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)
Message from the Directors of Catholic Education

Dear Parent

Welcome to Catholic education and thank you for choosing a Catholic school 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, your child will be nurtured in an environment which engages with the Gospel teachings. 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 and 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.

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 its local parish and communities.

We wish you and your family well as you begin or continue 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
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Ms Audrey Brown
Director of Catholic Education
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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 94,000 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.

In Catholic schools, highly qualified and caring teachers are committed to an education that integrates and celebrates faith, learning and life. Our 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. We can 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 page 17 of this Handbook).

Parents are encouraged to attend information sessions and open days at Catholic secondary schools to assist in choosing a school for your 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. All secondary schools have information days or tours allowing you to view the school facilities and ask questions of the appropriate staff.

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.

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**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’s 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 page 27 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 program 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 transition to 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 an enjoyable and successful one.
Your child’s learning

Our Catholic schools provide a foundation of faith based on Catholic tradition and teachings. They also assist your child to develop knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and dispositions 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 diverse learning needs.

Teachers design learning experiences that are responsive to the different ways which students achieve their best.

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 questions and issues as drivers for learning
• create flexible learning opportunities in response to the different ways in which students learn and achieve their best
• encourage effective use of contemporary technologies to deepen and accelerate student learning, both inside and outside of school
• 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 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 the 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. This is now known as AusVELS, a single framework that 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 still in development. The Australian Government, in collaboration with the state and territory governments, is committed to developing an Australian Curriculum from Foundation (the first level of the curriculum, taught in Prep) to Year 12.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has responsibility for developing the curriculum in several phases. Mathematics, science and history have been the first curriculum areas to be implemented in Victorian schools in 2013 and 2014. All other remaining areas of the Australian Curriculum will be implemented from 2015.

International Baccalaurate

Some Catholic secondary schools offer the International Baccalaurate, which includes its Middle Years Program (students aged 11 to 16) and its Diploma Program (students aged 16 to 19).

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 traditions 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**

The study of English helps create confident communicators, imaginative thinkers and informed citizens. It is through the study of English that individuals learn to analyse, understand, communicate with and build relationships with others and with the world around them. English helps students become ethical, thoughtful, informed and active members of society. It also helps students to engage imaginatively and critically with literature to expand the scope of their experience.

English teaching promotes continuity of literacy learning from primary to secondary schooling and supports literacy into the post-compulsory years. Our schools monitor student literacy achievement and use results to plan for students’ distinct learning needs. Where necessary, teachers use specially designed intervention programs to consolidate basic understanding in English.

**Mathematics**

Mathematics provides students with essential mathematical skills and knowledge in Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability. It develops the numeracy capabilities that all students need in their personal, work and civic life, and provides the fundamentals on which mathematical specialties and professional applications of mathematics are built.

Our schools monitor student mathematical achievement and use results to plan for students’ distinct learning needs. Where necessary, teachers use specially designed intervention programs to consolidate basic understanding in mathematics.

**Science**

Science provides an empirical way of answering interesting and important questions about the biological, physical and technological world. The knowledge it produces has proved to be a reliable basis for action in our personal, social and economic lives. Science is a dynamic, collaborative and creative human endeavour arising from our desire to make sense of our world through exploring the unknown, investigating universal mysteries, making predictions and solving problems.

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

**Languages**

Languages study enables all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English. Languages aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure students communicate in the target language, and understand language, culture, and learning and their relationship.
Languages study also helps students to understand themselves as communicators and to develop intercultural capability in communication.

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, see www.vsl.vic.edu.au

Health and Physical Education
Health and Physical Education teaches students how to enhance their own and others’ health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity in varied and changing contexts. The Health and Physical Education learning area has strong foundations in scientific fields such as physiology, nutrition, biomechanics and psychology, which inform what we understand about healthy, safe and active choices. The Health and Physical Education learning area is informed by these sciences and offers students an experiential curriculum that is contemporary, relevant, challenging, enjoyable and physically active.

Our schools promote the development of a healthy lifestyle by providing a well-organised and active environment in which students can participate in a wide range of sports and physical activities. 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.

Humanities
The Humanities learning area comprises History, Geography, Economics and Business, and Civics and Citizenship.

History aims to ensure that students develop knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the past and the forces that
shape societies, including Australian society. **Geography** focuses on characteristics of places that make up our world, using the concepts of place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change. Studies in **Economics and Business** enable students to understand the process of economic and business decision-making and its effects on themselves and others, now and in the future. Through the study of **Civics and Citizenship**, students investigate political and legal systems, and explore the nature of citizenship, diversity and identity in contemporary society.

**The Arts**

The Arts are a vital part of secondary school experiences. The Arts enables exploration of the dynamic relationships between the five Arts subjects: **Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music** and **Visual Arts**. This can involve students making and responding to artworks in traditional, contemporary and emerging forms, using materials, techniques and technologies from one Arts subject to support learning in another. Within all Arts subjects, design facilitates the creative and practical realisation of ideas.

