



St Gerard Majella School

PARENT HANDBOOK

Contents

Contents.....	1
WELCOME TO ST GERARD MAJELLA.....	1
HISTORY	1
IMPORTANT SYMBOLS AT ST GERARD MAJELLA.....	2
ENROLMENT	4
1. Enrolment Procedure	4
2. Entry Requirement	4
3. Media Consent Form	5
4. Transfer	5
5. Family Law and Custody Matters (Refer also to the School’s Family Law Matters Policy)	5
TUITION FEES.....	6
Levies	6
SCHOOL STRUCTURE.....	7
1. School Staff	7
2. Professional Development	8
3. Daily Routine	8
4. Attendance	9
5. Arrival and Departure	9
6. Leaving School Grounds	9
7. Out of School Hours Care	9
LEARNING AND TEACHING	10
1. Learning Areas	11
2. Communicating Student Progress	13
3. Home Learning (Refer also to the School’s Home Learning Policy)	13
4. Social – Emotional Learning	14
5. Excursions and School Camps Consent Forms	14
6. Resource Centre	15
7. Student Leadership	15

WHOLE SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN	16
1. Conduct	16
2. Children’s Responsibility	16
PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT	17
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	18
1. Family and Community Engagement Team	18
2. School Board	18
3. SafeST Committee	19
4. Tuckshop.....	19
5. Classroom Help	19
STUDENT SAFETY & HEALTH ISSUES	20
1. Administration of Medication during School Hours	20
2. Accidents and Sick Children	20
3. Student Care Insurance	20
4. Emergency Contacts	20
5. Contagious Diseases and Illnesses	20
6. Head Lice	21
7. Dental Clinic	21
8. Weather Considerations	21
9. SunSmart Procedures	21
UNIFORM (Refer also to the School’s Student Dress Code Policy).....	23
1. Uniforms.....	23
2. Other items	24
3. Second Hand Uniform Shop	24
GENERAL INFORMATION	24
1. Alcohol	24
2. Parking	244
3. Lost Property	25
4. Mobile Phones (Refer also to the School’s Personal Electronic Devices and Mobile Phone Policy)	25
5. Newsletter	25
6. Parent Portal and MyCE App.....	25
7. Facebook and SGM Community Hub	25



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 students 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 around 400 students and is staffed by over 50 dedicated staff members, all of whom are totally committed to the philosophy and ideals of Catholic Education.

The current Parish Priest is Father Nathan McKay. Fr. McKay 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 and inclusive. Representing the light that enters our school through the parents, students and teachers. Staff of SGM are here to guide and develop the students who enter these gates. 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 the natural environment of the Cairns Diocese, our sporting house names and logos (students voted on the sporting house names and logos back in 2014 and they were chosen from famous Australian sporting identities) and our SGM Wellbeing Wall.



4. St Gerard Majella Mosaic: 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 past parent of our school, Manuela Henwood.



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. At St Gerard Majella School, we believe that children can derive tremendous benefit from taking part in regular nature play and learning outside of the classroom. Nature play also provides experiential opportunities allowing children to respond positively to challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change. Active outdoor learning and nature play readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication, problem solving, an enterprising attitude and cooperative learning. At SGM we have developed several spaces to promote Outdoor Learning and Nature Play, including the area around our beautiful Raintree.



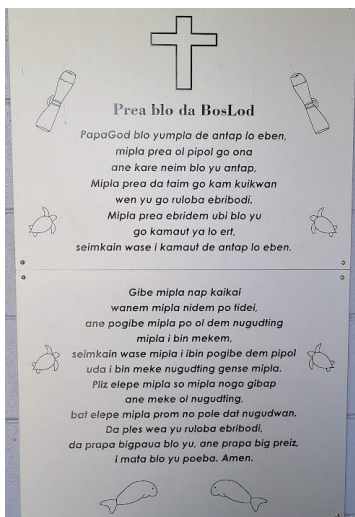
6. **Yarning Circle:** A yarning circle is a respectful space and once entered, every person, idea, conversation and even the space itself, must be treated with respect. The Yarning Circle is located at the front of our school, next to the Raintree playground. Everyone is welcome. This space can be used for meetings, outdoor classes/lessons, reflection. “Bilan Gudan”, welcome to our Yarning Circle.



