



Embracing *the* Fullness *of* Life

PARENT HANDBOOK FOR VICTORIAN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

(Jn 10: 10, NRSV)

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Message from the Directors of Catholic Education

Dear Parent¹

Welcome to Catholic education and thank you for considering a Catholic schooling for your child. All in Catholic education understand that this is one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent. By choosing a Catholic school you will ensure that your child is educated in an environment where students are nurtured with strong Christian values based on the Gospels. Catholic schools recognise that every child is special and unique and make every effort to cater for your child's individual learning needs.

Catholic schools are founded on Jesus Christ and are an important part of the Catholic Church's mission. The values and teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the Gospel and proclaimed by the Church are central to the Catholic school vision – a vision that offers fullness of life.

A distinctive mark of Catholic schools is the emphasis on community – principals, teachers, staff and parents working together with the wider community to educate and develop the whole child: emotionally, academically, physically, socially, and spiritually.

Catholic schools are committed to excellence in educational standards. They are partners with you in your child's faith development and in providing a high-quality education for your child.

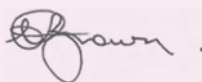
Catholic schools are supported by Catholic Education Offices in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Dioceses of Ballarat, Sale and Sandhurst. These authorities provide service and leadership, so you can be confident that state and national standards in education are maintained in all Catholic schools. At the same time, each Catholic school has the flexibility to tailor its programs to meet the individual needs of students and their local parish and communities.

We wish you and your family well as you begin this journey in Catholic education. We encourage you to be active partners with the school in your child's education and to involve yourself in the school community, where you are now a valued member.



Mr Stephen Elder

Executive Director of Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Melbourne



Ms Audrey Brown

Director of Catholic Education
Diocese of Ballarat



Ms Philomena Billington

Director of Catholic Education
Diocese of Sandhurst



Ms Maria Kirkwood

Director of Catholic Education
Diocese of Sale

¹The term parent is used to include natural, adoptive or foster parents, guardians and caregivers of students.

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Welcome to the Catholic secondary school

Victorian Catholic secondary schools provide high-quality academic, social, physical and religious education for about 90,000 young people all over Victoria.

As a welcoming school community each school provides an inclusive and safe environment focused on your child's wellbeing, achievement, challenge, creativity and enjoyment.

With highly qualified and caring teachers committed to the practice and celebration of Christian values, Catholic schools provide religious education and opportunities for faith development in communities where prayer and sacramental celebrations are

integral to life. Students are encouraged to engage in civic and public life, involving community service and working for social justice.

Our schools encourage your engagement in your child's learning and involvement in the school. Together we can create an effective learning environment and a climate of mutual respect, ensure timely and effective communication and enable participation in consultation on matters of parental concern.



Coming to our schools

Catholic secondary schools are located in various regions across Victoria and come under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop or Bishop of the diocese in which they are located. Some secondary schools are owned and governed by a religious order, others by a group of parishes. Some special education facilities are also available. See the Special education facilities section on page 17 of this Handbook.

Parents are encouraged to attend information sessions and open days at Catholic secondary schools to assist them to choose a school for their child.

Enrolling in the school

If you wish your child to attend a Catholic secondary school, you need to contact the school for an application form when your child is in Year 5 (though some Catholic secondary schools accept applications in earlier years). You will be asked to complete and return an enrolment application form. This enables secondary schools to plan for their Year 7 intake. Principals and your child's teachers can help you with questions and the appropriate paperwork.

For more information about a Catholic secondary school in your locality see the Catholic Education Office website for your diocese or the website of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) (below). These can connect you to the school's own website.



Catholic Education Offices

Ballarat – www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au

Melbourne – www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au

Sale – www.ceosale.catholic.edu.au

Sandhurst – www.ceosand.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd – www.cecv.catholic.edu.au

Selection into a Catholic secondary school is guided by the school enrolment policy. The school's policy usually takes into account a number of factors:

- the relevant diocesan enrolment policy
- whether your child is Catholic
- the parish where your child resides
- whether your child has a sibling at the school
- whether you or your spouse attended the school
- the number of places available in the year level of application.

Fees

The setting of fee levels and other compulsory charges in Catholic secondary schools is the responsibility of the individual school, taking into account the allocation of government funds. Most Catholic secondary schools offer a number of methods for paying fees to reduce any financial burden and to assist financial planning. If you have difficulty in meeting the required fee payment, you are welcome to discuss this with the principal or the business manager of the school.

See also the *Supporting parents – Access and affordability* section on page 25 of this Handbook.

Your child's immunisation

When you are enrolling your child in school, you need to take your child's immunisation certificate with you. The certificate shows whether your child has been immunised against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, whooping cough and haemophilus influenza type B.

Preparing for secondary school

One of the most pivotal stages of schooling is the transition from primary school to the more complex world of secondary school.

