

When strength meets kindness, learning thrives.

# St Joseph's Primary School



# Parent Handbook

2026

# School Information

## CONTACT DETAILS by stitch

Address: 1 Campaspe Street  
ROCHESTER VIC 3561

Phone: 5484 1797

Website: [www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au)

Principal contact: [principal@sjrochester.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@sjrochester.catholic.edu.au)

Office contact: [admin@sjrochester.catholic.edu.au](mailto:admin@sjrochester.catholic.edu.au)

## SCHOOL TERMS

- Term 1: Tuesday 27 January - Thursday 2 April (10 weeks)
- Term 2: Monday 20 April - Friday 26 June (10 weeks)
- Term 3: Monday 13 July - Friday 18 September (10 weeks)
- Term 4: Monday 5 October - Wednesday 16 December (11 weeks)

## THE SCHOOL DAY

Student supervision begins: 8.30am

Session 1: 8:55 am - 11:00 am

Lunch: 11:00 am - 11:40 am

Session 2: 11:40 am - 1:40 pm

Recess: 1:40 pm - 2:20 pm

Session 3: 2:20 pm - 3:15 pm

# 2026 PUPIL FREE DAYS



## Term 1

**27 January**  
**28 January**  
**29 January**  
Staff Professional Development Days



## Term 2

**20 April**  
Staff Professional Development Day  
**6 May**  
Staff Professional Development Day  
**5 June**  
Staff Professional Development Day



## Term 3

**21 July**  
Staff Professional Development Day  
**5 August**  
Staff Professional Development Day



## Term 4

**2 November**  
Staff Professional Development Day  
**16 December**  
2026 Planning Day



♥ Choose St Joseph's—where strength meets kindness,  
and learning thrives.

# Welcome

Or Where strength meets kindness, learning thrives

At St Joseph's, we are proud to continue our shared journey as a vibrant and inclusive Catholic primary school where faith, learning, and community unite to nurture hearts and minds. Guided by the principles of Authentically Sandhurst Catholic Education, we remain committed to creating welcoming environments where every child is embraced and celebrated.

Our promise to you is Quality Education that is affordable and accessible, with one all-inclusive fee covering every cost for the school year—so families can focus on what truly matters: their child's growth and learning. Through our MAGNIFY initiative, we continue to amplify student potential and foster Outstanding Learner Growth. Our educators use evidence-based practices and a knowledge-rich curriculum to support every child's academic, social, and emotional development, empowering them to become confident, compassionate, and courageous learners.

Education at St Joseph's is a true partnership. We value subsidiarity and solidarity, working closely with families to ensure active communication and collaboration. We expect parents to remain actively involved in their child's learning journey—engaging with school activities and supporting learning at home. By working collectively, we ensure every child has access to the opportunities and support they need to thrive.

Rooted in Catholic values, we continue to nurture a community of kindness, respect, and service. Together, we form lifelong learners and leaders who are collaborative, inclusive, and committed to justice and hope.

Thank you for being an essential part of our St Joseph's community. We look forward to another year of faith-filled learning and growth.



# Democratic Principles

Australian Society is defined, among other aspects, by a belief in elected Government; by a commitment to the rule of law, to equal rights for all before the law; and by a belief in freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of association. Our society is also tolerant of a range of religious, political, social and cultural beliefs and values in the context of the fundamental principle of our democracy.

The 'Education and Reform Act 2006' requires all education providers to operate in a manner consistent with this set of Australian democratic principles.

In accordance with the Act, St Joseph's Primary School is committed to delivering programs and teaching in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy.

- We believe in an accountable, democratically elected government
- We respect and observe the rule of law and believe that no person is above the law
- We believe in equal rights for all before the law
- We believe in the freedom of religion and the need to practice tolerance and understanding of others beliefs
- We believe in the freedom of speech and freedom of association, but also acknowledge that we have the responsibility not to abuse this freedom
- We believe the values of openness and tolerance and value and respect all members of the school community regardless of background.

These principles are interwoven through all we do and can be found included in many of schools' policies, our Vision Statement, our Graduate Outcomes and our school rules

# Our School

## Identity Statement

St Joseph's is a proud Catholic Community united in faith and committed in action, to live, learn and grow in God's love.

