



Friday, 31st February 2025

This Week's Newsletter Items:

- Welcome Back To School
- Why We Open The Gates And Classrooms Early
- School Advisory Council
- Preps Begin Next Monday
- School Communication Review & Protocols
- School Assembly – Setting expectations
- School & Staff Commissioning Mass
- Parent Helper Training Program
- Parent Teacher Learning Conversations
- Pupil Free Days
- Term 1 Dates



WELCOME BACK!
LOOKING FORWARD TO A 
BRIGHT
NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

Dear Parents, Students & Friends of St Catherine's,

On behalf of all the staff at St Catherine of Siena, I wish to express our sincere excitement at having the students return to school and being able to once again support them in their learning this year.

Last year was a very busy year with developments in curriculum, assessment and reporting, professional learning as well as facility upgrades. 2025 is set to be yet another wonderful year of growth, not just for our students but staff as we further build upon the learning and skills acquired last year.

I cannot help to share with the community how good it was to come in over the holidays and see so many of the staff having set up their classrooms in preparation for the start of this new school year. Their commitment and passion for what they do is deserving of recognition and praise as I have experienced schools in which this does not happen. This year marks a special year for us as Catholics. On Christmas Eve 2024, Pope Francis symbolically opened the Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica, marking the start of the 2025 Jubilee Year.

Jubilee years happen every 25 years and are times of reconciliation and renewal. The theme of this Jubilee is Pilgrims of Hope.

This Year of Jubilee in the universal Church calls us to embrace, and be renewed in, the hope of Christ—a hope that does not disappoint. We are embarking on a particular time of pilgrimage, and as the Holy Father has reminded us, Jesus, 'is the destination of our pilgrimage'. He is both the way, and the path to be travelled.

For myself professionally, I too am celebrating a jubilee year as I enter my 25th year of principalship.

This week's newsletter is to provide you with some important information to set you up for the coming weeks. Please take the opportunity to read and make yourself aware of this term's dates.

Wishing us all a wonderful Jubilee of Hope.

Des Noack
Principal

Why We Open The Gates and Classrooms Early

Last year, we began opening the school gates and classrooms much earlier with children being invited to go straight to the classroom rather than lining up.

This initiative has resulted in a far better start for our students both academically, socially and emotionally.

We continue to encourage all families to try to get their child to the school no later than 8.35am given that learning commences at 8.45am.

As a parent or carer, if you still are under the impression that being late is OK and why we insist on students being on time, we are more than happy for you to visit the classroom in the morning to see what occurs. In doing so, you will quickly see the disruption caused by a student/s being late to not only your child but also to the students and teacher in that classroom.

Please do your best to ensure your child/ren are at school no later than 8.35am prior to the 8:40am bell.

School Advisory Council

The School Advisory Council will convene on **Tuesday 18th February at 7.00pm in the school's staff room**. The primary focus of the Council for this year is to assist us in making continued improvements to the schools' operations, services and community connectiveness. **Parents wishing to participate are asked to please contact the office to advise us of your attendance.**

Preps Begin Next Monday

Next Monday, our Preps commence school. We ask our community to take special care when picking up and dropping of child/ren as these little Preps can often be very hard to see. We also invite all families to take the opportunity to greet each other with a smile.

It never ceases to amaze me how the joy of a child, whose smile and greeting of "Good Morning" can make such a difference to one's day. We each can do this for each other and the great thing is that it costs absolutely nothing. For us adults, we so often can wear the worries of our day upon our face.

Sometimes we simply are not aware of how our body language can speak so much louder than our words.

If today you want to make a difference in this world, smile at a stranger, say good morning to someone you pass in the school and you might be pleasantly surprised by the difference you not only make in their day but your own.

Parent Teacher Learning Conversations

Parent Teacher Learning Conversations will be held on **Tuesday 11th February** and **Thursday 13th of February**. These meetings are an important opportunity for you to meet with your child's teacher **face to face** and share any information that will enable the school to best meet the needs of your child.

