Parent Information Handbook

2013
Our Vision

where the rivers of promise, exploration and celebration meet and flow onto life long learning

ST JOSEPH’S PRIMARY SCHOOL CORK
The following information is a guide to the regular events and happenings at our school. Although the list is extensive it is not a complete summary of all our schools policies and procedures. This handbook is designed to give a guide to the policies and procedures which are of most concern to families who may be new to the school or who could be considering enrolling.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE OUTSIDE OF NORMAL TIMES
If you require your child to leave school early, please report to the front office to sign your child out and collect a partial absence note to hand to the teacher. Children who are late for school also need to report to the office to collect a note for their teacher.

ATTENDANCE
The class roll is a legal document and children’s attendance is marked by the class teacher every day. If children are not present at school for any reason, they are required to bring a note of explanation from their parent/guardian the next day of attendance or a phone call through to the school explaining their absence.

Parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children at school (Section 22 Education Act 1990).

School staff, as part of their duty of care, are responsible to monitor part or whole day absences and ensure that school attendance records will be maintained according to the Diocesan Guidelines for the Management of Student Attendance in the Catholic Schools Office of Diocese of Lismore 2011.

Family holidays and extended time away from school: What do we do when we know we'll be away for consecutive days?

Shorter term
The school acknowledges that sometimes families will ask for student leave from school in term time for personal reasons. It is assumed families have given this option considered thought before applying for leave. Parents must be aware that the request is made in writing to the principal.

The principal has two choices in these cases depending on the nature of the request. A principal can grant ‘Leave’, with no form completion required (up to 15 days in any 12 month period for such purposes) or decide that the request will need to be processed using Form B1 (Exemption from Attendance – located on the school website under ‘school notes’).

Longer term
The school acknowledges that sometimes families will ask for extended student leave from school in term time for personal reasons. It is assumed families have given this option considered thought. Parents must be aware that the request is made in writing using the correct form (Form B1) found of the school’s web site. Mostly this will involve
travel. If so, documentation is required (copies of any itinerary, air tickets etc). The lack of documentation will slow or prevent approval. Principals can grant up to 100 days leave in a 12 month period for this purpose (that’s 2 school terms). Requests for more time away from school than this must go to the NSW Minister of Education through the Catholic Schools Office. When parents are aware that this will occur at least one full terms notice is required.

Please be aware that these requirements are legislated by the State government. This is not unique to our school and we are following our registration obligations.

BEHAVIOUR
All members of our school community are expected to act responsibly at all times and ensure that the school is a safe place for all concerned. Our Pastoral Care Policy includes the School Community Behaviour Plan where behaviour is categorised into the areas of:

Safety   Effort   Respect   Self Responsibility.

As part of our School Community Behaviour Plan St Joseph’s has an “Anti - Bullying” policy which the whole school community is committed to enforcing through education and awareness programs.

Our school and the Lismore diocese has in place a Suspension and Expulsion of Students Policy and Procedure. These plans, policies and procedures are located in a folder at the front office.

St Joseph’s Primary School prohibits the use of Corporal Punishment. No teacher, parent or other member of the community will administer behaviour management techniques which involve any form of corporal punishment.

BOOK CLUB
The school participates in Scholastic Book Club as a service to the children so that they may have access to interesting books, suited to their age and interest,

A catalogue and order form will be sent home to parents twice each term. There is no pressure on parents to buy. The school receives a percentage of sales which is used to purchase books for the library. If you wish to purchase please return order slips and correct money in a clearly labelled envelope to the Office.

CANTEEN
The school canteen is run by the committee formed from members of the Parents and Friends Association. The canteen currently opens three days a week and the menu is in keeping with the NSW Healthy Canteens Policy. The canteen is run on a non profit basis and is staffed by volunteers.
CHANGE OF DETAILS
Any change of address, telephone contact number, parent’s work place or personal information regarding the child’s health, family situation etc. should be notified to the school as soon as possible so that we always have accurate details in case of emergency.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS
Any complaint or concern should, in the first instance, be directed to the class teacher if a classroom issues or to the Principal if an outside the classroom issue. The principal will then be notified if the classroom issue has not been resolved. We have a policy in place (Parents and Caregivers Concerns and Complaints) where processes are followed to resolve any problems either at the school level or with the involvement of the Lismore Catholic Schools Office. A copy of this policy is available at the front office.