## Vision

At St Joseph's Primary School, we strive to be a community where;

- Students have the right to be treated with respect and will be protected from harm
- Students develop a meaningful relationship with God that inspires social justice and compassion
- Students have a responsibility to care for and sustain our natural environment
- Authentic Learning experiences and celebrations inspire student success
- Parents, students and staff value our school's charism and partnerships

## Graduate Outcomes

At St Joseph's Primary School, we seek to educate our students to be;

- Confident – to be themselves, to achieve great things and be resilient in their learning
- Collaborative – to be open to new ideas and learn with others
- Inclusive – to always be welcoming and be respectful to all
- Compassionate – to consider each person and to take action for those who are unable
- Courageous – to be a risk taker, to challenge themselves and to lead with a just heart

# Our Team

PARISH PRIEST: Fr. Ashley Caldow

Craftsmanship in every stitch

Principal: Elizabeth Trewick

Catholic Identity Leader: Elizabeth Trewick

Learning & Teaching Leader: Susan Kerlin

Behaviour & Inclusion Leader: Cheryl Schwab

Mental Health in Primary Schools: Cheryl Schwab

## Administration Officers:

- Maria Whitehead (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday)
- Amy Betts (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday)

Finance Officer:

- Breanna Cox (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday)

## Classroom Teachers:

Year F/1 Lauren Sortino

Year 1/2: Jessica Carmichael / Cheryl Schwab

Year 3/4 Amy Eade

Year 5/6 Maree Johns

## Specialist Teachers:

Olivia McEvoy :

- Physical Education
- Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships

Kacey Pike:

- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts

## Learning Support Officers:

- Leanne McInnes
- Deanna Palmer
- Asha McConnell/Hannah Schwab
- Bianca Robins
- Michelle Seabrook

Chaplain:

# CARE, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF OUR STUDENTS

Our school has a number of policies and procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students at all times, these include:

- First Aid
- Medication Authorisation and Administration
- Emergency Management Plan
- Critical Incident Procedure
- Accidents and Incidents Procedure
- ICY Usage Policy
- Child Safe Policies and Procedures

A number of these items are addressed further in the handbook. All policies and procedures are available upon request from the school office and are available on the school website.

[www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au)

## ALLERGIES

Some children's health can be affected by being allergic to particular products, foods, plants, animal bites or stings. If your child is affected by an allergy, we ask you to provide your child's teacher at the beginning of the year, with all relevant documentation and treatment procedures. In this way we can inform all staff of the special needs of students with regard to allergies.

## ANAPHYLAXIS

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that occurs after exposure to an allergen. The most common allergens for school-aged children are nuts, eggs, cow's milk, fish, shellfish, wheat, soy, sesame, latex, certain insect stings and medication. All students at St Joseph's Primary School who are diagnosed by a medical practitioner as being at risk of suffering from an anaphylactic reaction must have an Individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan.

When notified of an anaphylaxis diagnosis, the Principal of St Joseph's Primary School is responsible for developing a plan in consultation with the student's parents/carers. Where necessary, an Individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan will be in place as soon as practicable after a student enrolls at St Joseph's Primary School and where possible, before the student's first day.

Parents and carers must:

obtain an ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis from the student's medical practitioner and provide a copy to the school as soon as practicable

immediately inform the school in writing if there is a relevant change in the student's medical condition and obtain an updated ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis

provide an up-to-date photo of the student for the ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis when that Plan is provided to the school and each time it is reviewed

provide the school with a current adrenaline autoinjector for the student that has not expired;

participate in annual reviews of the student's Plan. Each student's Individual Anaphylaxis Management

Plan must include:

- information about the student's medical condition that relates to allergies and the potential for anaphylactic reaction, including the type of allergies the student has
- information about the signs or symptoms the student might exhibit in the event of an allergic reaction based on a written diagnosis from a medical practitioner
- strategies to minimise the risk of exposure to known allergens while the student is under the care or supervision of school staff, including in the school yard, at camps and excursions, or at special events conducted, organised or attended by the school
- the name of the person(s) responsible for implementing the risk minimisation strategies, which have been identified in the Plan
- information about where the student's medication will be stored
- the student's emergency contact details
- an up-to-date ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis completed by the student's medical practitioner.