A booking form will be sent out as part of next week's newsletter.

School Assembly

School assemblies will occur on Wednesdays at 2.15pm in the school hall.

Our first school assembly will commence on Wednesday, 12th February and has been set aside as a student only event. **It is important for all families & carers to be aware that the first assembly will be for students only.** This provides the school with the opportunity to ensure that students have been versed in assembly protocols, expectations and participation.

Parents will be invited to attend all assemblies thereafter from Wednesday 19th February.



Term 1

Tuesday 28 January – Staff Planning Day

Thursday 3rd April – Team Charters

Friday 4th April – Team Charters

Term 2

Friday 6th June – School Closure Day - Teacher Time In Lieu

Term 3

Monday 3rd November – School Closure Day - Teacher Time In Lieu

Term 4

Friday 21st November – 2026 Curriculum Planning Day

Thursday 18th December – 2026 Student Handover Day

Friday 19th December – 2026 Classroom Preparation & Staff Function

Grade 5C Classroom Teacher



Today, Mrs Dolly Gerges was appointed as our new Grade 5C classroom teacher. Mrs Gerges will commence working at St Catherine's next Monday and work alongside Mr Shadwick next week as she familiarises herself with the students and our school.

Opening & Commissioning Mass

Next Wednesday, we wish to invite the community to join us in celebrating the start of a new school year as well as commissioning our staff.

It would be wonderful to see families join us as we acknowledge and bless our staff and students as we commence this Jubilee Year of Hope.

Parent Helpers Training Program

The partnership between parents and staff is highly valued and extra assistance is always greatly appreciated.

Fortunately, we have many parents who wish to help with the learning program. Because of this, and to ensure quality of teaching and learning, we are offering a **Classroom Parent Helpers Training Program**.

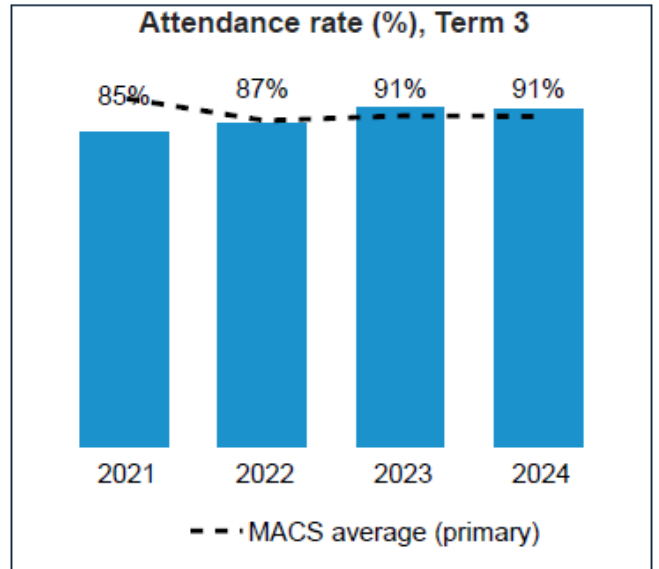
The course outlines how parents assist in the classroom. It also ensures that parents assisting in classrooms are instructed on correct protocols when working with students, such as being aware of child safety, making judgments about other children and retaining confidentiality.

It is in the best interest of the children in the classroom that younger siblings are not to be present in the classroom with their parent at this time.

