We dream a school where straight rows of desks will give way to circles of learners. Where everyone will be welcomed into the circle so that, seeing one another, we shall see there are other ways to learn.
Inspired by the lives of Jesus, Mary his Mother and the Brigidine tradition, Mother of God School is a welcoming, Christ-centered community, valuing and promoting the uniqueness and the development of the whole person in an engaging and inclusive environment, so they may be faith-filled, confident and empowered people in an ever changing society.

In Brigidine education we will:
- Be faithful to our catholic heritage,
- Welcome all people, especially the most vulnerable,
- Celebrate all that is good with joy and gratitude,
- Engender a love of learning, hope and sense of purpose,
- Image, and practice, justice and service.
Dear Parents,

Welcome to our school... your school! I am aware of the trust you place in me and everyone at school by choosing us for your child and thank you for that. I will hold that sacred.

As you get to know us - the children, the families, the staff and the wider Mother of God parish community, I hope that you will see in us a welcoming community that values every individual.

At the very core of what we do is the building of a strong relationship that involves every child, every family and everyone who comes to MOGS every day. Whether you are new, or already have children at MOGS each year is a new beginning, bringing new opportunities, new experiences and new friendships.

I hope you will always feel a sense of belonging here at MOGS and look forward to getting to know you and your family.

Welcome,

[Signature]
General Information

Contact details
Address: 67 Blanche Street Ardeer
Telephone: 9363 1734
Facsimile: 9360 4594
Web: www.mogardeer.catholic.edu.au

Principal
Gerard Broadfoot
Email: principal@mogardeer.catholic.edu.au
Mobile: 0403 192594

Parish Priest
Fr Barry Hughes
St Theresa’s Presbytery
17 Drummartin Street, Albion
Telephone: 9311 3091
Facsimile: 9311 5406
School Organisation

**Term Dates 2011**  
Term 1: 6 February – 30 March. (Starting day to be confirmed)  
Term 2: 16 April – 29 June  
Term 3: 16 July - 21 September  
Term 4: 8 October - 21 December

**School hours**  
School hours: 8.45am – 3.10pm Mon – Fri  
8.30am  Teacher on duty in school yard  
8.45am  Children line up and go into class  
9.00am  Classes commence  
11.00am  Recess (children eat at 10.55am)  
11.30am  Classes  
1.10pm  Children eat lunch  
1.20pm  Lunchtime  
2.10pm  Classes  
3.10pm  End of school day

**Assemblies**  
Our whole school assemblies are currently held every alternate Friday afternoon, starting approx 2.30pm and concluding at the end of the day at 3.10pm. Classes are rostered on to arrange the assemblies. Those classes responsible are highlighted in the newsletter and school calendar. Parents are most welcome!

**Punctuality**  
Arriving at school on time is very important for your child’s wellbeing and the smooth running of classroom programs. We ask that all children be at school no later than 8.40am. If children arrive after 8.50, you are asked to sign your child in at the front office.

**Absences**  
Please notify the school when your child is to be absent from school for a number of days. Please provide the classroom teacher with a signed note explaining your child’s absence when they return to school.

When children are unwell at school parents, or their nominated emergency contact, will be contacted and requested to take them home.

When taking your child out of school during the day for any reason, parents are requested to sign the book kept in the office prior to collecting their child from the classroom.

**Emergency Contact Information**  
A form is sent home at the beginning of every year to all families seeking current information. Please inform the school of any changes to family arrangements and contact details. This vital in order for us to be able to contact you in an emergency.

**Before and After School Care**  
We are able to provide a Before and After School Care program for those families who need it on a regular or semi-regular basis. The program is located at Ardeer Primary School in Suspension St, two blocks from MOGS. We collect the MOGS children from the program at around 8.20am and walk the children to the after School Care program at the end of the day.
Staff Meetings  Staff Development Meetings involving all teachers are held every Tuesday commencing at 3.30pm.

Teachers meet as Professional Learning Teams every Wednesday commencing at 3.30pm. Staff Seminar Dinners are held the third Tuesday every Term, these dinners involve a guest speaker.

School Closure Days  Catholic schools are entitled to four student free days per year. These days enable staff to undertake planning and evaluation of programs and professional learning. Ample notification will be provided to families.

Transition to school  The continuing support you give your child as they start school is vital. There are some practical ways you can help your child make the transition to starting school.

You can:

• ask your child what they think about starting school
• take your child to the local library and read books about starting school
• visit the school with your child so they are familiar with the grounds, including showing them where the drink taps, toilets and their classrooms are located
• use the time with the prep teacher at the beginning of the year to discuss your child’s interests, experiences and strengths
• don’t stress out!
• catch up with other parents and their children who will be attending the same school as your child so they can get to know other children in their class before they start school
• let your child practice dressing for school, using their lunch box and drink bottle and packing their school bag in readiness for their first day at school
• adopt a low-key approach to the big day by having casual conversations with your child about this next step in their life and sharing positive memories of your own school experience with your child.
Parent Involvement

Parent Support Team

Our Parent Support Team was established in 2010 and plays a very important role in supporting our school community. PST! meets every second and fifth Tuesday of each term in the staffroom. All are welcome!

