

ST MARK'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Seek and you shall find



Tuesday 14 October 2025

Kia Ora, Welcome, Hello, Nǐ hǎo, Talofa Lava, Hallo, Salut, Namaste, Bonjour, Bula Vinaka, Guten Tag, Shalom, Cìào, おはよう (Ohayou), 안녕 Ahn Nyeong, Olá, Privet!, Xin Chào, Kia Orana, Malo e Lelei, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Sat Shari Akal, Melo Ni, Halo Ola Keta, Mauri, Fakaalofa Atu, Salam, Welkom.

Key Dates

Date	What
Tuesday 14 October	HPPA Mathex Event at Sunnyhills
Wednesday 15 October	Yr 4 - 5 Hockey skills sessions commence (1st of 4 Wednesday sessions)
Thursday 16 October	Swimming at Lloyd Elsmore for Yr 3-6 children (consecutive Thursdays)
Tuesday 21 October	BOT meeting in the staffroom from 7pm
Thursday 23 October	NZEI STRIKE DAY - to be confirmed
Friday 24 October	STAFF ONLY DAY: MOE Curriculum development day - School is closed
Monday 27 October	LABOUR DAY - School is closed
Wed 29 and Fri 31 Oct	Yr 4 - 6 Waka Ama experience
Tues 4 - Fri 7 Nov	Yr 0 - 2 Swimming intensive at Fulton Swim school
Tues 11 - Fri 14 Nov	Yr 0 - 2 Swimming intensive continues at Fulton Swim school
Wed 12 November	PTFA meeting in the staffroom from 7pm
Wed 26 November	End of Year Thanksgiving Mass in the church from 6.15pm
Friday 5 December	Christmas Nativity and Special awards in the church from 1.15pm
Wed 10 December	Summer mufti and teddy-bear picnic (shared lunch as class groups)
Friday 12 December	Last day of Term 4 - school closes at noon
Thursday 29 January	First school day for the 2026 academic year

NZEI STRIKE ACTION TO BE CONFIRMED

You may have heard through the media, talk of a possible NZEI strike day on Thursday 23 October. NZEI is the largest union for Primary principals, teachers and support staff. At this stage, strike action has not been confirmed, however an informal strike notification has been presented to schools. If a formal strike notice is received, the school will close on Thursday 23 October as we are unable to provide safe staff:student ratios. For now, please keep this possibility in mind when planning for next week. Further confirmation will follow once an official notice is received.

IMPORTANT SWIMMING PROGRAMME REMINDER

As part of our Health and Physical Education Curriculum, swimming is a compulsory learning area for all New Zealand schools. At St Mark's, we are committed to ensuring every child has the opportunity to develop these essential life skills. Swimming lessons and transport for Year 3–6 students are fully funded, and we also heavily subsidise the Year 0–2 swimming programme so that students of all ages can access lessons in time for the summer holiday period.

Building water confidence, safety awareness, and swimming skills is vital for our tamariki—especially living here in Aotearoa, a beautiful Pacific island nation surrounded by water. **We expect all children to take part in swimming lessons.** If your child is unable to swim due to medical reasons, please provide a medical certificate. As a general guideline, **if your child is too unwell to swim, they are too unwell to attend school that day.** We appreciate your continued support in helping every child become confident and safe in and around the water.

SUMMER UNIFORM REMINDERS

Despite the wet weather showing little sign of spring, we know warmer days are on their way! This means our students are now transitioning into summer uniform, which is to be worn in full after Labour Day weekend. Please ensure all uniform items are clearly named; school hats are worn daily for sun protection and footwear meets school guidelines. For more information, please refer to the uniform tab on the website.

Message from Senior Leadership

Kia ora koutou

A very warm welcome back to the start of Term 4! We hope all our families enjoyed a restful holiday break and are ready for another wonderful term of learning, friendship and celebration. This final term of the year is always full of activity — from sports and cultural events to liturgies and our end-of-year celebrations. Please ensure you keep a close eye on the term calendar and add key dates to your diary.

*Last Friday's Mission Day was an incredible success, raising over **\$2,600** to support charitable causes including Missionz NZ and our sister school in India. Congratulations to our senior students who showed outstanding leadership by organising and running stalls, games and activities for everyone to enjoy. Thank you also to the parents who gave of their helping hands in the toy and book stall — your generosity and community spirit are deeply appreciated. Together, we have made a meaningful difference for others in need.*

Unfortunately, the Quiz Night planned for Friday 17 October has been cancelled due to limited ticket sales, which make it unfeasible to run the event this year. We know some of you had already arranged babysitters and costumes, and we're truly sorry for the disappointment and inconvenience this may cause. Thanks again to the fabulous PTFA who spent countless hours planning and preparing for this event - we truly appreciate your leadership, vision, enthusiasm and efforts in providing such opportunities for our community.

*Please note that our school is likely to be closed on **Thursday 23 October** due to nationwide NZEI strike action. As most of our staff are union members, we would be unable to safely open for instruction on this day. I will keep you informed if formal notification is received. Apologies in advance for any inconvenience strike action causes.*

October is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Rosary, and we encourage our families to take time to pray together during this special month. Even a short family prayer or a single decade of the Rosary can be a beautiful way to pause, reflect and draw closer to God through Mary's example of faith and love.

Please ensure you are receiving regular communications from your child's classroom teacher, as these will include specific reminders and details relevant to each class.

*Ngā manaakitanga, your friends in Christ
Tracey and the Leadership Team*

2026 STAFFING ANNOUNCEMENT

We are excited to share an update on our Senior Leadership Team as we look ahead to 2026. As many of you are aware, at the end of 2024, our long-serving Associate Principals, Trish Hodgson and Jenny McKenzie, stepped back from their leadership roles and transitioned to part-time hours. During 2025, we have been very fortunate to have Ushanthi Leaver and Jess Robinson step into acting Senior Leadership roles. Their commitment, expertise, and support have been invaluable in helping guide our school community with skill and heart. In addition, Julie Kippen and Nazley Ernstzen shared the acting DRS role, ensuring our Catholic ethos, identity and curriculum remain strong. We are grateful for their outstanding contributions.

Looking ahead, we warmly congratulate and welcome our new leadership appointments for 2026:

- Jess Robinson – Deputy Principal
- Debbie Eagle – Assistant Principal
- Rita Furivai – DRS

We look forward to formally introducing the team at the start of the 2026 school year and celebrating the continued growth and leadership within our wonderful school community.

2026 PLANNING

NOT RETURNING - We are currently planning class groupings and staffing for next year. If for any reason your child/family will not be returning to St Mark's (with the exception of Year 6 school leavers), we would appreciate you letting the school know asap.

FUTURE ENROLMENTS - If you have a child turning 5 before the end of 2026, please complete an enrolment asap. You may know of other families hoping to enrol their child/children at St Mark's. If this is the case, please encourage them to arrange a visit to the school and a meeting with the Principal.

YEAR 6 LEAVERS - If you have not yet enrolled your Year 6 child in a school for 2026, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Many local schools are zoned and have closing dates, so early application is important. If you need any support with the enrolment process, please let us know—we are always happy to help.

MAKING MAGICAL MEMORIES AT ST MARK'S

