



St. Joseph's School Cobram

Always Faithful to God, ourselves and others in the spirit of the Mercy Tradition

Parent Information Handbook



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WELCOME FROM THE PRINCIPAL

On behalf of the staff and students, I extend a warm welcome to our wonderful school community.

We are blessed with a vibrant, friendly school, filled with passionate and dedicated staff who work collaboratively and in partnership with parents, to nurture, educate and challenge each student. Our mission is to share with the students the Mercy Tradition that began at our school with the Sisters of Mercy in 1922.

Students at St. Joseph's are given the opportunity to shine in many different areas, which include, performing arts, public speaking, digital technologies, sacramental programs, swimming and many different sports, just to name a few. It is our wish to prepare students to be hope filled, independent, resilient and confident learners within an environment that nurtures students academically, socially, spiritually and emotionally. With the active involvement of our families, parish and broader community, we endeavour to prepare our learners to be productive and empowered to make a positive difference to our world.

We are extremely appreciative of our families for choosing the gift of Catholic education for their children. We enjoy the responsibility of making each students' educational experience as rich and meaningful as it can be and look forward to working with you to achieve this. Your child deserves the very best and we commit to giving our best to you and your family at St. Joseph's.

It is my privilege to lead this friendly community, which is striving to give the best education to all. We look forward to working with your family now and in the future.



Welcome to St. Joseph's School Cobram

The school as you find it now is because of those who have gone before you.

It is a fluid picture that is ever being created.

Each and every member of our community contributes in some way to that picture.

Those who come after you will experience your contribution.

You make the school what it is.

May God bless you and hold you in His loving care,

Sarah Iddles

Sarah Iddles

Principal

St. Joseph's promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children.

OUR VISION

St. Joseph's school strives to:

- Be a community where the teachings of Jesus are taught, modelled and lived.
- Create a child safe and positive environment in which each person academically, socially, spiritually and emotionally flourishes.
- Build and value collaborative partnerships with parents, the Parish and wider community.
- Build a learning community that fosters best teaching practice to enable improved student learning.

OUR GRADUATE OUTCOMES

St. Joseph's endeavours to educate students to become:

- Knowledgeable and appreciative of the Catholic faith.
- Problem solving, inquiring & critical thinkers with high competencies in literacy and numeracy.
- Confident, competent and ethical users of technology.
- Hope filled, independent, resilient and confident young people capable of contributing to building a just and fair society.
- Socially adept, respectful, just, environmentally conscious and appreciative of diversity.

St. Joseph's promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children.

2023 STAFF

PRINCIPAL	MRS SARAH IDDLES	
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	MRS STEPHANIE ARUNDEL	
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEADER	MISS FRANCESCA CREA	
FOUNDATION	MRS KIRSTY HITCHCOCK (FOUNDATION LEARNING COMMUNITY LEADER)	
	MISS BRITTANY STACEY	MRS MARESE PERCY
GRADE 1/2	MRS TERESA ALLEN (JUNIOR LEARNING COMMUNITY LEADER)	
	MISS FRANCESCA CREA	MRS MARY HYDE
	MISS HALINA TEDESCO	
GRADE 3/4	MS NATALIE WILSON (MIDDLE LEARNING COMMUNITY LEADER)	
	MRS TRACEY ALTOFT	MR NATHAN BROWN
	MRS CAROLYN CASSIDY	MISS GEORGIA KERR
	MRS KRISTEN O'DWYER	
GRADE 5	MR STEPHEN GEMMILL	MRS VIRGINIA O'SULLIVAN/MS LAUREN ROSS
GRADE 6	MRS KIMBERLY NYE (SENIOR LEARNING COMMUNITY LEADER)	
	MRS SARAH HODGSON	
PLUS ONE TEACHER	MRS JODI SEFTON	
LOTE (ITALIAN)	MRS CARMEL NATALE	
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	MR DALE POWEL	
SPECIALIST TEACHERS	MRS TEGAN ALEXANDER	MRS MELANIE CLYDESDALE
	MRS GABRIELLE FLORANCE	MS CHARLOTTE FRANCO
	MS LAUREN ROSS	
LEADER OF LEARNING ADJUSTMENT	MRS JANITA CRAWFORD	
PASTORAL WELLBEING LEADER	MRS STEPHANIE ARUNDEL	
LEARNING & TEACHING LEADER	MRS STEPHANIE ARUNDEL	
LITERACY LEADER	MRS JODI SEFTON	
MATH LEADER	MS NATALIE WILSON	
TECHNOLOGY LEADER	MR NATHAN BROWN	
WELLBEING OFFICERS	MS TAMERYN PERRY	MISS CHELSEA BEAVIS
MENTAL HEALTH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS	MRS HANNAH KAVANAGH	
LEARNING SUPPORT OFFICERS	MRS JULIE DIRETTO	MS CAITLIN MILLS
	MS ADRIANA FAZIO	MR KIERAN O'DONNELL
	MRS SANDRA KENNEDY	MRS LEANNE WALDRON
TRAINEE LEARNING SUPPORT OFFICERS	MR MATTEO ALLEN	MR WILLIAM SLATTERIE
	MISS LAURA MCLEOD	
ADMINISTRATION OFFICERS	MS LISA GERMANI	MRS KELLY KENNEDY