This transition can be difficult for some students, and schools actively support students as they make this educational and social shift.

As part of the transition from Year 6 to Year 7, students usually participate in an orientation day at the school. This day is generally held in Term 4 of Year 6 and may include:

- a school tour
- meeting fellow students and teachers
- taking part in special lessons and activities.

As a parent there are many ways in which you can help your child prepare for the transition to secondary school to ensure connectedness and belonging in their new environment.

What you can do to help your child prepare for secondary school

- Talk to the principal.
- Look at the information on the school website.
- Obtain information about enrolment requirements.
- Consider your child's views in the selection of the school.
- Discuss your choice of school with your child.
- Attend open days with your child.
- Ensure your child attends orientation programs.
- Work collaboratively with your child and staff to make the transition from primary to secondary school an enjoyable and successful one.

Your child's learning

Each Catholic secondary school aims to give your child a foundation of faith, values, knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.

At secondary level your child's learning focuses on the development of more complex and sophisticated thinking in areas of logical reasoning, critical analysis and reflection, creative thinking and problem-solving.

The emphasis is on fostering your child's independence as a learner and further developing his/her ability to organise ideas and information and apply practical skills as appropriate. S/he will be encouraged to participate in situations and problems that relate to real life, and to work with the local community and other useful resources outside the school. In addition, s/he will explore and identify possible pathways for future learning.

The student is at the centre of all learning arrangements in Catholic schools. Catholic schools recognise that students are individuals, each with his/her own

distinctive learning styles. Teachers cater for the diverse needs of students, designing learning experiences to help your child develop knowledge, skills and understandings in all areas of learning.

Contemporary learning

In their approach to contemporary learning, teachers in Catholic schools:

- aim to ensure all students will make progress and succeed
- enable students to develop deep understandings about the world and how to operate effectively in that world
- build capacity for lifelong learning
- use an inquiry learning approach to develop independent learning and the ability to make connections between ideas, areas of knowledge and experiences
- create flexible learning opportunities in response to different learning styles
- encourage effective use of contemporary technology to develop learning and understanding
- encourage learners to think and work creatively, explore and experiment, plan and reflect, communicate and collaborate
- create learning opportunities in different environments within and beyond the classroom.

Our schools provide facilities that enable your child to use and develop his/her skills in various technologies, as well as to learn in engaging and effective ways.





Our secondary school curriculum

The curriculum is planned carefully to ensure the development of the whole child, including intellectual, spiritual, physical, emotional and social dimensions.

The curriculum is based on the dignity of the human person, a culture of community and a commitment to social justice and service for the common good. It is designed to prepare students to be lifelong learners who can respond creatively to the challenges of the future, including rapid developments in science and technology, the environment, global activity and social change.

All our schools meet the curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements set by Victorian and Australian governments. Like most Victorian schools, Catholic schools base their curriculum on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and selected subjects of the Australian Curriculum (in 2013: English, mathematics, science and history). This is now known as AusVELS, and identifies what is essential for all students to learn during the compulsory years of schooling (Preparatory to Year 10).

For more information on AusVELS see <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au>



Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum is in development. The Australian Government, in collaboration with the state and territory governments, is committed to developing an Australian Curriculum from Foundation (in Victoria this year is known as Prep) to Year 12. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (see page 11) has responsibility for developing the curriculum in several phases. The Foundation – Year 10 curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history will be implemented in Victorian schools from 2013.

For more details see www.acara.edu.au or www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Home

Religious education

Our schools invite and support students to discover God's presence in their daily lives. Within a Gospel-centred environment students are challenged and supported to understand themselves and the world in which they live through a world view founded in Scripture and in the Tradition of the Catholic community: its stories, its worship, its experiences and its teachings.



Religious education is at the centre of the Catholic school curriculum and is reflected in a visible Catholic symbolic culture and active sacramental and liturgical practice. Religious education explores students' life experiences in the context of Church teachings and tradition. Participation in religious education is compulsory for all students in all of our schools.

Christian education in sexuality

Our schools are encouraged to design their own program in positive human relationships and human sexuality in line with the universal teaching of the Church, based on the particular character of the local community and in partnership with parents.

English

In English your child learns to appreciate, use and enjoy the English language through a variety of texts, including novels, plays, film, information, everyday texts (such as instructions, recipes, application forms) and workplace texts. Students improve their skills in reading, viewing, and listening critically, and speaking and writing clearly and confidently. These skills are an essential basis for success across the curriculum at school and in life generally.

English teaching promotes continuity of literacy learning from primary to secondary schooling and supports literacy into the

post-compulsory years. English programs aim to improve literacy learning for all students. Our schools monitor student literacy achievement and use results to plan for your child's learning needs. Where necessary, teachers use specially designed intervention programs to consolidate basic understanding in English.