CURRICULUM
We are required to teach the NSW Board of Studies Syllabus and our curriculum is based on the Key Learning Areas as specified by the Board of Studies. Each class will undergo a course of study in:
Religious Education
English
Mathematics
Human Society and Its Environment
Science and Technology
Creative Arts
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education

Teachers design programs using these documents and make assessments according to the outcomes and indicators as specified in the learning continuums in each stage.
ENROLMENT AND FEES

St Joseph’s promotes a learning community where all aspects of education are nourished. We strongly value the notion of partnership in education encouraging families to take an active role in working with the school to meet every child’s needs. As a Catholic School our Catholic faith underpins all our actions.

Parents wishing to enrol their students will need to fill in an enrolment form and arrange for an interview with the Principal.

Fees for 2013 are outlined below indicating a discount of approximately 20% for the second child and 45% for the third child. Families with more than three children enrolled at the one time will not be charged for more than three children.

1st Child $740.00  2nd Child $600.00  3rd Child $420.00  
Total per year $740.00 $1340.00 $1760.00

These fees are for one year and are billed over 3 terms.

At the time of enrolment all parents/guardians take on a responsibility to pay fees. Since students are enrolled in the school regardless of their families’ financial position, the school happily enters into special arrangements to assist low income families or allow for instances of special circumstance.

EVACUATION POLICY AND LOCK DOWN DRILL

The school’s evacuation policy is displayed in all rooms within the school and teachers are required to ensure that students are familiar with the procedure. Evacuation and lock down drills will be practised at least twice per year.
FIRST AID
Minor cuts and scratches will be treated in the Staffroom.

Staff assigned to administer First Aid have Basic First Aid qualifications and will wear appropriate protective clothing when treating children, i.e. rubber gloves, sterile dressings and antiseptic disinfectants.

In the event of a serious accident, the Principal (or nominee) examines the injured child and, if appropriate, rings the ambulance. Parents are then contacted. In the meantime, the injured child will be given appropriate First Aid. Should the ambulance arrive and be ready to go to hospital before parents arrive, the Principal (or nominee) will travel with, and stay with the child until the parents arrive.

Children who become genuinely ill at school are usually brought to the Sick Bay. The Principal (or nominee) ascertains the degree of illness and decides whether the parents should be notified to collect the child from school.

Medication will ONLY be given at school if parents have made a written request and filled in the necessary paperwork. Once approved, the amount, type, time and by whom administered will be entered into our medication register and countersigned by the Principal (or nominee).

HOMEWORK:
All grades use a homework grid where regular after school activities and other home based learning experiences are included as homework tasks. Class teachers will set some compulsory tasks e.g. ‘To Know Worship and Love’ and other activities where students and parents are able to choose activities in certain educational strands. Our homework policy engages students in activities which are designed to:

- Consolidate previous learning and share other experiences of school
- Provide opportunity for self-directed learning
- Positively engage students and their parents or carers in learning
- Recognise and value learning which may take place outside of school
- Foster a love of learning

Through engaging in homework with the above considerations in mind, we endeavour to make the process of homework a positive experience for all concerned.

Our home reading program is in addition to the Homework Grid.
IMMUNISATION
The Public Health (Amendment) ACT 1992 requires parents of children starting school to provide an Immunisation Certificate. This is not compulsory immunisation and parents will always have the right of choice. However, in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease in the school, unimmunised children will be required to remain at home for the duration of the outbreak.

KINDER ORIENTATION
During term four of each year the Kindergarten class for the following year will be invited to a series of days at the school. During these days the new Kindergarten students will gain some experience of school life to assist with a smooth transition into formal schooling.

New students will be engaged in a variety of activities and some initial assessments will be conducted to enable staff to ensure all relevant support structures are in place before school starts the next year.

All kindergarten students are paired with a senior student in a ‘Buddy’ system and new students will meet their buddies at the orientation days.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES
Learning technologies are a focus at St Joseph’s. We have interactive whiteboards in all of our classrooms

All classrooms have netbook computers, tablets and wireless broadband internet access.