Review and updates to Individual Anaphylaxis Management Plans

A student's Individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis in consultation with the student's parents/carers.

The plan will also be reviewed and, where necessary, updated in the following circumstances:

- as soon as practicable after the student has an anaphylactic reaction at school
- if the student's medical condition, insofar as it relates to allergy and the potential for anaphylactic reaction, changes
- when the student is participating in an off-site activity, including camps and excursions, or at special events including fetes and concerts. Location of plans and adrenaline autoinjectors

## **ANAPHYLAXIS cont...**

A copy of each student's Individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan will be stored with their ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis at the Sick Bay, together with the student's adrenaline autoinjector. Adrenaline autoinjectors must be labelled with the student's name.

## **ASTHMA**

Asthma is a long-term lung condition. People with asthma have sensitive airways in their lungs which react to triggers, causing a 'flare-up'. In a flare-up, the muscles around the airway squeeze tight, the airways swell and become narrow and there is more mucus. This makes it hard to breathe. An asthma flare-up can come on slowly (over hours, days or even weeks) or very quickly (over minutes). A sudden or severe asthma flare-up is sometimes called an asthma attack.

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at St Joseph's Primary School:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan which has been completed by the student's medical practitioner.

The plan must outline:

- the prescribed medication taken by the student and when it is to be administered, for example as a pre-medication to exercise or on a regular basis
- emergency contact details
- the contact details of the student's medical practitioner
- the student's known triggers
- the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.

2. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.

3. St Joseph's Primary School will keep all Asthma Action Plans:

- in the Sick Bay
- In Excursion Back Packs

4. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, St Joseph's Primary School parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.

5. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.

6. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans at the beginning of the school year.

### **Student Asthma Kit**

All students diagnosed with asthma are required to have a student asthma kit at school which contains:

- their own prescribed reliever medication labelled with the student's name
- their spacer (if they use one)

Student asthma kits will be stored in the Sick Bay.

### **Asthma Emergency Response Plan**

If a student is:

- having an asthma attack
  - difficulty breathing for an unknown cause, even if they are not known to have asthma
- School staff will endeavour to follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the Asthma Policy. School staff may contact Triple Zero "000" at any time.

## ATTENDANCE

At St Joseph's Primary School, we strive to ensure that every student achieves high levels of learning and wellbeing. To enable this, it is essential that students attend school, on time, every day. If student miss school regularly or are late, they can miss out on vital skills that set them up for success. It is not just every day that counts, but every minute counts. When students are unexpectedly absent, parents/carers are asked to please notify school via PAM as soon as possible.

Alternatively, a phone call to the school on the day of absence is required.



## **ILLNESS**

Unfortunately, from time to time, children become unwell and are unable to attend school. If your child is going to experience an extended absence due to illness or injury, we ask that parents/carers contact the school to ensure we work together to minimise the impact on the child's learning and wellbeing.

## **FAMILY HOLIDAY**

Families encouraged to plan family holidays for times outside the school term. When going on holiday during school term, please talk to your child's teacher in advance to develop an absence plan

## **“DAY OFF”**

Students taking general “days off” are highly discouraged as they have the potential to impact on a child's progress at school and could also send the message to the student that education is not highly valued.

## **SCHOOL REFUSAL**

School refusal is a potentially serious situation where a child avoids or refuses to attend school. Please speak to us as soon as possible if you experience difficulties getting your child to come to school.

If your child is absent, Please record on PAM

Any issues recording an absence on PAM, please phone the school (5484 1797)

For extended absences we will work in partnership to minimise impact on the child's learning and wellbeing

## **LATE ARRIVALS**

Students not in the classroom at the scheduled start time of 9:00am, and who subsequently arrive, are considered a late arrival. It is a requirement of all late arrivals that they attend Administration to sign in and collect a late pass to hand their teacher.

## **EARLY DEPARTURE**

An early departure is when a child needs to leave school with an authorised person (usually parent/carer) prior to the scheduled dismissal time. A parent/carer who needs to collect a child before dismissal should attend Administration to sign out the child. Any student required to depart early will be collected from Administration (collection from classrooms is not permitted). Where possible, it is highly recommended that parents/carers inform their child's teacher or Administration in advance.