Mathematics

In mathematics learning your child is engaged in activities to learn ideas and develop skills in number, space, measurement, data, chance and logic. Teachers aim to develop fully the talents and capabilities of all students by providing a challenging curriculum that is comprehensive, balanced and student-centred.

Mathematics programs aim to increase performance in mathematics learning for all students. Our schools monitor student mathematical achievement and use results to plan for your child's learning needs. Where necessary, teachers use specially designed intervention programs to consolidate basic understanding in mathematics.

Sciences

Science education aims to foster your child's curiosity and wonder about the world, both visible and invisible, and to develop your child's knowledge and understanding of this world. It provides opportunities for students to develop the skills and understanding appropriate to service and good citizenship. It also encourages students to articulate science values and accept the ethical principles embedded in scientific research.

All students need to appreciate the significance of science for the long-term future of our society. Science programs



provide the opportunity to explore the relationship between science, society and technology and the implications for your child's life, the environment and the community in which s/he lives.

Languages

The study of languages is an integral component of a broad and balanced education for all students. At a time of rapid globalisation, learning a language is more important than ever. In learning a language, students develop communication skills and knowledge and awareness of other cultures. They come to understand social, historical and family relationships, and the culture of the people who speak the language studied.

Many of our schools offer students a range of languages, including Italian, Japanese, Indonesian and French, as well as Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), German, Korean and Vietnamese. If your preferred language is not offered by your child's school, you may be able to access the services of the Victorian School of Languages (VSL), which offers after-school and Saturday classes and distance education. The school may

require that this study is in addition to the normal learning program.

For details of VSL programs and availability see www.vsl.vic.edu.au

Physical education and sport

Our schools promote the development of a healthy lifestyle by providing a well-organised and active environment in which your child can participate in a wide range of sports and physical activity. As well as improving fitness, participation in sport and physical education at all levels develops a sense of fair play, self-confidence and an ability to work with others as part of a team.

Opportunities are provided for your child to participate in a large range of sports at school, district, zone, state and national levels. Physical education is timetabled for all students at all year levels.

Humanities

The study of history, geography and economics gives students the opportunity to learn about people and their cultures and environments, in the past and the present. The humanities assist students



to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand themselves and their world. Your child will learn to plan, investigate and ask key questions, analyse data, form conclusions and present information in a variety of ways through integrated topics and projects.

Arts

The Arts are a vital part of secondary school experiences, allowing young people to express their emotions, individuality, imagination and creativity. There are many opportunities for your child to participate in music, dance, drama and visual arts activities. Many of our schools stage regular concerts, involving performances in dance, drama and music. There are opportunities to learn a musical instrument. Through visual arts your child will be able to create artworks in different media, including painting, drawing, clay modelling, graphics programs, etc.

Technology

Our secondary schools provide modern facilities that enable your child to use various technologies to learn in engaging and effective ways. Students have the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in design and technology to create new or improved products and systems using tools, equipment, materials and systems.

General skills and values

The range of subjects in our secondary school curriculum is designed to develop your child's skills in thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, using technology, planning and organisation, as well as creativity and design. Our schools encourage students to be active citizens by understanding their place in society and their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Your child will develop important interpersonal and leadership skills, including



communication, building social relationships and working with others.

Leadership and peer support programs

Where opportunities are available, students are encouraged to be involved in student representative councils (SRCs) and in programs within their local community.

There are several leadership and peer support programs in schools to encourage self-awareness and personal development. The 'buddy' system, where an older student is assigned to support a younger student, is now common in schools and has two main benefits. The older student learns to take on leadership and responsibility, while the younger student knows s/he has another student at school to whom s/he can turn for assistance.

Work experience

As part of the curriculum, your child may complete one or two weeks of work experience. This is usually offered in Years 9 and 10, but is not restricted to these years.

While on work experience, students are able to observe different aspects of work and assist with tasks allocated by their supervisor. It provides students with a greater understanding of the world of



work, as well as helping to improve their communication and organisational skills.

Employers also benefit from work experience because they are able to build closer relationships with Catholic schools and the local community.

For more information see www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/workexperience.htm

Student study tours and exchanges

Exposure to international cultures and experiences has a positive effect on students and teachers in today's global society. Many of our schools offer students the opportunity to participate in short-term international study tours. This is often linked to the study of a language or to an experience which will enhance social awareness and a deeper understanding of social justice. These tours are undertaken by individual schools. For more information you may contact your child's school.

Every year around 1000 Victorian students enjoy the benefits of exchange programs.

For more information about international study tours or student exchange programs, contact the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (see Useful contacts on page 28 of this Handbook).



Assessing and reporting your child's progress

Teachers will continually observe and assess your child's learning in class.