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CHILD SAFE - IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MINISTERIAL ORDER 1359

Our commitment to child safety means that all students enrolled, and any child visiting, has a right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

SCHOOL STRUCTURE & ORGANISATION

The structure of classes is dependent on our numbers. In 2023 there are 15 classes.

Specialist staff teach Physical Education, L.O.T.E (Italian), Library, Performing Arts, Health and RRRR.

TERM DATES FOR 2024

Term 1: Tuesday 30th January – Thursday 28th March

Office is open Monday 29th January

Term 2: Monday 15th April – Friday 28th June

Term 3: Monday 15th July – Friday 20th September

Term 4: Monday 7th October – Friday 20th December

SCHOOL CLOSURE DAYS

Throughout the year a designated number of days are allocated for planning, report writing, professional development and professional practice.

Parents are notified in advance of any school closure days.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Labour Day (March)	Anzac Day (April)
King's Birthday (June)	Melbourne Cup (November)

SCHOOL TIMES

School Commences	8:50am
Recess	10:50am – 11:20am
Supervised Eating Time	11:20am – 11:30am
Lunch Recess	1:30pm – 2:00pm
Supervised Eating Time	2:00pm – 2:10pm
Dismissal	3:10pm

OFFICE HOURS

The school office is open from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday.

SCHOOL ACCESS

During the hours of 9:00am – 3:00pm, access to the school is through the Administration building in Hay Avenue. The Broadway Street gate will be open from 3.00pm for end of day collection.

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STATEMENT OF ENROLMENT

Students are enrolled at St. Joseph's at the beginning of the year in which they turn five years of age, on or before April 30th of that year. It is encouraged that children previously attend kindergarten.

Parents are to present the following documentation for their child:

- Birth Certificate
- Immunisation Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate (if applicable)

Students on a Visa are required to present their current Passport and Visa.

Non-Catholic students are enrolled at our school with the understanding that they participate fully in the Religious Education Program.

ENROLMENT TIME-LINE

OPEN DAY & INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE FAMILIES

An Open Day is held every May and July, to give new families the opportunity to walk through the school. This is advertised on our Facebook page and all local kindergartens.

Guided tours are conducted by our Principal and Deputy Principal.

An appointment with the Principal is to be made to meet with you and your child and to discuss any needs your child may have.

ENROLMENT OF SIBLINGS

Sibling enrolments for the following year will be advertised in the school newsletter towards the end of Term 2. Parents are asked to contact the school to make an appointment with the Principal. Appointments are conducted during Term 3, to meet your child and discuss any needs they have.

OUR TRANSITION PROGRAM

The transition program for students entering Foundation consists of weekly visits in Term 4. The final visit will be in December for one and a half hours. The children will spend the morning with their teacher and class members for the following year.

SCHOOL NURSE PROGRAM

The School Nurse from the Regional Health Department visits the school every year to undertake medical inspections of all students beginning school for the first time. Parents are notified of the date of this visit and are asked to complete a survey before the visit.

Students from other classes can be referred to the Health Nurse during her visit. Referrals can be made at the request of parents or teachers.

PARENT ACCESS ORDERS

The Principal is to be notified of any Family Court Orders, such as parenting orders (custody orders), Contact Orders (access orders) or any other custodial or guardianship situations.

If your child, is in the care of one parent and is not permitted to see or to be collected by the other parent, it is important for the school to hold a copy of the parenting access order.

We have no legal right to refuse a parent access / permission to collect your child if we do not have the required legal documents.

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OUR EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

STUDENTS

- Participation in all school activities, including those of a spiritual nature.
- Respect for others, through use of manners, wearing school uniform and compliance with school rules.
- Pride in their contributions to the school community.

PARENTS

- Encouragement, understanding and support for the school's programs.
- Active participation in the life of the school.
- Cooperation with other members of the school and parish community.
- Acceptance and active support of the Catholic ethos of the school community.
- Participation in the child's spiritual, sacramental and pastoral education process.
- The fulfilment of financial obligations to the school community.