## **SUPERVISION**

Children who arrive prior to 8:30am are required to wait in the Administration Area. Once 8.30am supervision begins:

F/1/2 children are to put their bags near their classroom doors

3 - 6 children may put their bags in their lockers and then move outside

Classrooms open at 8.50am.

Teachers are rostered for yard duty before school, at recess, lunchtime, and after school. If children have not been picked up by 3:30pm, they will be taken to the Administration Office. During extreme heat and wet weather periods children are supervised in their classrooms/and or air-conditioned rooms at recess and lunch times.

## **ASSEMBLIES**

Whole school assemblies will be held every Friday @2.30pm in the Kildare Centre.

## **ASSESSMENT & REPORTING**

Teachers will continually observe and assess your child's learning in class. At different times a task or test may be set to gain a clearer idea of how well your child understands what has been taught. These are important feedback strategies for the individual student. In Victoria, NAPLAN is administered by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Various opportunities are provided during the year to let you know your child's progress;

At St Joseph's Primary School, our reporting process is designed to engage families in their child's learning journey. Here's how it works:

### **1. Learning Conversations**

Before reports are released, Learning Conversations are held. This is an opportunity for parents/carers to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher.

If your child is working below or beyond the expected level, the teacher will also outline the support in place to assist your child.

These are held in:

Term 1 - Week 2

Terms 2, 3, 4 – Week 9

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These are held in:

Term 1 - Week 2

Terms 2, 3, 4 – Week 9

## **2. TEACHER REPORTS**

Teachers prepare reports for all curriculum areas taught with the following components:

Overview of Learning – A brief outline of what has been taught during the semester.

‘I Can’ Statements – These statements are linked to the Victorian Curriculum 2.0. They provide an indication of what your child can do in relation to the expected curriculum level.

Achievement Level – A statement indicating whether your child is working at, below, or beyond the expected curriculum level.

## **3. REPORT ACCESS**

Reports are available on SIMON, and you will receive an alert through PAM.

Please download and keep a copy of your child’s report, especially if they are in Grade 6, for future reference.

Progression Points – What Are They?

Progression Points indicate your child’s development in various subjects and help you track academic progress over time. All progression points align with the Victorian Curriculum 2.0.

## **GENERAL COMMENT**

Each report includes a personal comment reflecting your child’s participation and engagement in school life and events. These comments are linked to our Graduate Outcomes: Collaborative, Courageous, Confident, Compassionate, and Inclusive. They celebrate your child’s positive growth across the semester.

Attendance

Attendance is always included in reports. During Learning Conversations, teachers also discuss the link between attendance and academic growth. Regular attendance ensures students do not miss important lessons, discussions, and activities that contribute to learning and development. In addition to this, you can contact the school to arrange a meeting with the teacher if you have concerns or wish to have an update on progress.

## **ATTENDANCE NOTED IN REPORTING**

Attendance is always included in reports. During Learning Conversations, teachers also discuss the link between attendance and academic growth. Regular attendance ensures students do not miss important lessons, discussions, and activities that contribute to learning and development. In addition to this, you can contact the school to arrange a meeting with the teacher if you have concerns or wish to have an update on progress.

# **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Our school has policies and procedures in place for behaviour management, bullying and harassment.

These can be found on the website: [www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au)

Positive Behaviour Intervention & Support (PBIS)

Our school values to which we all aspire are to be:

Safe

Respectful

Responsible

As we are a PBIS school, these values are the basis of our behaviour expectations and assist our children to make positive decisions. Our teachers focus on our expectations in all setting at St Joseph's Primary School, with a big focus on using our manners, valuing all members of our school community, caring for our property and listening to others when they are speaking.

Staff use data collected from behaviour tracking to identify behaviours that need attention throughout the school. Each fortnight a new PBIS BLITZ comes with a new way of reminding our students of our behaviour expectations. Staff and students discuss and model these continually and reinforce positive behaviours whenever possible.

## **SCHOOL BASED INITIATIVE – GOTCHA TICKET**

- Used to recognise students when they are displaying the school expectations, in particular the current BLITZ
- Collected and tallied in classrooms to determine whole class incentives

At the end of each term, there is a Whole School Reward Day.