At different times a task or test may be set to gain a clearer idea of how well your child is understanding what has been taught. This important feedback assists the teacher to fine-tune teaching strategies for the individual student.

Various opportunities are provided during the year to let you know your child's progress. You will receive two comprehensive written reports each year, and arrangements will be made for at least one interview with your child's teachers, when you can discuss his/her progress in each learning domain or subject. In addition, you can always contact the school to arrange a meeting with a teacher if you have concerns or wish to have an update on progress.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 participate in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), which tests English (reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy skills. The results of these tests, in conjunction with a range of other assessment strategies and data collection, give you information on how your child is progressing and where s/he could benefit from greater challenges or extra help.

National assessment and reporting is the responsibility of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). In Victoria the NAPLAN is administered by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

For more information see

www.nap.edu.au, call 1300 895 563 (ACARA) or email info@acara.edu.au

Alternatively see www.vcaa.vic.edu.au, call 1800 134 197 (VCAA) or email vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible to all Australian education Ministers for developing the Australian Curriculum, developing student assessment, including NAPLAN, and for reporting overall student and school performance. It manages the *My School* website, which provides information on all Australian schools.

For more details on ACARA, see www.acara.edu.au

For more details on *My School*, see www.myschool.edu.au

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) sets the guidelines for what students learn from Prep to Year 12 in all Victorian schools. The VCAA is responsible for the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and the phasing in of the Australian Curriculum (AusVELS), the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

For more information see

www.vcaa.vic.edu.au, call 1800 134 197 or email vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au

Learning pathways for your child

As your child matures and progresses through secondary school, s/he will consider carefully what future options or pathways to explore, based on personal skills, preferences and career interests.

Our secondary schools offer direct support and advice from specialist careers teachers about possible pathways for your child. These include:

- the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)
- the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the VCE
- a School-based Apprenticeship/Traineeship.

Combinations of these options are possible. They lead to further studies at universities or colleges of technical and further education (TAFE), to training, employment or a combination of these.

For more information on these pathways contact your child's school. Schools also provide pathways for students with additional learning needs. See page 16 of this Handbook.

Career advice and planning

Our schools provide a range of resources and guidance to support your child in making informed choices about the many options available after school.

Career and course information is available through careers teachers and year level coordinators at schools. Schools also have materials to assist your child in learning about different careers, including career guides, university and TAFE directories

and employment information. Much of this information is available online and is incorporated into curriculum and pastoral programs, especially in Years 9–12.

For more information see
www.myfuture.edu.au,
www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au
 and <http://myuniversity.gov.au/>

VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education)

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is a qualification designed for students in Years 11 and 12 that is recognised around the world. It is a valuable pathway to university study, technical and further education (TAFE) and employment. It is also possible to do a vocational certificate (VCE VET) or School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship within the VCE.

Each school decides the VCE studies and VCE VET programs it will offer. Typically, Catholic schools offer a wide range of subjects and make every effort to tailor a VCE program to match student interests and career aspirations. All necessary information and advice is provided by the school.

To help you and your child to plan for the VCE, and to find out more about how the VCE works, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) – see page 11 of this Handbook – has produced an excellent guide for parents, which is called



Where to Now? Guide to the VCE, VCAL and Apprenticeships and Traineeships. This is available at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/publications/wheretonow/index.html.

For more information see
www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

VET (Vocational Education and Training) in the VCE

In senior secondary years, your child can choose to complete a VCE VET program as part of his/her VCE. VCE VET programs provide students with pathways to university, TAFE, further training and the workplace. These programs include job training such as hospitality, agriculture, building and construction, multimedia, and engineering.

A range of VCE VET programs can contribute towards your child's satisfactory completion of the VCE, and give her/him a nationally recognised vocational qualification. The vocational qualification provides students with access to further training at a TAFE institute and will often improve their chances of getting work when they leave school.

If your child is interested in doing a vocational training certificate other than



those available through VCE VET programs or School-based Apprenticeships, s/he may still be able to count such training towards satisfactory completion of the VCE.

VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning)

The majority of Victorian Catholic secondary schools also offer the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), a recognised qualification with a strong focus on developing your child's sense of his/her own pathway into further training and employment. VCAL offers a flexible study program that suits each student's particular learning needs, interests and goals.

The VCAL is a good option for Years 11 and 12 students who enjoy hands-on learning activities and the chance to obtain practical industry-related experience. VCAL students are often interested in doing a TAFE course, starting an apprenticeship or traineeship or getting a job in a specific industry when they leave school.

The VCAL has four compulsory strands that give students practical work-related experience, as well as literacy and numeracy skills and the opportunity to build personal skills that stand them in good stead for both work and life.

