



PARENT HANDBOOK 2024



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In Faith We Live, Love and Learn

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St Christopher’s Vision Statement

St Christopher’s Primary School is a welcoming and caring community, guided by the Catholic Faith.

Embracing difference and diversity, we strive to empower students to experience success and become resilient lifelong learners.

We work collaboratively with our community to nurture the academic, spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth of each child.

Our students are challenged to engage with their local and global world to create positive change.



Principal's Welcome

Welcome to St Christopher's, a school where everyone knows your name!

St Christopher's is a warm and welcoming Catholic school with enriched educational opportunities in an environment of strong values, where individual attention to each child is the highest priority. We celebrate the multicultural and social diversity of our community and encourage all to participate in the full life of the school.

Our modern facilities and contemporary approach to learning and teaching provide a rich and engaging environment for our students. We have a strong focus on student wellbeing and understand that this is important to student learning. We aim to develop strong relationships between members of our school community and to make our school a happy, rewarding and enjoyable place to be.

We are a Catholic school dedicated to the development of the whole child where all programs are underpinned by the Gospel values. We aim to challenge our children to reach their potential through a broad curriculum tailored to meet every child's individual needs and we strive to provide excellence in all areas of school life.

In order to meet the demands of a rapidly changing society, we ensure that the professional development undertaken by our dedicated staff enables them to provide programs and activities relevant to children of the 21st century. We use current learning resources to support them to collaborate, solve problems, create and communicate.

We are inspired by the writings, philosophy and actions of St Christopher and St Vincent Pallotti, founder of the Pallotines, in whose care the school has been since it was established over sixty years ago.

We are encouraged to understand and contribute to issues of social justice, both locally and internationally, and believe this action is an important part of who we are.

Shane Davoren



Our School

St Christopher's school has an open park-like setting with both asphalt, and extensive grassed areas, including a sports oval. There are also basketball and netball courts, two adventure playgrounds, sandpit, cricket nets and tennis court with a separate clubhouse onsite.



While St Christopher's is a Catholic school, we are open to all who wish their children to be educated in an environment fostering strong Christian values. The student population is culturally rich and diverse. Children enrolled at St Christopher's are generally drawn from the immediate geographical areas; however children are welcomed into the school from a wider area.

St Christopher's Primary School and Parish have both been very actively involved in the local and global community over time which reflects a true testament to one of the core convictions of the Pallottine Order: Every Catholic is called to be an Apostle. The school's motto, 'In faith we live, love and learn' is embedded in the lives of our community.

Our specialist sport, intervention, camp and extracurricular programs enable every student to flourish. We are proud of our technology program with Chrome Books for each child in Years 3 to 6 and computers and iPads in each classroom in our Junior levels.

The children completing their education at St Christopher's continue their studies at a range of schools including Avila College, Emmaus College, Mazonod College, Salesian College and Glen Waverley Secondary College.



Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools - School Term Dates

2024

Term 1

Monday 29 January – Thursday 28 March

Students return: Tuesday 30 January

*Easter 29 March – 1 April

Term 2

Monday 15 April – Friday 28 June

Term 3

Monday 15 July – Friday 20 September

Term 4

Monday 7 October – Friday 20 December

The School Day

The morning bell goes at 8.55am and the dismissal bell is at 3.30pm.

Children should be at school five or ten minutes before commencement time.

Being late to school can disrupt your child's learning as well as being a distraction to the rest of the class.

Teachers supervise the school yard from 8.30am and after school until 3.45pm.

If children have not been collected by 3.45pm they will be brought to the office.

If they are not collected from the office by 4pm they will then be taken to Camp Australia (Out of School Hours Care) in the Hall. Parents will be invoiced for the cost of this care.





Bell Timetable

8.55am	School begins
10.55am	Children eat morning tea
11.00 – 11.25am	Morning Recess
1.00pm	Children will eat lunch
1.10 – 1.55pm	Lunch Recess
3.30pm	Dismissal Bell

Class Roll Marking / Absence from School

Student attendance is marked online at 9am and 2pm. Students will be recorded as 'late' if they are not in attendance at 9am.

If your child is absent from school, please notify the school via your Parent Access Module (PAM) by 9.00am on that day. Under government regulations, if there is no communication in regard to a student's absence, the school is required to contact parents/guardians - an SMS will be sent to parents' mobile phone.

St Christopher's School will follow up unsatisfactory attendance or late arrival with parents.

Days absent and late will be recorded and reported in mid and end of year reports.

