



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	13
5. Excursions and School Camps Consent Forms	14
6. Resource Centre	14
7. Student Leadership	14
 WHOLE SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN	15
1. Conduct	15

2.	Children's Responsibility	15
	PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT	16
	PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.....	17
1.	Family and Community Engagement Team	17
2.	School Board	17
3.	SafeST Committee	18
4.	Tuckshop.....	18
5.	Classroom Help	18
	STUDENT SAFETY & HEALTH ISSUES.....	19
1.	Administration of Medication during School Hours	19
2.	Accidents and Sick Children	19
3.	Student Care Insurance	19
4.	Emergency Contacts	19
5.	Contagious Diseases and Illnesses	19
6.	Head Lice	20
7.	Dental Clinic	20
8.	Weather Considerations	20
9.	SunSmart Procedures	20
	UNIFORM (Refer also to the School's Student Dress Code Policy).....	21
1.	Uniforms.....	21
2.	Other items	21
3.	Second Hand Uniform Shop	22
	GENERAL INFORMATION	22
1.	Alcohol	22
2.	Parking	22
3.	Lost Property	22
4.	Mobile Phones (Refer also to the School's Personal Electronic Devices and Mobile Phone Policy)	22
5.	Newsletter	23
6.	Parent Portal and MyCE App.....	23
7.	Facebook and SGM Community Hub	23
8.	Seesaw	23
9.	EdSmart	23
10.	Parent SMS	23



Centred in Christ and inspired by our Franciscan Charism, St Gerard Majella School fosters a flourishing community of faith and learning.

We are committed to spiritual growth, academic excellence, social responsibility, and personal development for all. Guided by our values of Compassion, Community, and Courage, we partner with families to empower every child to grow in wisdom and love, shaping a world of justice and inclusion.

Values on which this Mission Statement is based:

- ✓ Courage
- ✓ Compassion
- ✓ Community

School Vision Statement

Guided by the light of Christ, we nurture life-long learners who create a just and inclusive world.

WELCOME TO ST GERARD MAJELLA

At St Gerard Majella, we are proud to be a Catholic Primary School for students from Prep to Year 6. Our first priority is to nurture a deep and personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and to build a strong Christian community where children, parents, and staff grow together in faith. We value the vital role parents play in their child's education and believe that learning is strongest when home and school work in partnership. Together, we aim to create a family atmosphere built on love, respect, and a shared relationship with God.

Our goal is to support each child's growth in every way—spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, physically, and culturally. We look forward to working with you to guide and nurture your child throughout their primary school years.



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

Our school logo reflects who we are as a community of faith and learning.

- School Frontage – A symbol of welcome, inviting all to be part of our school family.
- Mountain – Reminds us that Christ is at the centre of our school; mountains in Scripture represent a closer relationship with God.
- Building behind the Cross – Represents growth in learning, faith, compassion, and spiritual guidance.
- Windows – Open to families and friends, they symbolise light, inclusiveness, and the shared role of parents, students, and teachers. The eight windows represent each year level from Prep to Year 6, plus one for our staff.



2. The San Damiano 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 San Damiano 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.



St Gerard Majella – Parent Handbook

5. **Raintree:** Our Raintree, generously donated by the Splatt family when the school first opened, is a special feature of our grounds. It represents our commitment to outdoor learning and nature play, which encourages children to explore, take on challenges, develop problem-solving skills, and grow through active, hands-on experiences. The area around the Raintree, along with other outdoor spaces, provides rich opportunities for learning, play, and connection with nature.



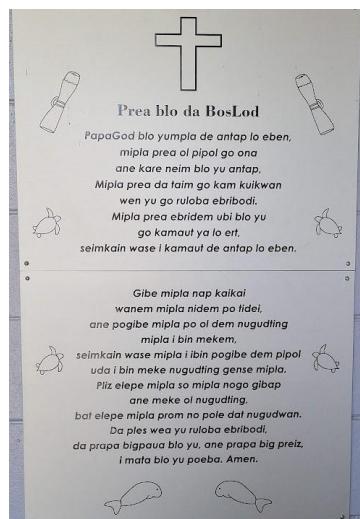
6. **Yarning Circle:** Our Yarning Circle, located near the Raintree playground, is a special space of welcome and respect. It is used for outdoor lessons, meetings, and times of reflection, where every voice and idea is valued and respected. *Bilan Gudan*—welcome to our Yarning Circle.