7. **The Totem / Speaking Pole:** The totem pole in our breezeway garden was installed by the Traditional Custodians of the land that St Gerard Majella School is built on. The markings on the pole tell the story of why the cassowary no longer flies and why its feathers are black. The cassowary is a totem of the Traditional Custodians. Next to this pole you will see the “Welcome to Country” sign, also installed by the Traditional Custodians.



8. **The Bush Tucker Garden:** This garden can be found within our breezeway garden. We are looking to expand the bush tucker garden to include more native indigenous plants.



9. **The Lord’s Prayer:** The Lord’s Prayer in Torres Strait Creole language can be found outside the School Counsellor’s office. Torres Strait Creole is also known as “Ailan Tok” or “Yumplatok”.

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 supporting the school’s Mission Statement.

1. Enrolment Procedure

1. Obtain an online Enrolment Application Form by contacting the school office or via the school or Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns website
2. Submit the completed online application form to the office with application processing fee (non-refundable) and supporting documentation.
3. An interview is necessary to complete the enrolment process. An application does not guarantee a position.
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.

To enrol in Prep, children must be aged five years by 30 June in the year of proposed attendance. Applications for Prep enrolments are accepted up to 31 January of the year preceding the intended enrolment. Prep interviews are then conducted in Term 1 of that year and confirmation of enrolment is provided by the end of Term 2.



Birth date	Eligible for Prep year in:
Child born 1 July 2019 - 30 June 2020	2025
Child born 1 July 2020 - 30 June 2021	2026
Child born 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022	2027
Child born 1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023	2028

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 throughout 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 in respect of the child's health, e.g., any special hazards, treatment, allergies, disabilities, specialist reports;
- Details of any medication to be taken while at school; (refer to Administration of Medication)
- 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 and may also be updated at any time.

4. Transfer

Ample notice of intention to transfer children to other schools should be given including completing an Exit Student Form so that the teachers can make available up to-date reports on progress for presentation at the next school. A transfer form will be completed to pass on to the next school.

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

Cairns Catholic Education Services and 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 all parties providing copies of any official court orders that may be obtained.

TUITION FEES

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

Accounts are forwarded at the beginning of each term (four terms per year, three terms per year for students in Year 6). Term fees are due 14 days after statement date. Payment methods include BPay, EFTPOS 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 a 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 includes but is not limited to: Booklists, iPad costs, resources for student learning, library and technology equipment, diaries, reading logs and online subscriptions.

3. Activities Levy

This levy includes but is not limited to: Excursions, Arts Council, musicals, external sport competitions, Eisteddfod costs, NAIDOC week, science week and book week activities.



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. Kelly Sheppard
Parish Priest	Father Nathan McKay
Assistant Principal Religious Education	Mrs. Belinda Porter
Assistant Principal - Learning and Teaching	Mrs. Renee Grima
Leader of Diversity	Mrs. Maree Bryne
Leader of Learning and Teaching	Ms. Suzanne Mullen
School Counsellor	Ms. Critty Wallace
Class Teachers	Prep – Mallory Van Wensveen and Melissa Pavey Year 1 – Louise Cronin/Lara Veivers & Alison Hussey/Bec Paterson Year 2 – Ann Blakeney and Anna Hitchings Year 3 – Jo Jarvis and Sarah Hession Year 4 – Jodi Pratley and Erin Todd Year 5 – Katerina Kasunic and Jo Tatti Year 6 – Cath Martin and Simon Taylor
Diversity Teachers	Susan Harpley, Sonya Hume and Siouxie Fitzpatrick
EAL/D Teacher	Joanne Prien
Specialist Teachers	The Arts – Nicole King Health and Physical Education (HPE) – Lisa Lay Technology – Siouxie Fitzpatrick and Erica George Health – Liana Nixon and Erica Bellero
Administration Officer - Finance	Mrs. Karen Farina
Administration Officers	Mrs. Sarah Rankine, Ms. Kylie Chenoweth, and Ms. Tina Rogers
Resource Centre (Library)	Mrs Sarah Webb
School Officers provide classroom support and interactive programs	Bec Blades, Ellen Everett, Jess Hubbard, Lisa Doherty, Jess Finlay-Peach, Jo Law, Julie Veleff Kylie Chenoweth, Narelle Martin, Deanne Johnson, Jodie Both, Amanda Allayialis Fran Caltabiano
Wellbeing Support Officer	Ms. Lisa Doherty
EAL/D School Officer	Renee Christoper
Digital Media Officer	Sarah Webb
IT School Officer	Jodie Both
Tuckshop Convenor	Mrs Rachel Chaplin
Cleaner	Mrs Jillian Cross