Staff are committed to engaging with the latest learning technologies and have extensive professional development in this area.

LIBRARY
We have a well stocked library and the collection is constantly being updated. Each class will attend a library lesson every week. Children are encouraged to borrow each week and return the books the next week. Every child should have a library bag to borrow books.

MUSIC
Music is catered for in a number of ways at St Joseph’s. Music is a major part of our Creative Arts Curriculum and regular lessons are timetabled into the learning program at school. These lessons often culminate in a whole school performance or a presentation at the district eisteddfod.

Opportunity also exists for individual tuition for piano, guitar and some other instruments.
NEWSLETTERS
Every Thursday fortnight, a Newsletter communicating school events (recent, past or future) and any other appropriate information you may need to know will be sent home. Teachers are also encouraged to contribute children’s work to this publication. Newsletters are sent home with the eldest child in the family and are also available from the school website.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION
Our school has a very active Parents and Friends Association which meets each month. The P&F are an integral part of the school and assist in forming school policy. The P&F work in partnership with the school to organise fund raising, excursions, camps, uniform, canteen and many other important functions within the school.

All parents are encouraged to be a part of the P&F to share their particular talents.

Members of the P&F also have the opportunity to represent the school at the Diocesan Parent Assembly.

PARENT INFORMATION EVENINGS
Teachers will conduct parent information evenings at the beginning of each year. This is to inform parents of organisational matters, give an outline of the work for the year and the expectations of the students. Your attendance at these meetings is strongly encouraged.

PERSONAL GOALS
Students are encouraged to strive for their personal best in all that they do and are constantly reminded to set personal goals to improve in all areas. In doing this we ask that the students reflect the pride they take in their work by always ensuring that their bookwork is neat and presented to the best of their ability. Students are also encouraged to reflect on their performance in all aspects of school life including behaviour and to set goals for improvements where necessary.

POLICY
St Joseph’s School Policies are located at the front office and on our website.

READING
Reading is a very important part of the whole learning experience at St Joseph’s. As such, in addition to the regular reading program at school we have a home reading program for all grades.

All students will bring home books to read at home either with their parents / carers or independently depending on age and ability. The main focus of the Home Reading Program is for children to enjoy reading and to experience success. This will mean that students will bring home books below the level at which they might be assessed so as to increase the likelihood of experiencing success and to foster a love of reading.
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Our Religious Education program in the school supports parents in preparing their children for the sacraments. Children are eligible for Confirmation in Year Two, Penance and First Eucharist in Year Three.

All classes are taught the Religious Education Syllabus as provided by the Catholic Education Office. We accept enrolments of non-Catholic Students however all students be instructed in Religious Education.

REPORTS AND PARENT/TEACHER/STUDENT CONFERENCES
Written reports are sent home twice yearly, at the end of terms two and four. All students from Year 1 to Year 6 will be assessed using the A-E scale as required by the Australian Government.

At the beginning of the year, at the end of term two Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences are conducted to review your child’s progress and to jointly set learning goals. A conference opportunity is also available towards the end of term four if requested by either the class teacher or parents.

Teachers are always available to discuss any issues or concerns that parents may have. A telephone call or email to discuss an issue or to make an appointment is all that is required. We also make ourselves available at the end of each school day.

SPORT AND PE
As well as weekly lessons in sport and PE many opportunities exist for our students to participate in a wide range of sporting activities. We have a regular swimming program and students participate in a variety of sporting clinics run by local, district and national sporting clubs and organisations.

Students at St Joseph’s also have the opportunity to represent the school and the diocese in all winter and summer sports. We have swimming, athletics and cross country carnivals every year and students are selected from these to attend the Richmond Zone carnivals.

Physical activity and a healthy lifestyle are a focus at our school.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP
There are many opportunities for our students to act as leaders in our school. Stage Three students will participate in two programs where leadership is a focus.

The Precision Academics Leadership Development Program known as VAM is run early in each year preceding any election for school leaders. Aspects of leaders are identified and students are asked to recognise leadership abilities in themselves and others.

