

YEAR 8

SEMESTER BULLETINS



2026 SEMESTER 1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Religious Education is a significant component of the entire Religious Life of the College package. All teachers at St Margaret Mary's College contribute to this, as do our students, with various opportunities also offered to families.

The Religious Life of the College is lived out in a variety of ways:

Daily Prayer:

All Students from Year 7 to Year 12 begin the year writing prayers to contribute to their Pastoral Care Class Prayer Book. They are very creative and beautifully written. Throughout the year, our Year 7 students participate respectfully in a variety of prayer experiences.

Year Level Retreats:

This semester our Year 8, 9, 10, and 11 students have retreat days. During our retreats great things happen. Students are encouraged to: disconnect a little from their daily school life; find time for reflection; get to know themselves and each other better; recharge; rejuvenate; and my favourite - strengthen their friendships. The St Margaret Mary's retreats are themed in a way that sees students grow through each experience. Year 8 will reflect on 'Sisterhood', Year 9 look inwards through the theme 'Body, Mind and Spirit' and Year 10 workshop with Michael Fitzpatrick to decide as a group what types of leaders they wish to be as they venture forth onto the Senior campus. Our Year 11 Retreat will look a little different this year as we will no longer head to Genazzano, Lake Tinaroo but instead focus on Leadership, considering the footprints they will leave behind.





Service Activities:

Project Compassion fundraising begins our year followed by World Down Syndrome day. Harmony Day is a highlight and we spend the week celebrating the many cultures that enhance our College community.



Calendrical Events:

Gatherings for such things as Lent, Stations of the Cross, Harmony Day, Samaritan Day, Advent/Christmas.

Religious Education outline

Year 8	
Unit-1: <i>The Trinity</i>	In Year 8, students engage with a variety of images and words that express the mystery of the Trinity, the fundamental Christian belief that God is relational in nature. They describe how words and images are used to represent the mystery of the Trinity. Assessment: In-class folio of works
Unit-2: <i>Covenant</i>	In this first unit, students will consider and organise Old Testament covenant narratives and the actions and messages of some Old Testament prophets. Students identify the unique relationship between God and God’s people. Assessment: Exam
Unit-3: <i>Rituals, Believers & Beliefs</i>	Students will identify the significance of initiation rituals in the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) for the faith journey of believers. Assessment: Video creation Project

ENGLISH

Welcome to Year 8 English! I would like to begin this welcome by introducing our highly experienced teacher team for Year 8:

8ENG.1: Amanda May amay@smmc.catholic.edu.au

8ENG.2: Gemma Kyle gkyle12@smmc.catholic.edu.au

8ENG.3: Marita Townsend mtownsend5@smmc.catholic.edu.au

8ENG.4: Emma Ellevsen eellevsen2@smmc.catholic.edu.au

8ENG.5 Kathryn Beplate kbeplate5@smmc.catholic.edu.au

We will begin the year by exploring the value of fairytales and animated texts in their world. Students will examine how intertextuality can enhance and deepen meaning. In Term Two, students will study a novel. This will be issued early in Term One to allow students to read it independently before the unit begins. Please encourage your daughter to read daily.

Tips for success in English:

- Read daily. Encourage your daughter to read each day - even if it is only for 10-15 minutes. Reading daily is an excellent way to improve comprehension, writing and spelling skills. There are many [websites](#) and resources that outline the benefits of reading. Our school library is stocked with the latest and some of the greatest books available, and the friendly staff will help with recommendations. Each week, there will be time for reading in class.
- Complete homework! If there is no set homework for English, your daughter should focus on revising the work completed in class.
- Ask questions. If your daughter is unsure of any work to be completed, please contact her teacher.
- Engage in class discussion.
- Join a debate team! Further information regarding our school debate teams will be released shortly.
- Take the opportunity to compete in one of the many public speaking competitions that we are involved in. Further information on these opportunities will be available over the next few weeks.

I hope that your daughter enjoys Semester One!