2. Professional Development

The Director of Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns 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, newsletter and Facebook.

The Teaching Staff attend six 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 6)

8:00am	Gates open (students to wait in Activity Centre)
8:15am	Play Bell – classes open
8:30 am	Bell - play ceases
8:35am	Lessons begin
10:45am	Lunch break – Eating Time
11.00am	Lunch break – Play Time
11:28 am	Bell - play ceases (wash bell)
11:30 am	Bell - Lessons begin
1:20 pm	Lunch Break – Eating Time
1:30pm	Lunch break – Play 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 inside the school gates at the front of the school to be collected. Staff members remain 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, email, the Parent Portal/MyCE App 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

School gates open at 8.00am. Students arriving before the 8:15am play bell wait in the Activity Centre. Children should arrive at school by 8.30am to unpack school bags and to get ready for learning.

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 wait inside the school gates, outside the office/in the Breezeway. 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 waiting to be collected by parents are supervised until 3:20 pm.

Please ensure that all children are collected 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 families have access to 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 program is offered for children at St Gerard Majella. (Refer to the OSHC brochure for further information).

Hours of Operation:

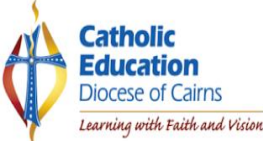
After School	3:00pm – 6:00pm
Vacation Care & School holidays	7:00am - 6:00pm

Additional fees are charged for these services. Information is available from the school office or by calling Outside School Hours Care directly on 0429 893 527 or emailing oshc.woree@cclc.catholic.edu.au.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The Australian Curriculum sets the goals for what all students should learn as they progress through their school life. It is designed to teach students what it takes to be confident and creative individuals and become active and informed citizens and plays a role in forming attitudes and skills necessary to become responsible citizens of Australia’s future generations. The curriculum outlines the core knowledge, understanding, skills and general capabilities important for all students to succeed. In the early years, priority is given to literacy and numeracy development as the foundations for learning. As students progress their way through the primary years, they focus more on the knowledge and skills of all eight learning areas.

Our view, at St Gerard Majella, about learning and teaching is informed by the Diocesan Learning Framework (DLF) that describes the key elements, which inform curriculum planning and decision making, along with the delivery and evaluation of curriculum in classrooms. As defined by our DLF, we seek to nurture students who aspire to be and become:

<p>LEARNERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are all capable of learning ✓ Are diverse ✓ Seek agency in their learning ✓ Deserve success ✓ Adapt to change ✓ Progress at different rates ✓ Have different needs ✓ Are spiritual ✓ Learn from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are curious ✓ Learn in different ways ✓ Come with prior knowledge ✓ Have various levels of social and religious capital ✓ Need to be appropriately challenged ✓ Are motivated in different ways and by different things 		<p>LEARNING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is a dynamic and organic process that is continual and life-long ✓ Occurs best in a community where relationships reflect Gospel values ✓ Connects the knowledge and experience of learners with authentic life contexts ✓ Occurs in a variety of environments and contexts ✓ Values individual differences and the dignity of the human person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is enhanced by meaningful, focused feedback and reflective practices ✓ Occurs where learners experience both success and challenge ✓ Is informed by a range of research-based, high yield, developmentally appropriate pedagogies ✓ Is enhanced by data and evidence informed practices
--	--	--	---	--