Classroom help

We encourage parent help in the classrooms. This can take many forms from helping with displays, preparing workbooks for students to publish their work, hearing children read, changing take-home readers, helping with art activities etc.

We will be running a Parent Helpers course at school early in Term 1, we would expect all those interested in helping in the classroom programs to be part of this short three-week, fun-filled program. Watch for details at the beginning of the school year. It is a great way to meet new parents as well as learning some skills about working with your people in the classrooms.

Excursions

Parents are often asked to join us on excursions to help with supervision of small groups. Unfortunately, parents in a supervisory role are unable to bring toddlers and pre-school children along on excursions. This is to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

Working with Children Check

All adults involved in working with young are required by law to undergo a Working With Children Check (WWCC). Application forms are available from the school office. There is no charge for this application. If you wish to work in the classroom or volunteer to accompany classes on excursions, you will require a WWCC.

School Website

Our school website is an ideal way to strengthen our communication as well as showcasing the great learning that happens at school. We will place each of our newsletters online as well as monthly calendars of the school programs. We will also celebrate special events with pictures, reports and student work. [www.mogardeer.catholic.edu.au](http://www.mogardeer.catholic.edu.au)
Our Approach to Literacy at Mother of God School

**Literacy**

Being a literate person is fundamental to being able to fully participate in the world. To be able to communicate our thoughts, ideas needs and wants adequately we need to be able to speak and listen, read and write and use multimedia very well.

Mother of God is a culturally and linguistically diverse school. Children who attend Mother of God school often speak a language other than English at home. While English is the language of communication and instruction at school, we value highly the knowledge and skills children and their families have in their first language. We encourage families to help their children maintain and extend their first language while also learning English.

Spoken language is the starting point for teaching reading and writing. At Mother of God we develop and extend students skills and knowledge of oral language (speaking and listening) and use this as a springboard into learning to read and write.

Learning about and through English happens at every minute of every day at school, however the first two hours of every day are specifically put aside to explicitly teach children about speaking and listening, reading and writing. We do this by giving children lots of opportunities to talk with each other and with us, reading to students, with students and students reading independently and writing for students, with students and students writing independently. We often use resources such as Big Books, books on CD’s, discovery centres, Interactive whiteboards and computers to assist children in their learning. Children bring books that they can read easily home to practise.

Teachers use a range of student groupings such as whole class, small groups and independent activity in order to respond the range of skills and experiences within the group of learners.

**Curriculum**

At Mother of God school we plan a broad and comprehensive curriculum for our students. The Victorian Essential Learning framework guides our work in planning for learning.

We believe we are preparing students for participation in a 21st century society. Therefore developing skills to enable students to learn flexibly anytime, anywhere is very important to us. In all areas of learning we plan for students to develop skills which enable them to be able to manage themselves their time and resources effectively, to work productively in teams, to use technology effectively as a tool for learning and to develop deep thinking skills.

Units of work are developed to enable students to explore these big ideas in developmentally appropriate ways. Our curriculum enables students to learn about themselves and their world and it is organised under four broad areas:
- Identity – Who I am now and what I’m going to be.
- Sharing our Planet – Environment and Sustainability
- Living and Working with Others
• Systems and Change – Our world is constantly changing

**Faith Education**
The Faith Education program is a whole school program based on gospel values and informed by the Brigidine Core Education Values. The resource To Know, Worship and Love is used throughout the school. At the junior level the program focuses on developing the children’s understanding of their God through story and simple prayers.

**Art / Library**
Creative Arts and Library are the two specialist classes that children experience at MOGS.

**Student Wellbeing**
Student Wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do at Mother of God School. That every child feels good about being at school and that they feel safe here, every day, is of the utmost importance. We know that when a child feels positive about themself and feels a strong sense of connectedness to school, then it is a great environment for learning to take place.

**Breakfast Club**
Breakfast Club is held every Wednesday and Thursday mornings before school commencing at 8.15 in the multi-purpose room. Coin donation is welcomed.
School Garden Program

We are very proud of our School Community Garden and look forward to watching it grow in terms of community involvement as well as the many fruits and vegetables we have planted.

We started our garden early in 2010. It was a bare patch of green grass and big mounds of soil left over from our building project. Everything you see has been created by the children partnership with Ben Wilhems, the teachers and families.

We are proudly part of the Schools Edible Classrooms Program with Cultivating Community www.cultivatingcommunity.org.au

The children meet every week with Ben Wilhems as a class group in the garden where they plant, weed, build, and harvest. They learn many things through the garden program including

- How fresh fruit and vegetables are grown
- The importance of fresh food
- Seasonal fruits and vegetables
- Sustainability
- Gardening is fun!

While the Ben coordinates and plans the garden’s progress and works with the children each week to develop the garden, we look forward to much more community and family involvement. Do not wait for an invitation! Join us on Friday during the classes or drop in any day if you want to spend some time working in the garden.

Family working bee in the school garden
Behaviour Management Procedures
At Mother of God School, we work to restore relationships, ensure a safe and secure learning environment for all and provide opportunities for students to own their behaviours and support them to make better choices. Our procedures are guided by our Behaviour Management Policy. Principles of Restorative Practice are embedded in all attempts to respond to student behaviours.