**Technologies**

This learning area encourages students to apply their knowledge and practical skills and processes when using technologies and other resources to create innovative solutions, independently and collaboratively, that meet current and future needs. The Technologies learning area includes **Design and Technology** and **Digital Technologies**.

**General capabilities and values**

General capabilities and values are explicitly taught and developed in Catholic schools, supporting students to manage their own wellbeing, relate well to others and make informed decisions about their lives. Students develop into citizens who behave with ethical integrity, relate to and communicate across cultures, work for the common good and act with responsibility at local, regional and global levels.
These general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century.

**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 Year 10 but is not restricted to this year level.

While on work experience, students are able to observe different aspects of work and assist with tasks allocated by their supervisor. This opportunity 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.


**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.
Assessing and reporting your child’s progress

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

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

Various opportunities are provided to let you know your child’s progress, with most schools scheduling Parent / Teacher / Student interviews twice a year. 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. Many secondary schools also have an online intranet facility that enables you to view your child’s assessment tasks and results. 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 are the responsibility of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). 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. ACARA also 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 administration of the AusVELS, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificates within senior secondary qualifications, 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 career development staff about possible pathways for your child.

Students may undertake either:

- the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), or
- the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

Within these two senior secondary certificates, as part of their learning program, students may undertake Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools programs, including School-based Apprenticeships or Traineeships.

The completion of a senior secondary certificate may lead to further studies at universities or colleges of technical and further education (TAFE), to training, employment, or a combination of these.

To help your child plan a senior secondary program, and to find out more about how the senior secondary certificates (VCE and VCAL) work, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) has produced an excellent guide for students and parents, titled *Where to Now? Guide to the VCE, VCAL and Apprenticeships and Traineeships*. This is available at [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/pages/vce/publications/WhereToNow/default.aspx](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/pages/vce/publications/WhereToNow/default.aspx).

Typically, Catholic schools offer a wide range of subjects and make every effort to tailor a senior secondary program to match student interests and career aspirations.

Schools also provide pathways for students with additional learning needs. See page 15 of this Handbook. All necessary information and advice are provided by the school.

**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 career development staff 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.


**VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education)**

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is a qualification that is recognised around the world. The VCE is usually undertaken in Years 11 and Year 12 but many students start their VCE in Year 10. It is a valuable pathway to university study, further education and training (for example at a TAFE), or to employment. It is also possible to do a nationally recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificate or a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship within the VCE.

For more information, see [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)
VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning)

The majority of Victorian Catholic secondary schools also offer the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Students usually begin the VCAL in Year 11 or Year 12 of secondary school. For some Year 10 students, Foundation VCAL may be an appropriate course of study.

The VCAL equips students with the practical skills that employers need. It helps them develop their initiative and resilience, and gain experience in teamwork and leadership.

Students who undertake Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools programs, including training from School-based Apprenticeships or Traineeships as part of their VCAL program, will have developed knowledge and skills and nationally recognised qualifications that employers will value.

The VCAL also gives students the literacy and numeracy skills that are important for work and life. Students will undertake units or modules from four compulsory strands – literacy and numeracy skills, work-related skills, industry specific skills and personal development skills.

The VCAL also has the flexibility to allow students to design a study program that suits their interests and learning needs.

The VCAL has three levels – Foundation, Intermediate and Senior. Upon successful completion of the program, the student receives a VCAL qualification, either for Foundation, Intermediate or Senior level, depending on which level they choose. Students also receive a Statement of Results listing all successfully completed VCE, VET in Schools and VCAL units, as well as a Statement of Attainment for any units completed through VET in Schools programs.

VET (Vocational Education and Training) in Schools

In senior secondary years, your child can choose to undertake a Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools program as part of his/her VCE or VCAL.

VET in Schools programs provide students with pathways to university, further education and training (including TAFE and the workplace). These programs include industry-specific training such as hospitality, agriculture, building and construction, multimedia and engineering.

VET in Schools programs undertaken as part of a VCE or VCAL allow students to include vocational studies within their senior secondary certificate. Students undertake nationally recognised training from either accredited state curriculum providers or national training packages. The training may contribute to satisfactory completion of their VCE or VCAL.

The VET qualification may provide students with access to further training at a TAFE institute or from another training provider. It will often improve their chances of getting work when they leave school.

If your child is interested in undertaking a VET certificate other than those available through VET in Schools programs, including a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship (for example, training undertaken through a part-time apprenticeship or traineeship that is not integrated into their school timetable), s/he may still be able to count such training towards satisfactory completion of the VCE or VCAL.
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 VET program or as part of a VCAL learning program, or as part of the VCE study, Industry and Enterprise. Structured Workplace Learning is an important means of supporting and complementing the student's learning program and developing their skills, with the opportunity to apply their knowledge in an industry setting.