7. **The Totem / Speaking Pole:** The Totem Pole in our breezeway garden was gifted by the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our school stands. Its markings share the story of the cassowary—a significant totem animal—and its place in local culture. Beside it stands our *Welcome to Country* sign, also installed by the Traditional Custodians, as a reminder of respect and connection to Country.



8. **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 2020 - 30 June 2021	2026
Child born 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022	2027
Child born 1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023	2028
Child born 1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024	2029

Getting your child ready for school

Starting school is an exciting milestone, but it can also feel overwhelming for children and families. Encouraging independence and practising simple routines at home helps children feel more confident, comfortable, and ready to enjoy their new school environment.

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. 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.
- Parenting Orders or Custody Arrangements

3. Media Consent Form

Media Consent Forms are signed on confirmation of Enrolment and may 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)

Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns 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.

4. FACET (P&F) Levy

The FACET (Family and Community Engagement) Levy is a contribution from families that supports projects and initiatives to benefit our school community. Funds raised help provide resources, improve facilities, and create opportunities that enhance the learning and well-being of all students and engage our families.



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 Byrne
Leader of Learning and Teaching	Ms. Suzanne Mullen
School Counsellor	Ms. Critty Wallace
Class Teachers	Prep – Ann Blakeney/Courtney Galeano and Anna Hitchings Year 1 – Alison Hussey/Erica Bellero Bec Paterson/Erica Bellero Year 2 – Melissa Pavey and Katerina Kasunic Year 3 – Jo Jarvis/Nicole King and April Mansfield Year 4 – Jodi Pratley and Erin Todd Year 5 – Sarah Hession and Jo Tatti Year 6 – Cath Martin and Simon Taylor
Diversity Teachers	Susan Harpley and Sonya Hume
EAL/D Teacher	Joanne Prien
Specialist Teachers	The Arts – Nicole King Health and Physical Education (HPE) – Lisa Lay Technology – Siouxie Fitzpatrick and Michael Doherty Health – Lara Veivers
Administration Officer - Finance	Mrs. Karen Farina
Administration Officers	Mrs. Sarah Rankine, Ms. Kylie Chenoweth, and Ms. Tina Rogers
Resource Centre (Library) & Digital Media	Sarah Webb
School Officers provide classroom support and interactive programs	Bec Blades, Ellen Everett, Jess Hubbard, Lisa Doherty, Jess Finlay-Peach, Jo Law, Kylie Chenoweth, Narelle Martin, Deanne Johnson, Jodie Both, Amanda Allayialis, Fran Caltabiano, Grace Blakeney Louise Halford
Wellbeing Support Officer	Lisa Doherty
EAL/D School Officer	Renee Christoper
Indigenous Liaison Officer	Jarom Mairu
IT School Officer	Jodie Both
Tuckshop Convenor	Rachel Chaplin
Cleaner	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 students 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. Students 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, students 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. Students waiting to be collected by parents are supervised until 3:20 pm.



Please ensure that all students are collected by 3.20 pm. This 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

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. 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 OSCHC brochure for further information).

Hours of Operation:

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

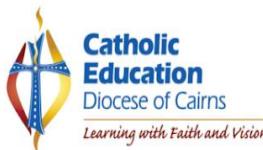
Additional fees are charged for these services. Information is available from the school office or by calling Outside School Hours Care directly on 0429 893 527 or emailing oshc.woree@ccelc.catholic.edu.au.

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:

LEARNERS:	LEARNING:
<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



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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	

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

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.