For more information
see www.vcaa.vic.edu.au,
call 1800 134 197 or
email vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au

Structured Workplace Learning

Your child can undertake Structured Workplace Learning to acquire skills and competencies in an industry setting as part of a nationally recognised vocational training program. In Victoria, Structured Workplace Learning is an important part of VET programs undertaken by VCE and VCAL students. Government support is provided to all students and employers throughout the course of their placement.

School-based Apprenticeships or Traineeships

In the past, many young people had to make the hard decision about whether to leave school and pursue an apprenticeship or traineeship, or to stay on and complete their secondary study. The School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship enables students to have the best of both worlds. Your child can participate in paid employment (part-time) while completing his/her final years of schooling.

Available to students as part of their VCE or VCAL, School-based Apprenticeships assist students in making a successful transition from school to further training or education. They provide multiple pathways to employment, on-the-job training, TAFE and university. Local industries also benefit from School-based Apprenticeships, because they help to fill local skill shortages.

The School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship qualification will contribute to satisfactory completion of the VCE in the same way that VCE VET programs contribute.

For more information
see www.vcaa.vic.edu.au,
call 1800 134 197 or
email vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au

Student destinations – On Track

On Track is designed to ensure that government and non-government school students in Years 10–12 are on a pathway to further education, training or employment after leaving school. Students are followed up in the year after leaving school through a telephone survey to identify their post-school study and/or employment destinations.

On Track adds to the information previously available to parents and the Victorian public by highlighting the diversity of pathways young people pursue after leaving secondary school.

If your child is not studying or in full-time employment, s/he may request assistance when surveyed. Your child will then be referred to one of the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), where s/he will be assisted to access the advice and services s/he requires.

For more information see
www.llen.vic.gov.au

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)

At the end of schooling students who wish to go on to further study will undergo a selection process. This process is managed by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC).

For more information
see www.vtac.edu.au
or call 1300 364 133

Additional learning needs

Our schools assist students with additional learning needs by developing and implementing individual learning programs within the school.

If required, your child may access the services of:

- psychologists
- speech pathologists
- visiting teachers (hearing impairment, vision impairment, physical/chronic health impairment)
- English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D)/New arrivals school advisers.

Information regarding the relevant referral process for these services is available from your child's school.

If the school believes your child would benefit from these services, the school will contact you and ask for your approval for the direct involvement of student services staff with your child. You may contact your child's school for more information.

Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Program

Our schools adopt the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Program to improve participation and learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy, of educationally disadvantaged students and students with a disability. You may contact your child's school for more information.





Specialised therapy in schools

Our schools work in collaboration with specialised organisations in developing learning programs for students with special needs and these are tailored to meet the requirements of the individual student. For example, full-time students who have a physical or multiple disability and require physiotherapy and/or occupational therapy as an integral component of their school program may be referred for specialised therapy. Programs by Yooralla and Scope Victoria are provided. You may contact your child's school for more information.

Transition certificate in work education

A transition certificate in work education (Certificate I in Transition Education) is offered at TAFE for students whose

minimum age is 16. This program is for young people who have experienced mild intellectual learning and/or social difficulties. It offers them the opportunity to participate in a range of vocational electives and activities, providing a broader base of living and employment skills. Programs can be tailored to meet the needs of individual students. You may contact your child's school for more information.

Futures for Young Adults

Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) is a program that provides support to students with a disability to make the transition to post-school options. Transition to Employment is an initiative within FFYA that aims to enhance opportunities for young people interested in pursuing employment. It is available to eligible students who have turned 18 when they complete their schooling and can be accessed up until they turn 21.

For more information see
www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability

Senior Pathways & Transition Program

The Senior Pathways & Transition Program is available to selected students in Year 10 across the Archdiocese of Melbourne. It aims to encourage students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to remain in the mainstream school setting beyond the compulsory years and to access a range of vocational and higher educational opportunities that allow flexibility, choice and interchange at the completion of compulsory schooling years.

For more information call the
 Catholic Education Office Melbourne on
 03 9267 0228 or email execdirector@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au

Special education facilities

In the Archdiocese of Melbourne, special education facilities are available at:

- Larmenier School in Hampton
- MacKillop Specialist School in Whittington
- St Vincent's School in Maidstone
- St Mary's College for Hearing Impaired Students in Wantirna South and South Morang (Primary campuses), Dandenong, Ringwood and South Morang (Secondary campuses)
- St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre in North Melbourne
- St Paul's College in Kew.

In the Sandhurst Diocese, the Doxa School in Bendigo, Borinya in Wangaratta and Notre Dame College, Shepparton, provide special education facilities.