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. A School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship enables students to have the best of both worlds. Your child can participate in paid employment (part-time) and undertake recognised, structured training while completing his/her final years of schooling.

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

Training undertaken as part of a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship may provide credit towards satisfactory completion of the student’s senior secondary certificate (VCE or VCAL).

For more information, see www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vet/programs/sbat.aspx or www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/apprentices/Pages/default.aspx

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 an online survey to identify their post-school study, training and/or employment destinations. As part of the online survey, if your child is not studying or training or in full-time employment, s/he will be offered advice and assistance to access education and training options.

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.

For more information, see www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/ontrack.aspx

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 information and resources
See also:

Additional learning needs

Our schools assist all students, including students with additional learning needs.

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.

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

**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. These are tailored to meet the requirements of the individual student. Students who have a physical or chronic health impairment, or multiple disabilities, and who 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 the FFYA program 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/for-individuals/disability/community-life-and-jobs/post-school-transition-support

Senior Pathways & Transition Program
The Senior Pathways & Transition Program is available to selected students in Year 10 across schools of 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 Catholic Education Melbourne on 03 9267 0228 or email execdirector@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au
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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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.

An initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Melbourne is the ‘Opening the Doors Foundation’. The Foundation provides assistance to parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who attend our schools in Victoria. It assists parents to choose and successfully maintain a positive educational environment for their children.

For more information, see [www.openingthedoors.org.au](http://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 the student is enrolled in a Catholic secondary school prior to commencing at the language centre/school. You may contact your child’s school for more information.

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Specialist settings

The Archdiocese of Melbourne operates specialist settings at:

- Larmenier School in Hampton
- MacKillop Specialist School in Whittington
- St Mary’s College for Hearing Impaired Students, with campuses in Wantirna South and South Morang (primary), and Dandenong, Ringwood and South Morang (secondary)
- St Joseph’s Flexible Learning Centre in North Melbourne
- St Paul’s College in Kew.

The Diocese of Sandhurst operates:

- Doxa School in Bendigo
- Notre Dame College, McAuley Champagnat program in Shepparton
- Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership in Wangaratta.

For more information contact:

- Catholic Education Melbourne: 03 9267 0228
- Catholic Education Office Sandhurst: 03 5443 2377

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 to assist schools in identifying gifted students, assessing their specific needs, and making appropriate programming recommendations. 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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.

An initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Melbourne is the ‘Opening the Doors Foundation’. The Foundation provides assistance to parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who attend our schools in Victoria. It assists parents to choose and successfully maintain a positive educational environment for their children.

For more information, see [www.openingthedoors.org.au](http://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 the student is 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

Students thrive at 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. The Australian Government’s National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) is an important guide for schools in this matter.

For more information on the NSSF, see www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0

Our schools have positive relationships policies, as well as student wellbeing and behaviour management plans and protocols. These documents outline expectations and responsibilities that promote mutual care, acceptance, courtesy and respect.

Our schools also have policies and strategies for dealing with bullying behaviours and serious offences. These policies and strategies are based on government requirements and on the Pastoral Care policy of the Catholic Education Office of your diocese.

Many schools appoint dedicated Student Wellbeing Leaders 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
- sun protection.

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 Catholic Education Melbourne.

For more information, contact Catholic Education 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 the training of relevant staff. A medically approved individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan is developed for each student at risk and you are required to provide this plan and 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](http://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.

**Sun Protection**

Two in three Australians develop some form of skin cancer before the age of 70. Most skin cancer is preventable. The Cancer Council Victoria recommends a healthy UV exposure balance that ensures some sun exposure for vitamin D, while minimising the risk of skin cancer. Each of our schools has a sun protection policy to ensure a healthy UV exposure balance to help with vitamin D levels and minimise the risk of skin and eye damage and skin cancer.

Our schools are committed to implementing a combination of sun protection measures (clothing, sunscreen, hats, shade and sunglasses). Sun protection is required whenever UV levels reach three and above – the level that can damage skin and eyes. This is typically from the start of September to the end of April in Victoria (not just in Terms 1 and 4).

As a parent you have an important role in ensuring that your child develops and maintains healthy sun protection habits throughout adolescence. Being a role model of sun-protective behaviours is one way to help your child to do this. Another is being aware of when ultra-violet (UV) rays will be dangerous and require sun protection.