For schools and colleges in the Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns, one of our top priorities is Religious Education, ensuring every student benefits from an engaging, contemporary, and personally relevant curriculum. We believe that Religious Education is not just a subject but a transformative journey that fosters critical thinking, self-discovery, and a meaningful connection to one's faith and community. We are shaping the future of our students by providing them with an education that prepares them to navigate the world's complexities with a strong foundation in religious understanding and personal growth. (CEDC 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 of 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

Our Health and Physical Education program helps students build skills for personal wellbeing, respectful relationships, and lifelong healthy habits. Specialist teachers deliver weekly HPE lessons, along with training for athletics and cross country carnivals. Students are encouraged to develop sportsmanship, fairness, and teamwork.

On enrolment, each child is placed into one of our four sporting houses—**Fraser Flames (yellow), Pearson Piranhas (red), Freeman Falcons (blue), or Strickland Scorpions (green)**. Families are placed in the same house team. Students wear their sports shirt on their HPE day and at annual sports events.

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 Technologies Curriculum includes **Design Technology**—where students use creativity and problem-solving to design solutions—and **Digital Technology**—where they develop skills in computational thinking and digital systems. At St Gerard Majella, a specialist teacher delivers both strands, while classroom teachers embed digital literacy across all learning.

Students in Years 4–6 are provided with a 1:1 iPad, while Prep–Year 3 classes share access to iPads. Classrooms are also equipped with Interactive Whiteboards to support and enhance learning.

(v) Extra-Curricular Activities

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

Numerous sporting opportunities (including AFL, Cricket, Netball, Soccer, 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

Music - St Gerard Majella offers a range of musical opportunities for students in Years 2–6. Instrumental tuition is available through St Mary's Catholic College, and piano lessons are offered on-site by a visiting private teacher (additional fees apply). Students can also participate in the school choir and showcase their talents through concerts, cultural festivals, and Eisteddfods.

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 encouraged to meet with class teachers to discuss student progress. Appointments are usually required as teachers have other commitments. Years 4–6 students use a home learning diary, which can also support communication between home and school. You can contact teachers via email (through the MyCE App) or leave a message at the school office to arrange a meeting.

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

Home learning reinforces classroom learning, helps develop good study habits, and allows parents to engage in their child's education. The amount and type of home learning varies by age, needs, and family circumstances, and may include regular tasks, contracts, or weekend assignments. Reading is an essential part of home learning, and all students are encouraged to read for at least 10 minutes each day using school, library, or personal books.

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 (SEL)

At St Gerard Majella, student wellbeing and learning go hand in hand. Our Social–Emotional Learning (SEL) program, including *The Resilience Project*, focuses on building positive mental health, resilience, and character through strategies based on **Gratitude, Empathy, and Mindfulness (GEM)**. SEL is integrated across lessons and school life through activities like brain breaks, prayer, mindfulness, and fostering positive relationships.

We aim to develop important social-emotional skills such as a growth mindset, resilience, kindness, collaboration, confidence, and empathy. Programs like *Circle Solutions* provide students with a safe space to problem-solve respectfully, have their voices heard, and strengthen connections within the school community.

5. Excursions and School Camps

Excursions and camps are valuable learning and social experiences. All year levels participate in excursions, while school camps are offered for Year 6. Parents will be notified in advance, and permission is required for attendance, with details about activities, times, transport, and clothing. Requests for exemption must be submitted in writing to the principal.



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

At St Gerard Majella, students have many opportunities to develop leadership skills through roles such as School Captains, Vice Captains, Sports Captains, Mission Leaders, First Nation Leaders, and Student Councillors. The Student Council represents students, raises concerns with the Leadership Team, organises activities, and participates in school and interschool events.

Year 5 students take part in a leadership program, after which School Captains and Vice Captains are elected, followed by Sports Captains. Mission Leaders assist with Liturgies and the Mission Ambassadors Program, while students in Years 4-6 may be elected as Student Councillors, with new councillors chosen each term.