Stage Three students also participate in the Making Jesus Real program where aspects
of being Christian leaders are discussed and identified. This program continues throughout the year and is a valuable tool in shaping the character of young people.

As leaders, Stage Three students may be required to:-
- Welcome visitors to the school
- Speak at School Assemblies and other special events
- Raise and lower the flag each day
- Take responsibility for distributing and collecting sports equipment
- Represent the school at special occasions e.g. Anzac Day
- Set a good example for other students
- Collect, re-use, recycle and dispose of waste (bins, cans, cardboard, paper etc.)
- Promote the school in the wider community
- Assist younger students with altar serving and other church activities
- Assist the Principal and teachers as required.

Leadership skills are promoted from the time a student enters kindergarten whether in group work or class responsibilities. Making Jesus Real and Restorative Practice will assist both staff and students develop during their time at St Joseph’s and the Year 6 Leaders will lead students through a peer support program encompassing these practices.

SUN SAFE POLICY
St Joseph’s is a Sun Safe school and therefore we commit to the following Sun Safe practices:

No Hat - Play in the shade
Children are required to wear our school approved hat at all times when outside. If they do not have their approved school hat, then they are to remain in a shaded or covered area.

Sunscreen
Sunscreen is available at school for children’s use. Children are encouraged to apply sunscreen before lunch and before sporting activities. If your child has an allergy to sunscreen please inform the Principal and class teacher.

During swimming season, if lessons occur during peak UV times, the children must use sunscreen and will be encouraged to wear a T shirt or wet shirt.

SUPERVISION
During all school activities, every effort is made to ensure the safety of each child. Children play in areas where they are easily visible and teachers are vigilant in
Staff are present at school from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Parents who need to have their children at school outside of these hours would need to make suitable arrangements with the Principal.

Often, there will be a need for children to be in the library or a classroom during recess or lunch times. At these times a teacher will be present with the children. At no time are children allowed in classrooms without supervision.

**THE SCHOOL DAY TIMES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00 am</td>
<td>Morning bell.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.00 am</td>
<td>11.00 am</td>
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<td>1:40 pm</td>
<td>3.00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.00 pm</td>
<td>Home Time</td>
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**TRANSPORT**

Students travel to school either by walking, being dropped off by parents/carers, riding bikes or catching the bus. Free bus travel is available to eligible families and application forms are available at the office.

**UNIFORM POLICY**

The wearing of correct school uniform is important to foster in children pride in their school and in their appearance. All uniform items, except shoes, are available through the school.

1. **Boys Uniform**
   - Red Polo Shirt with embroidered school crest
   - Navy shorts (suitable for everyday use as well as sports days)
   - Navy socks (short but above the ankle)
   - Navy Jumper
   - Navy Hat
   - Black shoes-Leather type or runners
   - Winter options (Not compulsory)-Navy track pants or long navy trousers.

2. **Girls Uniform**
   - Red Polo Shirt with embroidered school crest
   - Navy skirt
   - Navy skort
Navy shorts
Navy socks (short but above the ankle)
Navy Jumper
Navy Hat
Black shoes-Leather type or runners
Winter options (Not compulsory)-Navy; slacks, boot leg pants, leggings, stockings, track pants.

3. **Jewellery**
   In keeping with OH&S policies it is recommended that jewellery *not* be worn to school. However, the following items are deemed appropriate:
   - Earrings-Sleepers or studs only.
   - Rings-One signet ring
   - Watch
   - Necklaces-Only necklaces of special significance e.g. A cross given as a First Eucharist gift. These are to be worn under clothing so they do not get caught in something that could possibly cause harm to the child. It is highly recommended that these are not worn to school as necklaces can often break and become lost in the normal course of school life.

4. **Hair**
   Hair is to be kept neat and tidy at all times.
   Long hair (below the shoulders) is to be tied back while at school.
   Items used to tie hair back should be in school colours and not excessive in number.
   Temporary spray hair colours are not to be worn to school unless the express permission of the Principal is granted.

5. **Nail polish**
   Nail polish is not to be worn to school.
   **All** clothing must be labelled with the child’s name.