The curriculum is organised in three dimensions:

Learning areas

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Religion | HASS (Humanities and Social Sciences) |
| English | The Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama and Media) |
| Mathematics | Health and Physical Education |
| Science | Technologies (Digital and Design) |
| Languages (Japanese) | |

General capabilities

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Literacy | Digital Literacy |
| Numeracy | Critical and Creative Thinking |
| Ethical Understanding | Personal and Social Capability |
| Intercultural Understanding | |

Cross-curriculum priorities

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia
- Sustainability

For further information for parents please visit:

[\(The Australian Curriculum an Overview for Parents\)](#)

1. Learning Areas

(i) Religious Education

Religious Education and Religious Life of the School

As a Catholic Christian community, we educate all to live the gospel of Jesus Christ as successful, creative and confident, active and informed learners empowered to shape and enrich our world.

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 Years 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 parents taking responsibility for their child's faith development. Students can enrol in 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 Missions and St Vincent de Paul's Christmas Appeal.

(ii) The Arts

In the Australian Curriculum, The Arts is a learning area that draws together related but distinct art forms. Each strand within The Arts involves different approaches to arts practices and critical and creative thinking that reflect distinct bodies of knowledge, understanding and skills.



At St Gerard Majella a specialist teacher delivers the Music, Dance, Drama and Visual Arts curriculum for all year levels. The individual areas are taught for one hour per week for one term during a school year.

(iii) Health and Physical Education

The Health and Physical Education curriculum aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable students to develop and use personal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills and strategies to promote a sense of personal identity and wellbeing to build and manage respectful relationships.

At St Gerard Majella specialist teachers provide Physical Education and Health lessons once per week as well as additional times to implement the Health and Physical Education Curriculum and training for Athletics and Cross Country. All staff encourage the development of positive attitudes of good sportsmanship, fairness and a spirit of teamwork. All students are required to participate in lessons unless the parent/caregivers have notified the class teacher of a medical condition affecting participation.

Students are assigned a sporting house team on enrolment. All family members are assigned the same sporting team. Our four sporting teams are Fraser Flames (yellow), Pearson Piranhas (red), Freeman Falcons (blue) and Strickland Scorpions (green). Students wear their school sports shirts (purchased from Uniform Link) on their designated HPE day and on annual sports days during the year.

(iv) Technologies

The Australian Curriculum entails two distinct but related subjects; Design Technology and Digital Technology. In Design Technology, in which students use design thinking and technologies to generate and produce designed solutions for authentic needs and opportunities. In Digital Technology, students use computational thinking and information systems to define, design and implement digital solutions.

At St Gerard Majella a specialist teacher provides all elements of the Technologies strands. All teachers integrate digital literacy into their learning process. Years 3-6 have school-supplied 1:1 iPads, and Prep-Year 2 classes have access to iPads. The school currently has Interactive White Boards (IWB) in classrooms and Chrome Books to be used to support learning.

(v) Languages

The Australian Curriculum, Languages, is designed to enable all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English. Each language has its own distinctive structure, systems, conventions for use, related culture(s), place in the Australian and international communities, as well as its own history in Australian education.

At St Gerard Majella, Japanese is delivered via an online platform for Years 3 – 6..

(vi) Extra-Curricular Activities

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

Numerous sporting opportunities (including AFL, Cricket, Netball, Futsal, Hockey and Basketball)	Inter-house cross country, athletics and swimming	Visiting sporting clinics (Netball, Tennis, AFL, Soccer, Hockey and Basketball)
Visiting school performances	School camp and excursions	Opti-MINDS
Student Council	Choir	Choric Speaking
Buddies Program	Dance Troupe	Book Week activities

Story Dogs	Chess Club	Garden Club; Reef Guardians
<p>Music - Instrumental tuition is available through a set program provided by teachers at 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.</p> <p>The school aims to give children the maximum opportunity to develop their musical and artistic abilities through School Concerts, Cultural Festivals, Eisteddfods etc. the St Gerard Majella Choir performs for school events.</p>		

2. Communicating Student Progress

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

A Family Welcome Evening is held at the beginning of the school year. Teachers will communicate the year level 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. Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences are conducted at the end of Term 1 and can be booked via the online booking system Booked. Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences 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. Years 4-6 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 email teachers directly (email addresses are available on the MyCE App) to make an appointment to see them. Emails may also be forwarded via the School Administration Office.