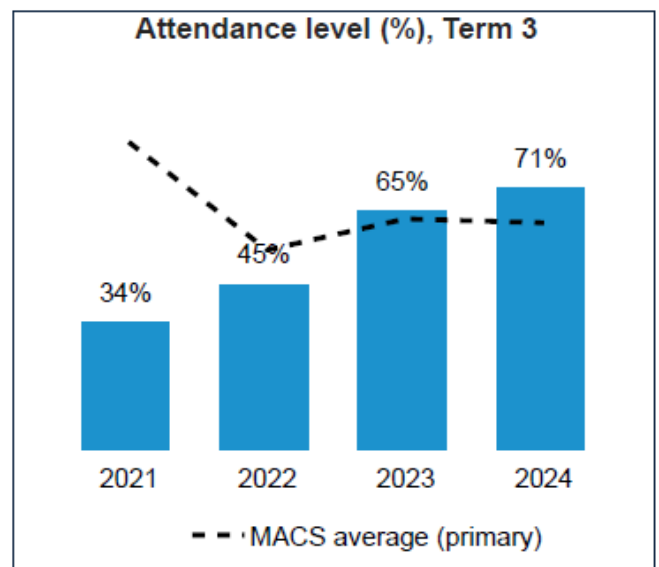
Please contact the office if you wish to attend.

There will, at this stage, be two sessions offered:

Tuesday 4th February @ 9.00am
Thursday 6th February @ 2.30pm



The **attendance rate** is the percentage of fulltime student days attended by our students out of the total of fulltime students days at the school. This provides a high level-measure of overall attendance at the school. Our results for last year show that we maintained a slightly better result than the average of school in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. However, **the next graph shows something even better**. The **attendance level** is the percentage of our students whose attendance rate is at least 90%. This provides a measure of both persistent absenteeism or attendance at the school. **It is fantastic to see our students attending consistently than what is currently occurring in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.**



School Communication

In responding to the school review last year, we are reviewing how the school communicates with parents and the ease in which information is accessible, both in content and language.

For the purposes of communication protocols until a full review is undertaken, we have five (5) primary communication platforms. They are:

- Direct email
- Operoo
- SeeSaw
- School Newsletter
- Text Messaging

For our current and new families, it's a great opportunity to remind ourselves which platform is used for what purpose.

Direct email

Emails are sent to communicate important information regarding school organisation and procedural matters. (An example is the content of this email.) Information sent via email is considered to be very important for the parent / carer to know. It is primarily used by the school administration.

Operoo

Operoo is specifically designed to minimise the paperwork required by parents when completing forms or requests for information during the year. Examples of this are permission forms for camps, excursions or the opportunity for us to seek feedback or your views around specific school actions or policies.

SeeSaw

This platform is to be used by teachers and parents to communicate student learning, achievements and provide feedback. It is primarily used by the classroom teacher. Some whole school messages that are emailed out will be replicated on SeeSaw also.

School Newsletter

The school newsletter provides a general update and account of school activities while informing parents of upcoming events. The school newsletter is where most information is posted and is the primary source of updated information for parents.

Text Messaging

Text messages are only sent in the event that there is important and urgent information that parents are required to know. This could be when we need you to be aware of an email that has been sent or in the event of a critical incident. When receiving a text message, we ask that you read the message and act upon the information as a matter of priority.



Dear Parents and Carers,

We are excited to announce that all students at our school will commence learning Auslan (Australian Sign Language) as part of the L.O.T.E (Languages) area of the Victorian Curriculum. This learning opportunity will introduce students to Auslan and Deaf Culture, fostering inclusivity, communication skills, and an appreciation for diverse communities.

To support learning, there will be a weekly newsletter item and a Seesaw post outlining the learning focus and providing an at-home activity. These resources are designed to engage all students and provide an opportunity for families to share in this learning journey.

Throughout Term 1, students will explore topics such as an introduction to Auslan, learning the alphabet, colours, everyday signs, family, school-related vocabulary, farm animals, describing animals, and numbers. Activities will include interactive games, songs, and practical applications to ensure learning is engaging and meaningful. For example, students will practise signing their names, identifying colours in the classroom, and using signs to describe animals.

We look forward to sharing this exciting journey in Auslan learning with you and your children. Thank you for your ongoing support in making learning engaging and accessible for all.