Student Late Arrival / Leaving Early

If your child will be arriving late to school, please advise us via the Parent Access Module (PAM) or by phoning the school office. When you bring them in to school, you will need bring them in to the office where they will be signed in.

If your child needs to leave school for an appointment, please come to the office 5-10 minutes beforehand so that we can contact the classroom and have your child sent down to the office. You may also email your child's teacher if you wish. When you arrive please come to the office. We will then contact the classroom to have your child sent down to the office to meet you.





Accident or Illness

In cases of an accident or sudden illness the school will contact parents or guardians. In serious cases, the parents will be contacted immediately. However, if parents or emergency contacts cannot be contacted and medical attention is deemed necessary, the school will seek medical attention for the child.

Communication

Good communication between home and school is essential and we encourage you to communicate any concerns which you may have to your child's classroom teacher who plays a vital role in ensuring the academic, spiritual and emotional well-being of your child.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

Parent/Teacher meetings are held early in Term 1 and late in Term 2. Details of these will be communicated to you via the weekly newsletter. Bookings for meeting times are organised through your PAM.

You are welcome to make an appointment to see your child's teacher at any time. Please email them to request a meeting.



Semester Reports

School Reports are provided to parents in June and December and made available to you via the PAM (Parent Access Module).

School Newsletter

A weekly newsletter is produced and a link is sent to families every Thursday via email.

Special Circumstances / Changes to Family Situation

If there are any family situation changes or anything that you feel may affect your child's wellbeing at school, please contact the Principal, Shane Davoren on 98030011 or email principal@scsyndal.catholic.edu.au.

All such information will be treated confidentially.

Changes to Contact Details

If you have a change in your address, phone number, email or emergency contacts, please send an email to office@scsyndal.catholic.edu.au and update them on your PAM.

Parent Access Module (PAM)

PAM is an electronic version of the paper based forms you are requested to fill in for camps, excursions etc. If your child will be absent from school, you should notify the school via PAM.

PAM also provides parents with the opportunity to update medical information while providing the school with instant access to emergency information provided by you. Parents/Guardians will receive an email invitation to join PAM and enter details for your child/children. Each parent will have their own log in to PAM.



Education in Faith

Education in Faith at St Christopher's involves daily prayer and Religious Education lessons as well as the opportunity to celebrate Mass for feast days or special occasions, as a whole school or class. Class Masses are celebrated each term. Parents are most welcome to attend these Masses which are planned around a unit of work studied as part of the Religious Education program and directed at the level of the child. A contemporary approach is used where possible and units of work are linked to inquiry units being studied in other areas of learning and teaching.

Sacramental Program

The Sacramental Program at St Christopher's is an ongoing Prep to Year 6 program. Students are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation (Year 3), Eucharist (Year 4) and Confirmation (Year 6) as part of our Religious Education program. Students who are not Catholic are included in these programs and warmly invited to share in the celebrations of each Sacrament. All students participate and celebrate in class and Parish Masses. The families of children receiving the Sacraments work in partnership with the Parish Priest and staff in the faith development of their child.

Digital Technology

The school operates a Chromebook program for children in Years 3 to 6 and the Prep to Year 2 students will have access to Chromebooks and iPads. All classrooms have an Interactive Whiteboard to enhance student learning and support a contemporary approach to education. This requires that students accept individual responsibility for the use and care of this technology. All students and parents are required to read and sign an 'Internet User Policy'.



Literacy Lessons

All children will have a two hour literacy block each day. Students work in a variety of group structures to ensure that all levels of ability are supported. We believe that all children can achieve success given sufficient time and opportunity.



Physical Education

Physical Education plays a very important part in the development of your child and every year level at St Christopher's takes part in a physical education program each week. Children will need to wear their sport uniform to school on Thursdays when they have their Physical Education class. Children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 also participate in sport activities on a Friday. As well as a class-based program, we have many other organised sporting activities. The senior students participate in interschool sport throughout the year. All Physical Education activities are compulsory and an email to the teacher is necessary if the child is not participating.

The Arts

As part of our Arts program the students have music and art lessons. In alternating years, we showcase our students' achievements by holding an Art Show and a School Concert.

Music – Children are given the opportunity to experience a music program taught by a specialist music teacher so that they can develop appreciation and skills. Each class has one lesson per week. Children also participate in the whole school choir and in school concerts and assemblies.