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 are 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 The Resilience Project as well as utilising other resources.

At SGM our major goal at the centre of our school effectiveness framework is wellbeing and learning for all students. One way we strive to enhance student wellbeing is through our explicit social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. We aim to have SEL not only taught in explicit curriculum lessons, but student wellbeing is prioritised in all aspects of school life. Wellbeing initiatives, drawn from the positive education movement, include activities such as brain breaks throughout the day, prayer/mindfulness/meditation, fostering positive relationships, understanding character strengths and utilising positive language across all learning areas and activities. Some of the important social-emotional attributes we strive to instil in our young people are a growth mindset, positivity, resilience, grit, gratitude, persistence, kindness, patience, collaboration, confidence, calmness and empathy.

The main purpose of SEL lessons in our school is to provide all children with the foundations for social/emotional wellbeing to achieve to their potential in school and life. At St Gerard Majella we have teamed with The Resilience Project to teach positive mental health strategies to help our students become happier and more resilient. The Resilient Project focusses on three key pillars proven to cultivate positive emotion; Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness (GEM). The program also has a strong focus on Connection, Purpose, Kindness, Emotional Literacy and Physical Health.

“Circle solutions” provides a framework for group interactions where participants can address issues not incidents, solutions rather than problems and strengths rather than deficits in a respectful, safe and inclusive space. Circle Solutions supports student wellbeing by giving students a voice as active participants in their school environment.

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 camp is limited to Year 6. Parents/Guardians will be advised by class teachers when an excursion or school camp is being planned and permission will be obtained to attend. Such advice will explain the nature of the activities, the time and venue involved, the materials required, transport arrangements 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.

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.

7. Student Leadership

The School Captains, Vice Captains, Sports Captains, Mission Leaders, First Nation Leaders and Student Councillors (elected each term) form the Student Council. The Student Council 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. Mission Leaders support the Leadership Team to run Liturgies and are involved in the annual Mission Ambassadors Program. Year 6 students have the opportunity to be elected as Student Councillors. New Student Councillors are elected each term.



WHOLE SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN

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 Parent Portal and MyCE App. 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 Principal/Leadership Team. 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.
- ✓ 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

St Gerard Majella – **Parent Handbook**

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, MyCE App and on the Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns website.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

1. SGM FACET (FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM)

(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, senior staff 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 FACET.

Our FACET is affiliated with CSPQ (Catholic School Parents Queensland).

The FACET meets in the staffroom monthly. The date and time are published in the school newsletter, Parent Portal and the SGM Community Hub Facebook Group. All parents and friends are encouraged to attend meetings.

(iii) Activities

Current operations and activities, which are organised by the FACET, include operating the Second- Hand Uniform shop, holding Fathers' and Mothers' Day stalls, organising a biennial Fete and other social functions during the year.

2. School Board

(i) Role

Provides a local level pastoral structure for organised co-operation and teamwork in the ministry of Catholic Education.

(ii) Membership

All parents are invited to consider serving on the Board. Board members are then nominated and elected. Board meetings are held in the staffroom monthly. Dates and time advised in the newsletter and on the Facebook Hub.

(iii) Activities

The board has responsibility in the areas of:

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

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 per term and all parents are welcome.

4. Tuckshop

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

The Tuckshop operates five days per week serving both big lunch and little lunch. Online orders are preferred and must be placed by 8:15am using the FlexiSchools Platform. 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 purchase over the counter.