Correna Neumann – Curriculum Middle Leader, English

SCIENCE

Welcome to Year 8 Science at SMMC.

Betty Hay was a trailblazing developmental biologist who revolutionized our understanding of how cells grow, change, and regenerate. Her work on limb regeneration in amphibians revealed that specialised cells could revert to a more flexible state—an insight that has influenced everything from stem cell research to regenerative medicine. Hay's passion for discovery and her mentorship of young scientists helped pave the way for women in biology.

Just like Betty Hay, in Year 8, we will be starting our journey investigating the fundamentals of Biology on the topic of 'Cells'. The girls will be learning how to use microscopes safely and effectively and learning to complete scientific drawings whilst using the microscopes. The girls will then continue their studies in Biology. They will explore how the body's organs and systems work together to maintain life.

Students will investigate the structure and function of cells, tissues, and organs, and how these systems interact to support survival. From the circulatory system to the digestive tract, students will gain a deeper appreciation for the complexity and coordination of the human body.

As the Semester ends, the girls will explore how rocks are formed, developing an understanding of the Rock cycle and the various types of rocks that can be found. They will investigate different ways of identifying rocks.

Year 8 Science teaching staff for Semester One are:

- 8.1 – Darren Spina
- 8.2 – Ashleigh Rhodes
- 8.3 – Renee Deuble
- 8.4 – Katherine Truntic
- 8.5 – Matthew Brescianini

We look forward to fostering your daughter's resilience in Science this semester.

Belinda Coombes – Curriculum Middle Leader, Science

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Welcome to Health and Physical Education for Semester 1, 2026. The HPE theory unit in Term 1 focuses on Alcohol and Drug Education. Students will investigate a range of licit and illicit substances and the harmful effects these have on the body. They will explore the common reasons for substance abuse, the health issues that are caused by this use and the legal issues surrounding substance abuse. Students will also explore positive strategies that can be used by them for smart decision-making.

During Term 2 students will explore Food and Nutrition to develop an understanding of how to apply healthy eating principles to their own and others' health. This unit explores the role of food and nutrition in promoting health and wellbeing, enabling students to make informed, healthy food choices. They explore the contextual factors that influence eating habits and food choices.

Semester 1 physical activities are Netball and Pickleball. The students will participate in a range of activities with an emphasis on developing teamwork and communication skills, as well as their physical skills.

Students in Health and Physical Education are reminded that participation in practical lessons is compulsory. If a student can't participate in practical activities for any reason, they must provide their classroom teacher with a note of explanation from a parent/guardian.

Year 8 HPE Teachers are:

- 8.1 Michael Dear
- 8.2 Katanya Cottone
- 8.3 Anna Franzmann
- 8.4 Anna Franzmann
- 8.5 Katanya Cottone

Kim Cameron – Curriculum Middle Leader, Health & Physical Education

FOOD & TEXTILES TECHNOLOGIES

FOOD SPECIALISATIONS

Step outside your comfort zone,
Explore the unknown,
And discover the wonders that await.

Creativity is about embracing the unknown and taking risks. It involves generating unique and original ideas that have yet to be explored. However, creativity isn't just about coming up with something new—it's also about reimagining and combining existing ideas in innovative ways. In design, creativity plays a crucial role in exploring and developing diverse solutions to a given problem.

This year, the SMMC Food & Textiles Department is challenging students to step beyond their comfort zones and embrace new learning experiences. Innovation is key in the food industry—without it, we wouldn't have discovered the tantalizing taste of salted caramel or protein-enhanced snacks. In addition, we are encouraging students to be mindful of food waste, exploring creative ways to repurpose ingredients into innovative and sustainable food solutions.

We will also be encouraging our students to be mindful of the waste that they create and look at ways in which we can repurpose ingredients into other food solutions. Students will use the phases of design thinking to create new food solutions. They will empathize (understand the consumer/client), investigate and define the problem, generate ideas, create prototypes, test, and then refine their design.

Term One: a healthy handheld lunch item for teenage consumers will be the focus.