Art – This program is skill based and focuses on the different artistic elements of art through the use of drawing, painting, printing, collage, textiles and construction. Students are given the opportunity to experiment with their ideas and concepts and are encouraged to use their imagination to create their artwork.



LOTE (Languages Other Than English)

In LOTE all children from Prep to Year 6 are exposed to the Italian language and culture. They develop an appreciation for cultural differences and develop language skills. Children have one lesson each week.

School Camps

A school camp program is a valuable part of the education of our students.

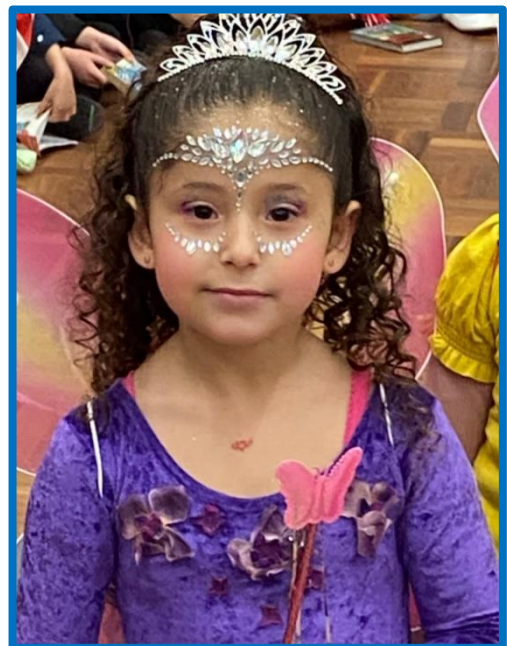
All Year 5 and 6 children go on a three-day camp each year. The camp provides opportunities for students to display and develop skills and abilities in an 'out of school' environment. The program assists the gradual development of both independence and responsibility in our students.



Excursions

All excursions planned by the school are a part of the school curriculum. They are invaluable in stimulating children's interest and are always preceded or followed up with class work relating to them. It is therefore important that all children take part in class excursions.

On some excursions we may require parent helpers. All parent helpers either in the classroom or on excursion must have completed the relevant Child Safety Paperwork and have a current WWCC. Please contact the office if you have not completed this paperwork.



Swimming

Swimming is part of the school curriculum at St Christopher's, not an extra-curricular activity and therefore all students are expected to take part. Children are taught swimming at Waverley Aquatic Centre.



Homework

At St Christopher's homework is regarded as a method of teaching children self-discipline and healthy study habits. It is intended to reinforce material covered at school. Homework is given at all levels of the school. The amount varies according to the needs and ages of the children.

Amount of time suggested for each year level per day:

- Prep 10-15 minutes
- Years 1 & 2 15-20 minutes
- Years 3 & 4 20-30 minutes
- Years 5 & 6 30-45 minutes

Library

The Library is seen as an integral part of the school. It provides a collection of fiction and non-fiction books, journals, maps, posters and kits to enrich and support the school curriculum. It provides space for students to read quietly or undertake research.

All students attend the library once a week for book borrowing as we try to develop in them a love of literacy. We teach them how to use a library bag and a variety of research skills. All children must have a library bag to protect the books they borrow. Library bags can be purchased through the PSW uniform shop and should be clearly marked with your child's name.



Enrichment and Intervention Programs

St Christopher's offers the following extracurricular programs:

- Performing Arts
- Swimming
- SRC Activities
- Premier's Reading Challenge
- Sports and Athletics
- Year 5/6 Camp Program
- Buddy Program
- School Concert
- Grandparents Day
- Cultural Day
- Gardening Club
- Art Show

Tennis, Chess and Instrumental lessons are also run by external providers and can be accessed through the school. K&C Performing Arts are run after school and on a Saturday, giving students the opportunity to learn dance and drama skills in a safe and fun environment.

School Uniform

The St Christopher's school uniform is to be worn at all times. If this is not possible a note of explanation is required. All children wear their sports uniform on a Thursday. Children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 also wear their sports uniform on a Friday. On all other days children should wear their normal summer or winter uniform.

Uniforms, including school bags and library bags, are supplied through PSW in Glen Waverley. Please see the link on our website if you require further details. Uniforms can be ordered online at www.psw.com.au or by phoning 98095477.

Children will require an art smock for protection when doing art and craft. This can be an old shirt from home.

A second hand uniform shop is available at the school every Friday afternoon between 3 and 3.30pm or by appointment – office@scsyndal.catholic.edu.au

Medication

If it is necessary for your child to have medication during the school day (apart from regular asthma treatments) this must be brought to the office with a signed note describing dosage, time and date required. We cannot administer medication to children without this parental consent.