STAFF

- Commitment to the Catholic faith and ethos.
- Loyalty to the school/parish community.
- Integrity and professionalism.
- Personal commitment to individual children in their care.
- Commitment to professional and personal development.
- Sensitivity to the needs of parents and families.

ATTENDANCE

Students are required to attend school every day, except when ill. Parents are asked to bring their children to school on time. **Arriving late for school is a disadvantage for children.**

The Government's Attendance Guidelines state: ***'schools must advise parents/guardians of unexplained absences, on the same day, as soon as practicable, including for post-compulsory aged students'.***

St. Joseph's School is required to notify parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond. We will advise parents promptly of unexplained absences via text message.

After the first attendance recording each day, the school will identify students with an unexplained absence.

LUNCH ORDERS/CANTEEN

St. Joseph's School uses an external provider (Hungie Fangs Artisan Bakery) to supply lunch orders to students. This is available Tuesday to Friday. Ordering of lunches is made through the My School Connect App. Lunch orders are delivered to the school by 11.20am.

The canteen window is open at lunch times. The spending limit is \$1.50 for treats and \$2.50 for juice.

UNIFORM SHOP

St. Joseph's School Uniform Shop operates within the school and supplies all uniform requirements for our students. Summer and winter uniforms, sports uniforms, sun hats, school bags and art smocks are available.

Parent volunteers run the Uniform Shop and collate orders Tuesdays. Orders are to be emailed to the school office by Tuesday 2.00pm. You will be emailed when your order is ready to collect. Alternatively, you can visit the Uniform Shop Tuesday afternoons, between 3.00pm – 3.30pm.

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SCHOOL FEES

St. Joseph's School Family Fee is compulsory.

Our fees are in line with the recommendations of our governing body Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd. The Family Fee increases between 3-5% each year, to assist with the ongoing cost of running and maintaining the school and grounds. Additionally, the needs and circumstances of the community are always carefully considered when setting fees for the following year, along with the ongoing and long-term strategic plan of our school.

2023 School Fees (Family Fee)

1 child	\$1,300
2 children	\$1,450
3 or more Children	\$1,550

Plus, the following levy that is applicable to your child(ren)s' year level of enrolment.

2023 Student Levies are as follows:

Year Level	Curriculum/ICT Levy	Camps, Sports and Excursions Levy	Total Levies 2023
Foundation	420	125	545
Year 1	420	125	545
Year 2	420	125	545
Year 3	420	475	895
Year 4	420	475	895
Year 5	420	625	1045
Year 6	420	625	1045

The Curriculum/ICT levy goes toward costs incurred in providing quality programs and resources in each learning area. For example; iPads, photocopying, classroom requirements, library books, readers, math equipment, class set of books, assessment materials and more. iPads are 1:1 for all learning areas.

Camps, Sports and Excursions Levy will cover expenses relating to camps, excursions, sleepovers, incursions and sporting programs (including but not limited to; swimming, Skillzone, Healthy Harold, World of Maths).

Fee remissions are available to families who require assistance by way of a confidential meeting with myself.

The family school fee is reviewed annually.

Direct Debit: This is our preferred method of payment. Direct Debit Forms are available through the school. Fees may be paid weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly through this system. All other payment arrangements can be made weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Centrepay: Centrepay is a voluntary bill-paying service that is free for Centrelink customers. Use Centrepay to arrange regular deductions from your Centrelink payment. You can start or change a deduction at any time. Go to humanservices.gov.au/Centrepay for more information and to set up your Centrepay deductions. Administration staff can also assist you with setting up your Centrepay deduction.

CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund is provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

If you hold a valid means-tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible for CSEF. The allowance will be paid to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions, or sporting activities for the benefit of your child.

The annual CSEF amount per student is \$125 for primary school students.

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SCHOOL UNIFORM

GIRLS

Summer	Blue and white checked shift style dress or approved navy shorts & blue and yellow polo shirt with school logo. Plain white socks, black shoes.
Winter	Navy tunic with a white long sleeve shirt or pants with a blue and yellow polo shirt and school windcheater with logo. Plain navy socks / tights, black shoes/black sneakers

BOYS

Summer	Grey shorts and blue and yellow polo shirt with school logo. Plain grey socks, black shoes.
Winter	Grey trousers, blue and yellow polo shirt and school windcheater with logo. Plain grey socks, black shoes/black sneakers

A weatherproof jacket in the school colours is also available from the school Uniform Shop.

With the exception of watches, studs and sleepers, jewellery is not permitted.