Student Norms of Behaviour
Appropriate behaviours expected of students at Mother of God School are categorized under three headings.

Respect of self
Whether I am in the presence of teachers or not, I always act in a way that is respectful.
I do nothing that places myself at risk of harm.

Respect of others
We let others work and play without interference.
We listen to others and speak to others politely.
We do nothing that places others at risk or harm.

Respect of property
We respect and take care of our school.
We respect other’s property as we do our own.

Classroom norms of behavior
These include the ‘Student Norms of Behaviour’ (above) as well as other norms that are generated by students as part of an Inquiry Unit at the start of each school year that focuses on Building Our Learning Community.

Student Misbehaviours
In providing guidance in responding to inappropriate behaviours, we have approached student misbehaviours in three levels:
1. Misbehaviours (low level that can be dealt with immediately by the teacher present)
2. Serious Misbehaviours (when a student demonstrates a persistent pattern of misbehavior)
3. Extreme Misbehaviours (those misbehaviours that place the student or those around them at risk of injury or harm, both physically and emotionally).

What needs to happen to make things right?

Misbehaviours At this level of misbehaviours, teacher judgment will guide the most suitable response. When a child’s behaviour has been hurtful to another child, or has damaged property, the response should be an appropriate action. Examples of ‘What needs to happen to make things right’ may include:

- Talk with those involved using the Affective Questions
- Actively encourage children to take action to repair the
relationship(s)
- Encourage children to use the Naming It strategy
- Time Away from class or school yard (and Welcome Back).
- Use Circle Time to explore issues of inappropriate behavior and generate alternative behavior choices
- Complete MOGS Reflection Sheet (n.b. whenever a child completes this form it is to Principal and then sent home for signature. It is kept on file in student records.)

**Serious Misbehaviours**
Inappropriate behaviours are deemed serious when there is a persisting pattern of misbehavior and there is no evidence of change of behaviour as a result of using strategies detailed above. In this instance strategies _will include_:
- Utilising appropriate strategies outlined above
- Referring student to Student Support Group (SSG)
- Developing an _Individual Behaviour Management_ plan (and communicating this plan to all teachers, including CRTs)
- Communicating to parents
- SSG may seek support from outside agencies

**Extreme Behaviours**
Inappropriate behaviours are deemed extreme when the safety of the child, or those around him/her, are at risk. In this instance the following process will be put in place:
- _Extreme Behaviour Card_ to be sent immediately to a member of the School Leadership Team or designated member of staff
- Removal immediately from area (classroom, yard or community garden) by member of the School Leadership Team or designated member of staff
- Ensure area is safe and students are no longer at risk of harm, respond accordingly if someone is injured
- Guided by _Affective Questions_, Leadership Team member will complete an Incident Report
- Student will complete the MOGS Reflection Sheet
- Families of children involved will be contacted prior to children going home
- Teacher will complete an Incident Report and give to Principal by end of day
- Principal will contact parents to set up a Mediation Meeting
- Student is removed from mainstream programs until Mediation Meeting is held. They will be supervised by a member of the Leadership Team (or designated member of staff)
- All documentation is filed in student records
School Uniform

We encourage our young people at Mother of God School to wear their school uniform with pride. The school uniform helps signify who we are as a school and names us as a member of the Mother of God community to the wider community.

The school uniform is available from the school and can be ordered though Lourdes at the school office. It is very important that all items of clothing are clearly marked with the child’s first name and family name.

**Summer uniform**

**Boys**
- Blue unisex shorts
- School polo shirt
- School windcheater
- School jacket
- Black shoes
- School sunhat

**Girls**
- School dress
- Blue unisex shorts
- School polo shirt
- School windcheater
- School jacket
- Black shoes
- School sunhat

**Winter uniform**

**Boys**
- Royal blue tracksuit pants
- Lightblue skivvy or school polo shirt
- School windcheater
- School jacket
- Black Shoes

**Girls**
- Royal blue tracksuit pants
- Lightblue skivvy or school polo shirt
- School windcheater
- School jacket
- Black Shoes

**Sports and Physical Education Uniform**

**Boys**
- School polo shirt
- Blue unisex shorts
- School windcheater
- Runners
- Royal blue tracksuit

**Girls**
- School polo shirt
- Blue unisex shorts
- School windcheater
- Runners
- Royal blue tracksuit

Nail polish and jewellery must not be worn. If ears are pierced, we suggest only gold or silver studs or sleeper are to be worn for safety reasons.

If children have hair longer than shoulder length, it must be worn in plaits, a ponytail, a bun or braided.
School requests

Library Bag - 40cm x 40cm - drawstring material bag (with name).

A painting smock or old shirt with elastic inserted in the neck and sleeves is ideal to protect the school uniform. If using an old shirt please sew up the front as little ones have difficulty with so many buttons.

A spare change of clothing and undies in a plastic bag with name on the outside of the bag. (When appropriate for your child.)

Each child is asked to send one large box of tissues at the beginning of the school year.
Small School

Big Expectations