tools it is important that there is appropriate use. Use of mobile phones by students will be limited to out of school hours' time. Mobile phones are not permitted in classes and are not to be used during school hours or lunch breaks unless there is a significant emergency.

### **5. Newsletter**

The newsletter is the main form of communication between school and home. It contains information regarding upcoming events, educational views, etc. that we consider are important to the whole school community. The newsletter will be emailed to parents weekly or fortnightly on a Tuesday. It is also available on the school website and Parent Portal.

### **6. Parent Portal**

The Parent Portal is a secure one-stop-shop for parents to access information about school events, report cards, announcements, forms, policies, school contact details etc.