Hair must be tied back, regardless of gender.

COLOURFUL SNEAKERS ARE NOT PART OF THE ABOVE SCHOOL UNIFORM AT ANY TIME.

SPORTS UNIFORM

Navy blue shorts (Summer) or track pants (Winter) and blue and yellow polo shirt with school logo.
Sneakers to be worn on sports days.

All items are available from our Uniform Shop, except for socks and shoes.

SUN HATS

We have a "**No Hat, Play In The Shade**" Policy for all students. That is, if a student does not have a school hat, he/she must remain in the shaded area of the school grounds. This policy is in force for Term 1 and Term 4.

Approved sun hats are available for purchase from the school Uniform Shop.

Please ensure that all items of clothing are clearly labelled with your child's name.

This is also required for all other school requisites - lunch boxes, drink bottles, etc.

COMMUNICATION

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Get to know your child's teacher and establish good communication with the school community.

Parents are encouraged to attend Parent/Teacher/Student conferences which are held twice a year.

Reports are sent home each semester and will be available on the Parent Access Module (PAM).

Parents are encouraged to visit the school or contact the teacher if they are concerned about their child's progress, or if any information is required. Appointments should be made for these occasions.

Teacher email address can be found on the Parent Access Module (PAM).

PARENT ACCESS MODULE (PAM)

The Parent Access Module (PAM) is an online portal for parents. PAM is used for student medical profiles, making parent teacher interviews, consent forms for school activities, student absences and assessment reports.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

All communication from the school is emailed to the email address registered with your Parent Access Module (PAM) account.

Please keep the office updated with any change to address, phone numbers, email address or medical conditions.

THE WORD FROM ST JOSEPH'S (NEWSLETTER)

The Word from St. Joseph's is published fortnightly on a Friday. The Word from St. Joseph's contains information about all aspects of school life and needs to be read. We urge parents to keep this document for reference. The Word from St. Joseph's is available on our Parent Access Module, school website, Facebook and via email.

Our school website: www.sjcobram.catholic.edu.au

ASSEMBLY

School Assembly is held every 3 weeks on a Friday morning at 9.00am. The aim is to provide information, share ideas and celebrate together (at times changes are necessary and when possible, will be published on our Facebook page, email or text message).

CURRICULUM

The Victorian Curriculum F-10 incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects the Victorian priorities and standards. This is used throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At School It brings the message of Jesus through the Gospel stories, relating them to life experiences of our time; with a Catholic perspective.

At Home Encourage children to respect and value themselves and others in an atmosphere of trust and security.

CORE RESOURCE 'Source of Life' – Diocese of Sandhurst

SACRAMENTS

At School Study of the Sacraments is ongoing from Foundation to Grade 6. Students will experience Reconciliation and Eucharist / Confirmation in their primary years of schooling. Through these Sacraments the children will celebrate life with Jesus and are welcomed into the life of the church.

At Home Children will need to know that they belong and are accepted for themselves and their individual uniqueness. Children need to experience a sense of trust and forgiveness throughout their lives.



LITERACY

Our school has adopted the "Structured Literacy Approach", which is an evidence based approach that combines reading, writing and oral language. This approach has an emphasis on using highly explicit and systematic teaching and learning strategies that focus on phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension, oral language, vocabulary and fluency.

MATHEMATICS

Students engage in evidence based mathematical approaches to develop skills in problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration skills and reasoning. They explore various mathematical concepts through explicit teaching and inquiry based learning to achieve curriculum outcomes.

LIBRARY

This program is an integral part of the children's reading development. Students are encouraged to read a wide range of material appropriate to their interest and level of reading. Skills are developed so that students are competent at gathering information.

OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

Students also learn the following: Civics & Citizenship, History, Geography, Science, Visual Art, Music, Drama, Physical Education/Sport/Health, LOTE (Language Other Than English) – Italian and Digital Technology.

TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET USAGE

Upon enrolment at St. Joseph's, parents are asked to complete a consent form allowing their child/children to use the internet. Safety in using the internet is taught in classrooms; however, we also encourage parents to be aware of what their children are accessing at home.

At St. Joseph's we have 1:1 iPads across the school.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

At St. Joseph's responsible attitudes are formed at all levels and these underpin the promotion of leadership skills.

Leadership formation programs are made available to all senior students, such as the Values for Life – Lead the Way, Skillzone Leadership and CES Jesus as a Leader.

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HOME PRACTISE STATEMENT

At St. Joseph's School, we acknowledge that the time children spend with their families and their involvement in out of hours activities are important components in the development of the whole child.