WHOLE SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN

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

1. Conduct

Students are expected to demonstrate politeness, respect, and high standards of behaviour at all times, both at school and while travelling to and from school. Wearing the school uniform reflects not only the student but also their family, school, and Church.

St Gerard Majella works in partnership with parents to support children in growing in character, spirit, and responsibility. Behaviour issues are generally managed by the class teacher, with support from the Leadership Team if needed. Parents are asked to support the school's efforts and discuss any concerns directly with teachers or the Principal, rather than in front of their child, to maintain a consistent and respectful approach.

School policies on behaviour are available on the Parent Portal and MyCE App.

2. Children's Responsibility

At St Gerard Majella, students are expected to act in ways that reflect Gospel values.

Key responsibilities include:

- Working quietly and respecting others' learning.
- Being thoughtful, respectful, and courteous to all.
- Caring for personal, school, and others' property.
- Following school rules, including safety and playground guidelines.
- Taking school messages home to parents.
- Practising good personal hygiene and coming to school clean.



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.

Code of Conduct

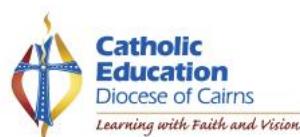
for Parents, Volunteers and Visitors



This Code of Conduct applies to all parents, volunteers and visitors who interact within our schools and Catholic Education Services in the Diocese of Cairns.

It also applies to all parents, volunteers and visitors who are present at school and school sponsored meetings/functions within and outside of school hours.

As parents, volunteers and visitors there is an expectation of support for the vision and mission of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Cairns.



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 leadership 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 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 Parent Engagement, 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 the Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Police 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 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. Help is always appreciated so please contact the school if you can assist.



5. Classroom Help

Parents and grandparents are encouraged to assist in classrooms, sharing skills in areas like art, craft, sport, reading, writing, and literacy activities. Your involvement enriches students' learning experiences. Volunteers must complete the annual Volunteer Induction Program and sign in at the 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 webinars	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

Head lice are common in schools, but the school is not usually the source. Children can spread lice through close contact, such as sharing hats. Parents are responsible for treating and preventing infestations using effective treatments or sprays. Cooperation from all families is essential to manage head lice, and parents will be notified of any 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

St Gerard Majella promotes sun safety for students, staff, and visitors. Students are required to wear the school bucket hat, protective clothing, and apply 30+ sunscreen when outdoors. Shade areas are provided, and outdoor activities in direct sunlight are limited where possible. Sun safety is taught through health lessons, modelled by staff and parents, and students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own protection.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

For all outdoor activities—including sport, lunchtime play, outdoor learning, and excursions—students must follow minimum sun protection standards. This includes wearing the school hat, appropriate uniform, and applying sunscreen to exposed areas. No hat means students must stay in shaded areas or refrain from outdoor participation.



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. Formal Uniforms

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

2026 Prep – Year 2 students (and 2027 Prep – Year 3): 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 (and 2027 Year 4 – 6): 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 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 Uniform

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.

St Gerard Majella – Parent Handbook

Hats: Compulsory. The school has a “No hat, undercover play policy”. (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 SGM sports jacket, it is 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 **parents are 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 table is located in the Breezeway (opposite Prep). This table 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)

Students may bring mobile phones to school for use outside school hours only. Phones are not permitted in classrooms or during school hours. In case of an emergency, all communications should go 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 calendar and events, report cards, announcements, forms, policies, school contact details etc.

7. Facebook and SGM Community Hub

Our Public 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.

8. Seesaw

This communication app helps our teachers communicate learning with parents. You will be emailed a link to sign up to your child's class. Unfortunately, due to privacy laws, only the legal guardians can have access to a student's Seesaw account.

9. EdSmart

This is our online platform for permission slips and other important information. You will receive an email notification advising you to complete an online slip. Past permission slips can be viewed via the Parent Portal.

10. Parent SMS

This is a proven fast and reliable way to communicate with parents, particularly in urgent cases, reminders about dress up days or special events, or when students are absent without notice.