- This is usually held on the last day of term.

## **Minor Behaviours are addressed by:**

NON-VERBAL CUE: use proximity, facial expressions, and gestures

PROMPT: ensure understanding by reinforcing expectations

REDIRECT: clarify the expectation and provide an example of appropriate behaviour

PRAISE: acknowledge improvements, good choices, and positive actions of others

RESTORE: give time for the individual to make improvements

## **MAJOR behaviours are addressed by:**

- Clear and direct instructions
- 1:1 adult supervision
- Parental conversations

## **Major behaviours that are consistent will be addressed with the parent/carer through:**

- Temporary Play Adjustments
- Restorative Reflections
- Early Pick Up
- Circuit Breaker
- Suspension, in extreme circumstances

These are identified by the principal and school leaders, in conjunction with the class teacher.

## **BICYCLES/SCOOTERS**

Students riding bicycles/scooters to school are the responsibility of parents. The age of children, the distance to be covered and the path to be taken should be taken into account before a child undertakes this activity.

St Joseph's Primary School encourage parent/carers and students to follow the relevant road rules and, where possible, use Pedestrian and School Crossings.

VicRoads states; Children do not have the ability and experience to do all of these things simultaneously and consistently until age 12 or 13. Like young drivers, they need plenty of supervised practice before gaining their independence.

Students must wear approved safety equipment and bicycles/scooters must be in a roadworthy condition.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Children love to celebrate their birthday, and we would be pleased to help facilitate this at school.

- If your child has birthday invitations to hand out, we ask that this be done discreetly, especially if it is only for a few choice friends. Your child's teacher will support them to put these into bag lockers.
- If you would like to bring a treat to celebrate as a class, please check with your child's teacher regarding dietary requirements and class numbers. We don't encourage lollipops as they are not ideal when running and playing. We would prefer store bought cakes and treats to enable easy identification of ingredients.

## **BREAKFAST CLUB**

Breakfast Club is offered at St Joseph's every Thursday morning.

We know that children who eat breakfast tend to perform better academically compared to those who skip breakfast. They also feel a greater level of connectedness with teachers and other adults at their school, which leads to further positive health and academic outcomes (Better Health Channel).

# CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS

Camps and excursions can provide a valuable educational experience for our students which are complementary to their learning, as they provide access to resources, environments and expertise that may not be available in the classroom. In addition, camps and excursions provide an opportunity to further strengthen relationships in a different context.

Permissions for excursions will be sent home through PAM/SIMON Everywhere.

## Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)

The CSEF provides payments to assist eligible families to cover the costs of camps, sporting activities and excursions.

To be eligible for CSEF, two criteria must be met:

- The parent or carer must be the beneficiary of a financially means-tested card such as a Health Care Card (list of eligible cards are listed at <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/camps-sports-and-excursions-fund/guidance/eligibility>)
- The student must be of school age and attend a Victorian school
- Some common examples of school-organised programs for which a CSEF payment may be used include school camps/trips
- swimming and other school-organised sporting programs
- outdoor education programs
- excursions/incursions

Please contact Bree Cox ([admin@sjrochester.catholic.edu.au](mailto:admin@sjrochester.catholic.edu.au)) if you believe you may be eligible for CSEF.

The School Camp Program provides for an ongoing development in independence and responsibility as each child moves through the primary school.

The 2026 programs are for children in Years 3-6.

- Grades 3/4 Camp: 7 – 8 May to Pioneer Settlement Swan Hill
- Grades 5/6 Camp: 23 – 25 March to Cave Hill Creek Raglan

We understand that school camps can be something your child expresses concerns about attending, if this is your child, please make sure you discuss these with your child's class teacher.

## **CHILD SAFEGUARDING**

St Joseph's Primary School in conjunction with Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CESL) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility.

This includes promoting the inherent dignity of children and young people, and their fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and safeguarded by all.

The [CESL Commitment to Child Safeguarding Statement](#) affirms our commitment to:

- embed a culture of 'no tolerance' for child abuse
- listen to and empower children and young people
- keep children and young people safe

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

CESL is committed to child protection strategies and procedures to ensure the care, safety and protection of all children and young people in Catholic schools in the Diocese and safeguarding children and young people against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse and/or neglect.