Activities such as dance, sports practise, cultural activities, out of school hours care, the learning of a language, tutoring, church and youth clubs, etc are all considered to be valuable learning activities that place additional demands on family time.

Research also shows that reading regularly at home remains a very important activity. Therefore, students are encouraged to read for a minimum of four nights per week.

Experts believe time would be better spent on more family-friendly activities, as there is very little academic value in doing other types of home activities for primary school aged children.

EXCURSIONS

All students are given the opportunity to participate in excursions. Their experiences range from:

Foundation	Teddy Bears' Picnic
Grade 1	After school activities and a barbecue dinner at school
Grade 2	Sleepover at school
Grade 3/4	A camp to be determined
Grade 5	A camp to be determined
Grade 6	A camp to be determined



WATER FAMILIARISATION PROGRAM

Each year all students have the opportunity to participate in a Water Familiarisation Program. They are placed into groups according to their level and receive instruction.

Austswim-trained personnel give assistance during the program. The aim of this program is to promote safety awareness and skills to ensure safe conduct near the water.

LEADER OF LEARNING ADJUSTMENT

This role focuses on the specific needs of individual children. The Leader will work in conjunction with Catholic Education Sandhurst staff, parents, classroom teachers, external professionals and students to ensure appropriate support is provided for students with special needs. Organising:

- Necessary assessments
- Liaising with specialists
- Timetabling visiting specialists
- Parent Support Group Meetings
- Meeting with teachers to plan Individual Learning Plans
- Supporting teachers with students with special needs
- Providing an alternative for students at recess and lunch times.

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PASTORAL WELLBEING

St. Joseph's has a comprehensive structure in place to ensure we cater for the needs of our students. Today, as in the past, we look at our students in terms of their academic, social, psychological, physical and spiritual well-being and development.

There are many programs in place at St. Joseph's to support the students, and in many cases, parents and other family members. Some of the programs include:

- Individual Learning Plans
- Positive Behaviours Interventions and Supports (P.B.I.S.)
- Social Skills
- RRRR
- Visiting Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist and Educational Psychologist
- School Wellbeing Officer
- Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHIPS)
- Inclusive classroom practices

Coco

Coco is in our school dog and she is part of the learning and teaching team. Coco is a very special part of our school community and provides unconditional love to everyone.




BEHAVIOUR EDUCATION POLICY

St. Joseph's has a Positive Behaviour Education Policy which aims to promote self-discipline, responsibility and appropriate behaviours. In addition to the Behaviour Education Policy, St. Joseph's has a policy and has set in place procedures to address any incidents of undesirable behaviours.

Positive Behaviours Interventions and Supports (PBIS), is the school wide framework utilised by St. Joseph's to consistently approach the explicit teaching of desirable behaviours in settings throughout the school.

St. Joseph's has three school wide expectations; Always Respectful, Always Safe and Always Learning. Six Golden Rules sit underneath these expectations and further support educators when teaching the expectations in each setting.

	PBIS
	Always Respectful
	Include others Use please, thank you and excuse me
	Always Safe
	Walk Inside Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
	Always Learning
Listen to the speaker "Personal Best"	

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The involvement of parents in their child's education and in the day to day running of the school is seen as an important prerequisite for effective learning and the building up of a warm and friendly school community.

All families are invited, encouraged and expected to become involved in activities around the school. If we, as adults, show an interest in the school and gain enjoyment from its activities, our children are much more likely to place emphasis on learning and gain enjoyment from school.

St. Joseph's presents a family based Sacramental Program for Reconciliation and Eucharist/Confirmation. Parents are required to be involved in these programs.

Families are expected to be involved by joining at least one of the support groups;

- St. Joey's Dough Raisers
- Social/Fundraising, Uniform Shop
- Teacher Support
- Water Familiarisation Program
- Excursions and Sport events
- Fete

ST. JOSEPH'S FETE COMMITTEE

This important group organises the running of our biggest fundraiser. The fete is held mid-March. This dedicated group depend entirely on the support of all those involved in the school and Parish to run this event.



WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

At St. Joseph's Primary School, we rely on support and assistance from parents and family members in classrooms, the uniform shop and various other events held throughout the year. Under the Victorian *Working with Children Act 2005* and *Catholic Education Sandhurst*, all people engaging in 'child-related work' are required to have a working with children check. Volunteers must also complete the Volunteer Induction Pack, available from the office.

- No charge for volunteers.
- Valid for 5 years.
- You must have your working with children check with you when volunteering at the school.
- If you already have a check, you must inform the Department of Justice that you have commenced child-related work at St. Joseph's School, if not previously advised.

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