For useful ideas and more information about sun protection and skin cancer prevention, including a SunSmart app and a UV alert, see Cancer Council Victoria’s SunSmart website [www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au)

Your child’s wellbeing is our first priority.
Parents and schools – Working together

Catholic schools welcome opportunities to work with you in educating your child. 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

<table>
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<th>Faith development</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Attend school and parish liturgies and Masses, sacramental education and faith development evenings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participate in and discuss religious education learning activities and social justice initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Build a partnership with the school and teachers to support your child’s faith and learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourage your child to take increasing responsibility for his/her learning and organisational skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discuss with your child his/her learning and progress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Establish regular contact with your child’s teacher.</td>
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<td>• Encourage reading by setting an example – reading yourself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read texts (e.g. novels, plays) set by your child’s teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discuss your child’s response to the texts and ask to see work s/he completes on these texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Regularly review your child’s learning program, assessment requirements and assessment reports where these are available online via the school’s intranet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourage healthy eating, sufficient sleep and regular physical activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourage positive attitudes, values and behaviours like courtesy, confidence, persistence, and doing your best.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Celebrate your child’s successes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Help your child balance the amount of time spent on school work and in recreational pursuits.</td>
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<th>School and co-curricular activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourage your child to participate in the school’s co-curricular program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attend school events and co-curricular programs in which your child is involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Become actively involved in school community activities such as the School Board, parent groups and parent education programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School attendance
Regular attendance at school is vital if students are to obtain maximum benefit from the educational and social opportunities that the school can offer. Young people who attend school regularly and complete Year 12 or its equivalent have better health outcomes and access to a much wider range of post-school education, training and employment opportunities.

As a parent, it is important that you familiarise yourself with the school’s attendance requirements and procedures, which in most instances are provided at the time of enrolment and published on the school’s website. You are responsible for ensuring that your child attends school every day, on time, and for explaining absences in a timely manner.

Your child’s homeroom teacher or year level coordinator is directly responsible for monitoring daily attendance and patterns of absences and lateness, while the principal is responsible for determining if any irregular attendance or sustained absence is reasonable. If there are concerns about a student’s record of attendance, the matter may be referred to a government Attendance Officer who has extensive powers of inquiry to investigate extended absences from school without a reasonable excuse.

There may be occasions when your child is reluctant or refuses to attend school. Such occasions may increase in frequency and reflect a pattern of worrying behaviour. You are strongly encouraged to work in partnership with your child’s teacher to address factors which may be causing the problem and to implement agreed strategies to promote attendance.

For further information and ‘helpful hints’ in ensuring your child’s regular attendance at school, see the Every Day Counts website www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/everyday.aspx

Learning at home
Catholic schools usually advise parents of homework expectations at the beginning of the school year. You can assist your child with his/her learning 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 learning 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 and informal occasions for this, both face-to-face and in writing (see page 11 of this Handbook).

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 his/her 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. 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.vrq.a.vic.gov.au
For My School, see www.myschool.edu.au
School/College boards
College boards are established in most Catholic colleges. College boards bring together priests, members of religious orders, principals and parents and friends of the college 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, incorporated boards or boards of management. Membership is defined in the board constitution.

‘In schools… families have a most important place and role. Catholic schools appreciate their value, and promote their participation in the school, where they can assume various forms of co-responsibility’.

(Congregation for Catholic Education 2013)

Procedures and processes for parent representation on college boards are available through the Principal’s Office.

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
- 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.

The VCSPB 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. Each diocese has a representative on the VCSPB who ensures that school boards are informed about state issues.

For more information, see www.vcspb.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 page 15 of this Handbook.

Support is available for students newly arrived in Australia and for families who are more comfortable communicating in a language other than English (see page 27 of this Handbook).

For families experiencing financial difficulties, the information below outlines a range of opportunities for assistance.

**Government support**

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. Currently this support equates to $410 payment for every primary school child and $820 for every secondary school-aged child. (Note: This is subject to government policy changes.)


**Youth allowance**

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


**Transport**

In country areas and some outer metropolitan areas, students who reside 4.8km or more 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.


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1 At the time of publication, the details in this section were correct. You should check the relevant website for current allowances and eligibility requirements.
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://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students

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, equipment and ICT
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.
Appendices

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

Horsham Centre – (03) 5831 1260
Mildura Centre – (03) 5023 0722
Warrnambool Centre – (03) 5561 1177

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](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au)

#### 2016

- **TERM 1**: Thursday 28 January – Thursday 24 March
- **TERM 2**: Monday 11 April – Friday 24 June
- **TERM 3**: Monday 11 July – Friday 16 September
- **TERM 4**: Monday 3 October – Tuesday 20 December

#### 2017

- **TERM 1**: Tuesday 31 January – Friday 31 March
- **TERM 2**: Tuesday 18 April – Friday 30 June
- **TERM 3**: Monday 17 July – Friday 22 September
- **TERM 4**: Monday 9 October – Friday 22 December

#### 2018

- **TERM 1**: Tuesday 30 January – Thursday 29 March
- **TERM 2**: Monday 16 April – Friday 29 June
- **TERM 3**: Monday 16 July – Friday 21 September
- **TERM 4**: Monday 8 October – Friday 21 December

### References