For more information contact:

- Catholic Education Office Melbourne: 03 9267 0228 or www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au OR
- Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst: 03 5443 2377 or www.ceosand.catholic.edu.au

Gifted students

Catholic schools make provision for high-achieving and gifted students in a variety of ways. The Catholic Education Office in each diocese offers educational consultancy and access to resources which assist schools in identifying gifted students, assessing specific needs, and making appropriate programming recommendations to school staff. You may contact your child's school for more information.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Ongoing educational, pastoral and cultural support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is provided through school-based curriculum initiatives. Schools develop, implement and evaluate individual learning plans for Indigenous students as required.

Effective links are established with Aboriginal community organisations, with Koorie education personnel, student support schemes and funding where available. You may contact your child's school for more information.

As part of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Melbourne, the 'Opening the Doors Foundation' provides assistance to parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who attend our schools in Victoria, so that they are able to choose and successfully maintain a positive educational environment for their children.

For more information see www.openingthedoors.org.au or call 03 9443 9070

English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D)/ New arrivals program

Consultancy services and funding are available to schools to meet the needs of newly arrived students requiring support with learning English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D), and their teachers.

Eligible secondary students are entitled to a minimum of six months English language support at a language centre/school *if enrolled in a Catholic secondary school prior to commencing at the language centre/school*. You may contact your child's school for more information.

Your child's health, wellbeing and safety

Children thrive in school when they feel happy, confident and secure. Your child's wellbeing is our first priority.

Our schools work with parents to provide every possible assistance and support for the wellbeing of all children in our care, within the Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF).

For more information on the NSSF see www.deewr.gov.au

Student wellbeing and behaviour management plans and protocols in our schools outline expectations and responsibilities that promote mutual care, acceptance, courtesy and respect.

Our schools have anti-bullying policies and strategies for dealing with serious incidents, based on government requirements and the Pastoral Care policy of the Catholic Education Office of your diocese. Many schools appoint dedicated Student Wellbeing Coordinators to work with principals and other teaching staff to promote wellbeing and support services.

Our school communities have access to a wide range of student wellbeing support in areas which include:





- child protection
- student health services
- personal development
- safety
- resilience and mental health
- behaviour management
- anti-bullying education
- drug education.

School care program

If your child has high medical needs and is enrolled in a Catholic school in Victoria, s/he may be eligible for a service provided in partnership with the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH). The RCH Home and Community Care Service is available to schools on request through the Catholic Education Office Melbourne.

For more information contact the Catholic Education Office Melbourne on (03) 9267 0228 or execdirector@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction which requires life-saving medication. A severe allergic reaction usually occurs within 20 minutes of exposure and can rapidly become life-threatening. Anaphylaxis must be treated as a medical emergency, requiring immediate treatment and urgent medical attention.



Each of our schools has an Anaphylaxis Management Policy, which includes plans and procedures for anaphylaxis management and the training of relevant staff. An individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan is developed for each student at risk and you are required to provide your child's EpiPen® to the school.

Healthy eating

Our schools address one of Australia's growing health problems, obesity, through various curriculum and practical initiatives. In schools where canteens operate, guidelines have been developed to provide students with healthy eating suggestions.

As a parent you have an important role to play in helping to ensure your child receives a consistent message about healthy eating and being active.

For useful ideas and more information about healthy eating and physical activities see www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Emergencies

In cases of emergency or ill health, the school will immediately contact you so you can collect your child or approve the appropriate medical attention. It is important to ensure that your contact details are up to date.

Your child's wellbeing is our first priority.

Parents and schools – Working together

Catholic schools welcome opportunities to work with you in educating your children. The partnership between you and the school, especially your child's teachers, is crucial to ensuring that your child has the best opportunities to enjoy the school experience and to learn effectively.

As a parent you can contribute your own knowledge and skills at all levels, to assist your child's learning, to support the school's goals and to promote the principles of Catholic education.

There are many ways in which parents and schools can work together to improve the educational experience and outcomes for their children. You can help your child in many areas of school life, as suggested in the list opposite.

Parents have a particularly important role to play in the educating community, since it is to them that primary and natural responsibility for their children's education belongs.

(Congregation for Catholic Education 1997)



What you can do to help your child at school

Faith development

- Attend school and parish liturgies and Masses, sacramental education and faith development evenings.
- Participate in and discuss religious education learning activities and social justice initiatives.

Learning

- Encourage your child to take increasing responsibility for his/her learning and organisational skills.
- Discuss your child's school work and progress with him/her.
- Contact the relevant teacher to discuss any problems your child is having with his/her classwork or homework.
- Encourage reading by setting an example – reading yourself.
- Read texts (e.g. novels, plays) set by your child's teachers.
- Discuss your child's response to the texts and ask to see work s/he completes on these texts.

Wellbeing

- Encourage healthy eating, sufficient sleep and regular physical activity.
- Encourage positive attitudes, values and behaviours like courtesy, confidence, persistence, and doing your best.
- Celebrate your child's successes.
- Help your child balance the amount of time spent completing homework, watching television, playing computer games and engaging in other leisure or recreational activities, and part-time employment.