Student Health

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening. The safety of all our children is our highest priority. For some children even skin contact with the allergen can cause an allergic reaction. Our aim is to have all families refrain from sending nut products to school with their children. This includes peanut butter, hazelnut spreads and some muesli bars.

Lunch Orders

Pre-ordered lunch orders are available on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays via Classroom Cuisine. Parents can order online until 8.30am on the day lunch is required.



Sun Smart Policy

St Christopher's is a Sun Smart School. We have a "no hat, no play" policy during Terms 1 and 4. Children are also encouraged to use a factor 50+ sunscreen during these times.



Lost Property

All school uniforms and belongings should be clearly labelled with your child's name. Any lost property is kept in the office area until the end of term. Children and parents can check the lost property at any time.

Buddy Program

The children in Prep and Year 6 are involved in a variety of cross-aged activity sessions throughout the year as part of the Buddy Program. This allows the younger children to have an 'older buddy' and the Year 6 children are given a sense of responsibility towards the younger children.



Awards / Student of the Week

'Student of the Week' awards are presented to each class during Friday Assembly. These weekly awards recognise the efforts and achievements of students at all levels and in all areas.



Leadership

There are opportunities for students at St Christopher's to assume leadership roles. Leadership is seen to be an important way of developing confidence, sense of responsibility, organisational skills and commitment. School Captains, House Captains and other leaders are selected from our Year 6 students. There is also an SRC (Student Representative Council) and each class has two representatives in this group.



Book Club

An order form is sent home from the Scholastic Book Club twice a term. If children wish to purchase books, parents can order **online** by the due date and the books will be delivered to school and given out via the classroom blue tubs.



School Assemblies

Assemblies are held on Monday at 3pm. They provide an opportunity for students and staff to meet as a whole community. The children present work studied and it provides them with the opportunity for public speaking and performing. Parents are encouraged to attend. We will let you know via the newsletter which class will be presenting each week.

Bringing Bicycles to School

There is a bicycle shelter behind the school office where children can park their bike during the day.



Extreme Weather Conditions

On days of extreme weather conditions, the school curriculum is adapted so that pupils are engaged in school activities appropriate to the weather. Pupils will not be dismissed early. All classrooms are air conditioned and heated. Students will remain indoors during recess and lunch in the event of extreme weather conditions.

Camp Australia (Outside of School Hours Care Program)

Camp Australia provides tailored enrichment to children before school, after school and during school holidays. Their engaged educators foster a safe, inclusive environment where children can relax, have fun and grow. Care is offered at St Christopher's from 7am to 8.45am and 3pm to 6pm on school days.



www.campaustralia.com.au Tel: 1300 105 343

All families are encouraged to enrol their children in Camp Australia in case it is ever needed in an emergency.

Transition to Secondary School

The transition process from Primary to Secondary school begins in year 5.

- If it is your intention for your child to go to a **Catholic Secondary** or Private School, enrolments close in the August that your child is in Year 5. Please visit the website of relevant schools early in that year to access a school tour. It is the responsibility of parents to enrol their child at a Catholic or Independent secondary school.
- If it is your intention for your child to go to a **Government Secondary School**, around July of the year your child is in Year 6, we will send home an enrolment form for you to complete and return to us. We will then enrol your child and notify you (around August) if your child's enrolment has been successful.

Please contact Tracey in the school office if you have any further queries or require any help with this process.



School Advisory Council

The St Christopher's School Advisory Council is a representative group of parents who give advice to the Principal on matters of policy and procedures. The Council serves the school community to realise the vision of the school. It aims to maximise the educational experience of all children and to improve the experience of all parents, families, carers and others who interact with the school.

Parents Association

The St Christopher's Parents Association meets monthly and offers an opportunity for parents to gather and become involved in the life of the school. It supports the school in social functions and fundraising.

Traffic Flow & Safety

Parents dropping off or picking up children can park in front of the Presbytery or behind the Hall but not in Doon Avenue. Please do not attempt to do a U-turn, stop in driveways or park on the nature strip as this hinders the flow of traffic and is dangerous. Observe all road signs particularly the NO RIGHT TURN from Doon Avenue into Blackburn Road during drop off and pick up times.

For safety reasons, all children and parents are asked to cross on the marked pedestrian crossing where a teacher is on duty 15 minutes before and after school.