Warm regards,

Damien Michael
L.O.T.E - Auslan Specialist Teacher

2025

Term dates

Week 2

Monday 03/02

- *Saint Ansgar and Saint Blaise*
- **Preps first day of school - 8.40am till 1.30pm**

Tuesday 04/02

- **Parent Helper Training 9.00am (Legal & Classroom Support)**
- **Preps second day of school - 8.40am till 1.30pm**

Wednesday 05/02

- *Saint Agatha*
- **Prep Day Off - Scheduled testing of Prep students**
- **Whole School Mass 9.15am – Opening Of School Year** (Commissioning of staff)

Thursday 06/02

- **Prep Students commence full school days: 8.50am – 3.15pm**
- *Saints Paul Miki and Companions*
- *Saint Josephine Bakhita*
- *Waitangi Day (NZ)*
- **Parent Helper Training 2.30pm (Legal & Classroom Support)**
- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Friday 07/02

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Saturday 08/02

- *Saint Jerome Emiliani*
- *Saint Josephine Bakhita*
- International Day of Prayer

Sunday 09/02

- 5th Sunday In Ordinary Time -GREEN

Week 3

Monday 10/02

- *Saint Scholastica*
- Exec Team 2:15pm – 3:15pm
- Team Leaders Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30 pm
- Parent Support Group Meetings

Tuesday 11/02

- Parent Support Group Meetings
- *Our Lady Of Lourdes*
- **Parent Teacher Conversations 3.30 to 5.00 / 5.30 to 8.00pm**

Wednesday 12/02

- Whole School Assembly 2.15pm – Students Only

- Parent Support Group Meetings
- Prep Day Off
- **Year 6 Attending Parish Mass @ 9:15am**

Thursday 13/02

- *World Day of the Sick*
- Parent Support Group Meetings
- **Parent Teacher Conversations 3.30 to 5.00 / 5.30 to 8.00pm**

Friday 14/02

- *Saints Cyril and Methodius*
- Parent Support Group Meetings
- Emergency Displan Practice

Sunday 16/02

- 6th Sunday In Ordinary Time -GREEN

Week 4

Monday 17/02

- 2026 Prep Enrolments Open
- Parent Support Group Meetings

Tuesday 18/02

- **Parent Helper Training 9.00am (Legal & Classroom Support)**
- **Parent Advisory Committee 7.00pm – 8.00pm**
- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm
- Parent Support Group Meetings

Wednesday 19/02

- Whole School Assembly 2.15pm
- Prep Day Off - Scheduled testing of Prep students
- **Year 5 Attending Parish Mass @ 9:15am**
- Parent Support Group Meetings
- **Enrolment night for Sacraments @ 7pm (Hall)- St Dominics and St Catherine of Siena**

Thursday 20/02

- WORLD SOCIAL JUSTICE DAY
- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm
- Parent Support Group Meetings
- **School Canteen Committee 7.00pm**

Friday 21/02

- *Saint Peter Damien (commemoration)*
- Parent Support Group Meetings

Saturday 22/02

- *The Chair of Saint Peter*

Sunday 23/02

- *Saint Polycarp (commemoration)*
- 7th Sunday In Ordinary Time- GREEN

Week 5

Monday 24/02

- **Prep's Commence Full-Time**
- Exec Team 2:15pm – 3:15pm
- Team Leaders Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Tuesday 25/02

- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm
- **Reconciliation Family Night for St Catherine of Siena and St Dominics @ 6:30pm**

Wednesday 26/03

- Whole School Assembly 2.15pm
- **Year 4 Attending Parish Mass @ 9:15am**

Thursday 27/03

- *Saint Gregory of Narek (commemoration)*
- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

- Yr 1/2 Parent Night – Reading with your child at home 7pm

Friday 28/02

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Sunday 02/03

- 8th Sunday In Ordinary Time-GREEN
- Clean Up Australia Day

Week 6

Monday 03/03

- **Whole School Photo Day**
- Team Leaders Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Tuesday 04/03