School activities

- Attend school events, displays or productions in which your child is involved.
- Become actively involved in school community activities such as the School Board, parent groups, parent education programs, etc.



Homework

Catholic schools usually advise parents of homework expectations at the beginning of the school year. You can assist your child with his/her work at home in a number of ways.

What you can do to help your child with homework

- Ask whether homework has been set and ensure your child keeps a homework diary.
- Acknowledge your child's success and ask how his/her homework and class work are progressing.
- Help your child to plan and organise a time and space for completing work at home.
- Assist your child to complete work at home by discussing key questions and directing him/her to resources.
- Discuss homework in your child's first language (where English is not the main language spoken at home) and link it to his/her previous experience.

Your child's progress

Our schools welcome opportunities to communicate with you about your child's progress, to enable you to:

- assist with your child's progress
- see examples of work
- develop a relationship with your child's teachers.

There are formal occasions for this, both face-to-face and in writing (see the Assessing and reporting your child's progress section on page 11 of this Handbook). However, you are welcome to make appointments at other mutually convenient times to discuss any concerns.

As a parent you can contribute your own knowledge and skills at all levels, to assist your child's learning.

Career options

Parents play a vital role in guiding and advising students about career options. As parents, you are aware of your child's particular interests and abilities.

This knowledge helps when choices are considered for post-compulsory education,



training and employment options. However, it is the young person's ongoing life choices that are the key.

Each individual needs to be encouraged to accept this responsibility as part of their maturing. Happily, and with sound support from home and school, this is a common outcome.

For information about learning pathways available to your child, see page 12 of this Handbook.

Contact information

It is important that you keep the school up to date with your contact telephone numbers and those of an emergency contact. There may be times when the school will need to contact you. In cases of emergency or ill health, the school will immediately contact you so you can collect your child or approve the appropriate medical attention.

Annual School Reports

Every Victorian Catholic school provides an Annual School Report on its activities to parents and the wider community.



This report gives parents a clearer idea of the nature and outcomes of each school. The report includes important information such as enrolment and financial data, student attendance, the range of activities provided, overall performance of students on tests such as the NAPLAN and VCE, results of parent and student surveys and teacher qualifications.

The Annual School Report is normally found on the school's website, as well as on the State Register. Similar information about every school in Australia may also be found on the *My School* website.

For the State Register see

www.vrqa.gov.au/sreg

For *My School* see

www.myschool.edu.au

Secondary School/College boards

College boards are established in most Catholic colleges. College boards bring together priests, members of religious orders, principals and parents in a spirit of collaboration to realise the college's vision and achieve its educational aims. The boards are established under

various governance models and vary in responsibility and function from advisory boards to boards of management. Procedures and processes for parent representation on college boards are available at your child's school.

Parents and friends associations

Most schools have a parents' association, often called the Parents and Friends Association or a Parents Auxiliary. These groups offer an opportunity for parents to gather and become involved in the life of the school. These groups take many forms and provide support for the school in areas such as:

- social functions for the school community
- maintenance of grounds, buildings and equipment
- fundraising for particular needs in the school
- voluntary support for educational programs.

Parent groups can also assist in fostering the intellectual, cultural, social and spiritual interests of their members, and provide opportunities for the development of community spirit among the staff and parents.

Parent support

Catholic schools and Catholic Education Offices are committed to developing and maintaining opportunities for parent and community participation in the education of their children.

Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB)

The Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB) was established in October 2005. Its role is to:



- provide a forum to represent parents in Victorian Catholic schools
- promote parents as partners in education with the school, the Church and the community
- promote the principles of Catholic education in collaboration with the Diocesan Bishops
- promote Catholic schools as schools of first choice for Catholic families.

It provides an avenue for parents to participate at diocesan, state and national levels, advocates for Catholic school communities, and represents parents of students in Catholic schools through their school boards or parent associations.

For more information see
www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au

Parent Seminar Series – Archdiocese of Melbourne

The Parent Seminar Series, operating in the Archdiocese of Melbourne for over 17 years, provides parents with a forum for discussing a range of topical issues relating to their children's education and personal development.

For more information see the Parents section at www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au

Supporting parents – Access and affordability

Catholic education is strongly committed to the principles of social justice and the dignity of the human person. Catholic schools make it a priority, therefore, to create an environment in which all parents and families feel welcomed, valued and supported.

In particular, every effort is made to support and empower students with additional learning needs. (For further information see the Additional learning needs section on page 15 of this Handbook.) Support is available for students newly arrived in Australia or for families who are more comfortable communicating in a language other than English (see Interpreting and translating services on page 27). For families experiencing financial difficulties this section provides a number of opportunities for assistance.