The Tuckshop 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 Program annually and sign in at the school office when helping. Grandparents who volunteer also require a Blue Card.

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

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Class masses | FACET functions, social gatherings and fundraising |
| Sporting carnivals | Sacramental programs |
| Curriculum nights | Excursions |
| Parent in-service night | Parent/Teacher meetings |
| Classroom activities | Working Bees |



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.

For medication to be administered during school hours and/or during school-related events, provide the school with: a) a completed Medication permission form (contact school for copy). b) the medication with an attached dispensing label, in its original container, with intact packaging.

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.

Please visit [Medication information for parents fact sheet](#) for further information.

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. Student Care Insurance

Has your child had an accident or injury at school or in a school related activity such as inter-school sport or a school camp? If the answer is yes, you may be entitled to claim for expenses under Catholic Education's Student Care Insurance. It covers expenses such as medical costs (where the law allows), emergency transport, travel, home tuition and school fee relief. For further information visit [Student Care Insurance](#) .

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.



9. 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+ sunscreen 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 FACET will consider sun protection when reviewing the 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.

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 UniformLink, 2A/110 Scott Street, Bungalow or the St Gerard Majella Second Hand Uniform Shop. 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. Uniforms

(i) Over the next few years, we will be transitioning to unisex pieces that boys and girls can wear.

2025 Preps and Year 1: Boys: Unisex check shirt, maroon shorts, sports shirt, white socks. Girls: Unisex check shirt/check blouse, check dress, maroon shorts/skort, sports shirt, white socks.

2025 Year 2 - 6 Students: Boys: Grey shirt, maroon shorts, sports shirt, white socks. Girls: Check blouse, check dress, maroon shorts/skort, sports shirt, white socks.

2026 Prep – Year 2: Boys: Unisex check shirt, maroon shorts, sports shirt, white socks. Girls: Unisex check shirt/check blouse, check dress, maroon shorts/skort, sports shirt, white socks.

2026 Year 3 – 6 Students: Students may wear - Boys: Grey shirt, maroon shorts, sports shirt, white socks. Girls: Check blouse, check dress, maroon shorts/skort, sports shirt, white socks

OR Boys: Unisex check shirt, maroon shorts, sports shirt, white socks. Girls: Unisex check shirt/check blouse, check dress, maroon shorts/skort, sports shirt, white socks.

Jackets: A new SGM sports jacket is available at UniformLink. Note, this does not replace the maroon jumper/zipped fleece jackets, they are simply another choice.

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: New style unisex shorts/skorts or old style nylon shorts (Year 2 – 6 only)

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. Other items

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

Hair: Students: Hair that is collar length or longer is to be kept tied back.

Extreme hairstyles are not permitted. For example: mohawks, mullets, 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.

Jackets: For anyone wishing to purchase the new SGM sports jacket, it is now available at UniformLink in the store. Note, this does not replace the maroon jumper/zipped fleece jackets, they are simply another choice.

3. Second Hand Uniform Shop

Second hand uniforms are available for purchase from the school Second Hand Uniform Shop. Opening times are published in the newsletter and on the Facebook Hub. 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 two 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 Breezeway (opposite Prep). This rack is emptied periodically, and unclaimed articles are sent to St Vincent de Paul.

4. Mobile Phones (Refer also to the school's Personal Electronic Devices 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. Parents are reminded that in an emergency all communications will be through the school office.

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 fortnightly on Wednesdays. It is also available on the school website and the SGM Community Facebook Hub.

6. Parent Portal and MyCE App

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

7. Facebook and SGM Community Hub

Our Facebook page is where we publicly promote the great things going on in our school. Parents are invited to 'follow' the page and to 'like', comment, and share posts with family and friends to help get the word out about St Gerard Majella and what we have to offer.

Our SGM Community Hub is designed for parents who like to use Facebook to interact and engage in conversation, ask questions and share information about the school. This is a page for engagement and community building and should not be relied upon completely for school notices and upcoming events. Parents are also encouraged to refer to newsletters and the Parent Portal/MyCE App to keep up to date.