- **Shrove Tuesday**
- *Saint Casimir (commemoration)*
- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Wednesday 05/03

- **Ash Wednesday Mass @ 9:15am**
- Instalment 1 - Family Fee & Student Levy Payment Due
- Whole School Assembly 2.15pm

Thursday 06/03

- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Friday 07/03

- *Saints Perpetua and Felicity (commemoration)*
- **World Day of Prayer**

Saturday 08/03

- *Saint John of God (commemoration)*
- International Women's Day
- **Reconciliation Presentation and Commitment MASS @ 6:00pm**

Sunday 09/03

- *Saint Frances of Rome (commemoration)*
- 1st Sunday of Lent-VIOLET

Week 7

Monday 10/03

- **Labour Day – Public Holiday**

Tuesday 11/03

- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Wednesday 12/03

- **Year 2 Attending Parish Mass @ 9:15am**
- **Sacrament of Penance 7.00pm**
- **NAPLAN Commences for Year 3 & 5**
- Whole School Assembly 2.15pm

Thursday 13/03

- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Friday 14/03

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Saturday 15/03

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Sunday 16/03

- 2nd Sunday of Lent-VIOLET

Week 8

Catholic Education Week

Monday 17/03

- *Solemnity of Saint Patrick (Dress In Green)*
- *Saint Gertrude*
- Team Leaders Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Tuesday 18/03

- *Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*

- **Parent Advisory Committee 7.00pm – 8.00pm**
- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Wednesday 19/03

- *Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
- **Year 3 Attending Parish Mass @ 9:15am**
- Whole School Assembly 2.15pm

Thursday 20/03

- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Friday 21/03

- Harmony Day
- Mass of Saint Patrick for Schools

Saturday 22/03

- *Saint Turibius de Mogrovejo (commemoration)*

Sunday 23/03

- 3rd Sunday of Lent-VIOLET

Week 9

Monday 24/03

- Exec Team 2:15pm – 3:15pm
- Team Leaders Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Tuesday 25/03

- *The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord*
- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Wednesday 26/03

- **Year 1 Attending Parish Mass @ 9:15am**
- Whole School Assembly 2.15pm

Thursday 27/03

Saturday 29/03

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Sunday 30/03

- 4th Sunday of Lent-VIOLET

Week 10

Monday 31/03

- Exec Team 2:15pm – 3:15pm
- Team Leaders Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30 pm

Tuesday 01/04

- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm

Wednesday 02/04

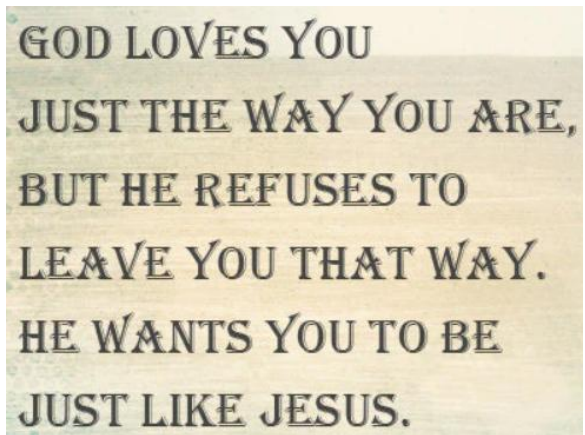
- **Last day of Term 1**
- *Saint Francis of Paola*
- Staff Meeting 3.30pm - 4:30pm
- Student Dismissal 3.15pm

Thursday 03/04

- **School Closure Day - Staff PD**

Friday 04/04

- **School Closure Day - Staff PD**
- *Saint Isidore*



GOD LOVES YOU
JUST THE WAY YOU ARE,
BUT HE REFUSES TO
LEAVE YOU THAT WAY.
HE WANTS YOU TO BE
JUST LIKE JESUS.