Catholic schools make it a priority to create an environment in which all parents and families feel welcomed, valued and supported.

Government support²

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

If you have a child under 16 years of age and receive an eligible Centrelink benefit along with a health care or pension card, you may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) from the Victorian Government. This allowance is provided to assist low-income families to offset the cost of the essential educational items that all parents are required to pay for.

Application for the EMA is made through your child's school. The school will provide you with further information, including the application form and details about deadlines which it is your responsibility to meet.

For more information see
www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/financial/ema.htm
or call 1800 060 970

Schoolkids Bonus

The Australian Government Schoolkids Bonus provides a guaranteed up-front payment to support families eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A with the costs of their children's education.

For more information see
www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/SchoolkidsBonus.aspx or
www.humanservices.gov.au
or call Centrelink on 132 468

Youth Allowance

Students aged 16 years and over may be eligible for financial assistance through the Youth Allowance scheme.

For more information see
www.centrelink.gov.au

Transport

In country areas and some outer metropolitan areas, students who live more than 4.8 km from their nearest Catholic school may be eligible for transport support. In locations where there is not enough demand to run free school bus transport, the Victorian Government provides a conveyance allowance to help with travel costs.

²At the time of publication, the details in this section were correct. You should check the relevant website for current allowances and eligibility requirements.

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For more information, first contact your child's school. If further information is required, see www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/lifeatschool/traveltoschool.htm or <http://corp.ptv.vic.gov.au/projects/school-buses/>, or call the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on (03) 9637 2000

Public Transport Concessions

In Victoria, all students aged 17 and under can automatically travel on public transport at a concession rate. All students are eligible for a statewide Victorian Public Transport (VPT) Student Concession Card, which is required for purchasing a student transport pass.

For more information see <http://corp.ptv.vic.gov.au>

School-based support

Fees

If you have any concerns regarding payment of school fees or charges, you are encouraged to discuss these at any time with the business manager or principal of your child's school. Where appropriate you will be able to make alternative arrangements to pay the fees. It is not helpful to ignore notices of request for payment.



Interpreting and translating services

All schools are able to provide access to interpreting and translating services free of charge. Parents of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds may request schools to provide interpreters for parent-teacher interviews and information sessions. Schools are also able to use the service to translate school notices.

Scholarships

Some of our schools offer scholarships for prospective students and those already attending their schools. You may contact your child's school for more information.

Textbooks and equipment

Some textbooks, stationery and equipment will be provided by the school and a charge levied to the parent. Each student will be given a list of textbooks and equipment required. Many schools assist parents to buy and sell second-hand books. You may contact your child's school for more information.

Uniforms

Your child's school determines the uniform to be worn by all students. In addition, a sports uniform will usually be required. In some schools parents can buy new or second-hand uniforms through a uniform shop. You may contact your child's school for more information.

Useful contacts



Catholic Education Offices

Archdiocese of Melbourne

Central Office, James Goold House

East Melbourne

(03) 9267 0228

www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au

Eastern Region – Croydon

(03) 9724 0200

Southern Region – Moorabbin East

(03) 9532 1922

Northern Region – West Melbourne

(03) 9329 8800

Western Region – Werribee

(03) 9731 3900

Diocese of Ballarat

(03) 5337 7135

www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au

Diocese of Sale

Warragul – (03) 5622 6600

www.ceosale.catholic.edu.au

Diocese of Sandhurst

Bendigo – (03) 5443 2377

www.ceosand.catholic.edu.au

Shepparton Office – (03) 5831 3811

Wangaratta Office – (03) 5723 0000

National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC)

(02) 6201 9830

www.ncec.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Limited (CECV)

(03) 9267 0228

www.cecv.catholic.edu.au

Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB)

secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au

www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

(03) 9651 4300

www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)

(03) 9637 2806

www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

1300 895 563

www.acara.edu.au

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Term Dates

For more information see www.cecv.catholic.edu.au

2013

TERM 1: Wednesday 30 January – Thursday 28 March

TERM 2: Monday 15 April – Friday 28 June

TERM 3: Monday 15 July – Friday 20 September

TERM 4: Monday 7 October – Friday 20 December

2014

TERM 1: Wednesday 29 January – Thursday 4 April

TERM 2: Tuesday 22 April – Friday 27 June

TERM 3: Monday 14 July – Friday 19 September

TERM 4: Monday 6 October – Friday 19 December

2015

TERM 1: Friday 30 January – Friday 27 March

TERM 2: Monday 13 April – Friday 26 June

TERM 3: Monday 13 July – Friday 18 September

TERM 4: Monday 5 October – Friday 18 December

References

Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, St Pauls Publications, Strathfield, NSW, <www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/index.htm>.

New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition 1993, Catholic Bible Press, Nashville, Tennessee.