The students will collaborate as a pair to complete this challenge; thus they will be busy brainstorming potential ideas and then trial their best solution.

They will also investigate a Food Design Company to identify how companies are creating and refining everyday products to better meet the needs of clients, for example, a whisk that flattens and takes up less room in the kitchen drawer.

During the second half of the semester, the 'War on Waste' unit will challenge students to design and produce a trending 'Use it Up Menu Item' that highlights both sustainability and healthy eating. This unit incorporates a variety of resources from the OzHarvest FEAST Program.

An increasing range of culinary and food analysis skills will be developed throughout the semester. Students will become more food literate by being able to identify how they can incorporate the Australian Guidelines to Healthy Eating into their everyday foods. Food Design & Technology also helps to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills as they need to read and follow recipe steps, measure and weigh ingredients, and perhaps, modify ingredient amounts to change the serving size. We love to see what the students cook at home and encourage them to share their photos and recipes with their teachers.

Teachers: Nadine Orman and Andrew Thompson

TEXTILE TECHNOLOGIES

Creativity is about embracing the unknown and taking risks. It involves generating unique and original ideas that have yet to be explored. However, creativity isn't just about coming up with something new—it's also about reimagining and combining existing ideas in innovative ways. In design, creativity plays a crucial role in exploring and developing diverse solutions to a given problem.

Our first unit, 'Zip it Up' supports our environmental focus by challenging students to design & produce a lined zippered pouch that uses small scraps of fabric from the stash in the Textile Room. Students will design and produce a colour scheme suitable for their crazy patch. They will also learn how to insert a zip, and some hand stitching, as well as, further developing their sewing skills from Year 7.

The students will document the phases of design thinking, including investigating, generating ideas, prototyping, and evaluating in a project folio.

In the second part of the semester, our focus will be on following a pattern and building on construction skills. and sewing techniques to create a bucket hat. Students will investigate the benefits of cotton and the emerging technology associated with this fibre. Other learning activities include making scrunchies from leftover fabric.

Teacher: Kylie Wallis and Tanya Krause

Tanya Krause – Curriculum Middle Leader, Food & Textiles Technologies

HUMANITIES

Welcome to Year 8 Humanities for 2026! We will work with your daughters to help them to see that the Humanities are alive and well, and are very important to our understanding of what happens in our world. This year at SMMC your daughter will complete one semester of History. She will also have the opportunity to complete one term of Business and Economics, and one of Geography in Semester 2.

This semester all classes will be studying History. Classes will be learning about Europe from the fall of Rome and into the Middle Ages this term. Special focus is given to the system of feudalism that replaced Roman laws as well as the spread of Christianity that changed societies across Europe. Students examine social changes in Europe brought about by the rapid growth of towns and trade as well as the Crusades. We will also be looking at the arrival of the Plague, and students will be able to look at its spread, its impact, and how people coped. For assessment this term students will investigate sources with view to shedding light on an aspect of the Middle Ages. In the second term, all Year 8 will explore the Spanish conquest of the Americas. They learn about pre-Columbian life, the motivations for Spanish expansion, first contact and the subsequent impacts of this on trade, technology and people. They will conclude the term with an exam.

To be able to do her best in her Humanities subjects, it is recommended for your daughter to:

- Bring all required materials to class, including her Learning Journal!
- Complete all classwork and homework
- Work effectively on assessment in class time provided
- Meet all assessment checkpoints
- Be proactive and ask questions, or when necessary, for help from her teacher

We are lucky enough to have a fantastic blend of enthusiastic, creative and passionate teachers working with the Year 8s this year.

- Mrs Nadine Orman will take 08HIS.1.
- Ms Kath Burke will be working with 08HIS.2.
- Ms Rachel Walsh will be working with 08HIS.3.
- Mrs Gemma Roberts is the class teacher for 08HIS.4 and 08HIS.5.

If you have any questions about your daughter's Humanities subjects, please contact her class teacher.

Kath Burke – Curriculum Middle Leader, Humanities

MATHEMATICS

Welcome, Year 8 Students and Parents!

Over the Australia Day weekend, Katherine Bennell-Pegg was named the 2026 Australian of the Year. She is Australia's first woman astronaut and the first Australian to qualify as an astronaut through Australia's own space program.

In interviews, Bennell-Pegg shared that even when she was at school, she knew she wanted to be an astronaut. It started with curiosity — looking up at the stars and asking, “*what if?*” She has also spoken about how Australia can miss out on great talent when students step away from STEM subjects as soon as learning feels challenging.

What really stood out to me was her comparison to sport. In Australia, we are often encouraged to “*give it a go*” on the sporting field, even if we are not the strongest player. Yet in maths, many students start to doubt themselves when things feel hard. Bennell-Pegg's message is a powerful reminder that challenge is not a sign to stop — it is a sign that learning is happening.

At SMMC, we encourage your daughter to keep going in Mathematics, even when it feels challenging, and to back herself by asking questions and attending tutorials when she needs extra support. Seeking help is a strength, not a weakness. With the right support, students build confidence, improve their understanding, and keep future opportunities in Mathematics open.

Our Year 8 Mathematics team includes Kylie Wallis (8MAT1), Katanya Cottone (8MAT2), Irina Korshunova (8MAT3), Claire Tidmas (8MAT4) and Anna-Luisa Bertocchi (8MAT5). These dedicated educators bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the classroom, and together, we're excited to support your daughter in her journey of growth and achievement.

We are very much looking forward to working with you and your daughter this year. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me or your daughter's Mathematics teacher if you have any questions or concerns.

Irma Lapico – Curriculum Middle Leader, Mathematics



Katherine meeting a young space enthusiast in W.A
Credit: Australian Government

DIGITAL & DESIGN TECHNOLOGIES

Exploring opportunities to improve our community

The Australian Curriculum Technologies subjects are built around solving problems. Our students will be given opportunities to seek out ways to help others and improve products, practices, or procedures all while considering the environmental and social impacts of their solutions as well as the choices of materials and methods of production.

The girls will delve into a spectrum of technology concepts, enhancing their twenty-first-century skills. They will actively participate in invaluable and in-demand experiences that can shape their future careers. As they tackle problem-solving scenarios, students will employ a diverse set of industry-standard software and hardware, fostering confidence in the selection and application of various techniques.

In Year 8 at St Margaret Mary's, the Technologies curriculum encompasses four diverse subjects. Students have the opportunity to choose two of these subjects during the year. Both of the Information Technology (IT)-based subjects emphasize a hands-on approach to address real-world problems using technology. Lessons will be centred around active engagement, involving research, planning, and creation. Each subject will introduce a major project, providing students with the opportunity to complete it within the class. While there is no regular scheduled homework, teachers may occasionally assign small tasks or request students to finalize any unfinished classwork at their own pace throughout the term. This approach ensures a practical and dynamic learning experience for the students.

Digital Technologies

This semester the girls will be learning how to solve real-world problems with digital solutions. They will identify problems, and work collaboratively to create appropriate solutions. In Term One the girls will gain an insight into how older Australians use technology. They will conduct interviews to discover areas where a digital solution could improve the lives of their stakeholders. This will begin the design process and lead to the creation of a digital prototype.

In the second half of the semester, we look at microcomputing. This Technology can be used to learn a range of concepts and applied to a variety of solutions. The girls will design, build and program a BBC Micro: bit to complete a real-world task. This unit will give them an opportunity to discover how microcomputing can be used to create better futures and improve lives.

Design & Technologies

In Year 8 Design & Technologies Term One students solve a range of problems. Term One will see us venture into the Tiny House Movement by designing a fully equipped house on a minimal floor plan. Students will investigate how to make the most out of a limited space. They will draw a scaled floor plan and learn how to use Australian Standards to inform their design work. This Unit is situated in the greater global context of housing insecurity, and students will investigate how communities around the world cope with housing shortages.

In Term Two, the girls are challenged to design with and for people as their design stakeholders. Students will use a circular design process to engage with their stakeholder/s and design a low-fidelity prototype using sketching techniques. Their design process will be informed by stakeholder feedback, and students will be required to respond to their stakeholder/s' needs and wants.

Cathy Jago – Curriculum Middle Leader, Design & Technologies

THE ARTS

VISUAL ART

Year 8 Art will enjoy a semester of Art with Mrs Hendle. In Unit One “A Second Life”, the girls will design and create three-dimensional animal sculptures using recycled objects and mixed media. They will investigate sustainability in art and transform everyday materials into imaginative, sculptural forms. Finished artworks will be displayed in a class exhibition, accompanied by an artist statement explaining their ideas and processes.

In the second unit, “The Space Around Us”, students will explore how contemporary artists use positive and negative space in portraiture. Through research, planning, and experimentation in their Visual Diary, Year 8 artists will think creatively about how space can create meaning and impact in an artwork. Drawing inspiration from a chosen artist or model, they will produce a final self-portrait that reflects their understanding of space and personal expression.

DANCE

The Year 8 Dance classes, led by Miss Catherine Ryan, will build on their knowledge of the Elements of Dance this semester as they participate in various practical and theory activities. With a focus on Contemporary Dance, students will explore how dance can be used to tell a story or convey meaning, and how dance is an important aspect of First Nations culture. We hope to invite Glen Thomas from Cowboys House back to work with the students. He has delivered a fun and engaging dance workshop for the girls over the past few years, and we would like to maintain this partnership. The girls will complete three assessment tasks over the course of the semester, beginning with a Contemporary performance that they will learn as a class. They will then work on a written Responding task that looks at a dance work by Bangarra Dance Theatre. Finally, the classes will choreograph their own dances using the knowledge and skills they have gained throughout the semester.

DRAMA

Year 8 Drama with Mrs Amy Bent and Mrs Ivy Trueman will continue developing the students’ understanding of the Elements of Drama. The girls will watch a live-recorded production by ATYP (Australian Theatre for Young People) and analyse a scene in their written responding task. Students will then bring stories to life with a storytelling unit in Term Two. Students will explore various scripted Australian Indigenous stories and Asian tales. They will also work with the Conventions of Storytelling. At the end of the Semester, they will present their polished group performances. All Year 8 Drama students are strongly encouraged to join our Junior Drama Club which is an extracurricular opportunity for girls to further enhance their dramatic skills and have fun!

MUSIC

Students in Year 8 Music will continue to develop their music-making skills in the semester-long unit, “Major Hits and Minor Moods.” They will examine how “hit” tunes use the elements of music to tell a story or create a mood and they will try their hand at writing their own melodies. Lots of prac time will be spent singing and playing instruments. Who knows? The next *Australian Idol* could be discovered at SMMC!

Jennie Edwards – Curriculum Middle Leader, The Arts

LANGUAGES

This semester, Year 8 students who have chosen Japanese as an elective will continue to develop their language skills while deepening their understanding of Japanese culture through engaging and practical learning experiences.

In Term One, students will study a fun and interactive food unit. They will learn vocabulary and language structures related to dining out and restaurants, as well as using money in everyday situations. As part of their assessment, students will participate in a role-play, allowing them to apply their language skills in a real-world context.

In Term Two, students will learn how to talk about their town and local area and will also explore what towns and cities in Japan are like. This unit will help students compare daily life in Australia and Japan while developing their descriptive language skills.

Throughout the year, students will continue to build their understanding of Japanese writing systems, with a strong focus on increasing confidence and accuracy in hiragana.

Learning will be supported through the use of online platforms such as Education Perfect, along with interactive activities using Quizlet and Kahoot, which help reinforce language skills in an engaging way.

We look forward to guiding the girls as they continue their Japanese language studies and supporting them in developing both their language skills and cultural understanding.

Marita Townsend – Curriculum Middle Leader, Languages

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