Victorian Child Safe Standards

CESL is committed to the wellbeing and protection of all children and complying with [Ministerial Order 1359](#) – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises, and following the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Child Safety also considers the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, children who are unable to live at home, international students, and students of diverse sexuality.

Policies and Procedures have been put in place and are expected to be adhered to in order to ensure the safety of our students. These can be found on the website: [www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au)

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

At St Joseph's Primary School, all staff—including teachers, learning support staff, office staff, and Principal—are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment where every student can learn and thrive. Staff uphold high standards of professional conduct and value the trust placed in them to support each child's learning, wellbeing and development.

Parents/carers and visitors share responsibility for maintaining a respectful and orderly school environment. Upon enrolment, families agree to the School Code of Conduct, which outlines expectations for respectful behaviour, appropriate communication and positive partnerships between families and staff, in line with Catholic Education Sandhurst policies and values.

# COMMUNICATION

St Joseph's Primary School utilises SIMON Parent Access Module (PAM) as its Student Management System which includes tools to communicate with parents and carers.

At the beginning of the school year families will receive information on how access the PAM platform. Other communication tools/forms that will be utilised by staff at St Joseph's Primary School when communicating with families and the broader community include:

- School Newsletter (published fortnightly) Families are subscribed to the newsletter on enrolment at St Joseph's.
- School Facebook Page - St. Joseph's Rochester
- School Instagram - stjosephsrochester
- School Website
- Email
- Formal letters
- Phone calls
- Formal and informal meetings (including Learning Conversations)
- School Assemblies

## Communication

To support staff wellbeing and ensure consistent communication, St Joseph's Primary School staff will respond to emails and phone calls between 8:00am and 4:30pm on school days. Communication outside these hours will be limited to urgent matters or PAM reminders for school events.

Staff aim to respond to all communication within 24 hours. Messages received on a Friday afternoon will be responded to by Monday afternoon.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Information needed in the case of emergency is kept in the School Office and classrooms. This information needs to be updated constantly. It is important that any alteration of contact persons, phone numbers, addresses or medical information be brought to the attention of our school immediately.

Parents are asked to update this information through PAM at the beginning of the school year and at a time when information changes.

## **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Staff at St Joseph's Primary School strive to work in partnership with families to continuously improve outcomes for every student. Effective partnerships are based on trust, mutual respect and a commitment to supporting students.

There are a number of ways parents/carers can work in partnership with the school, including:

- Working in partnership around their child's learning and wellbeing
- School Council
- Parents & Friends Association
- Working Bees
- Volunteering
- Attendance and/or involvement in community events

## **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The St Joseph's Primary School Advisory Council is the leading consultative and advisory group for the Principal, as an active forum for parent and community participation. The role of a School Advisory Council centres around oversight and setting the broad direction of a school. In doing this, a school council can directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

The School Advisory Council meets termly.

## **PARENTS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION**

The Parents and Friends Association is a vital organisation in the life of St Joseph's, offering an opportunity for parents to gather and become involved in the life of the school. Our PnF provides support for the school in areas such as; social functions for the school community, fundraising for particular needs in the school and voluntary support for educational programs.

All parents are members of the Parents and Friends Association when enrolling children at St Joseph's. New faces are ALWAYS welcome at meetings and events.

The Parents and Friends meets twice a term.

## **CURRICULUM**

The educational program is based on the Victorian Curriculum.

MAGNIFY Sandhurst is an ambitious, evidence informed and wide-ranging program being implemented at St Joseph's and across all Catholic Education Sandhurst Schools.

MAGNIFY Sandhurst has implemented a number of key programs and initiatives that focus on:

- Catholic Mission
- Neuroscience of Learning
- English
- Mathematics
- Classroom Routines and Management
- Instructional Coaching for teachers

## **CURRICULUM**

MAGNIFY Sandhurst is committed to 'Every Student, Every Teacher, Every School, Every Day'.

MAGNIFY supports a structured and adaptable approach and teachers will create a learning environment that is supportive and challenging, helping all students achieving their full potential. Teachers will ensure that students are actively engaged in their learning and can apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. They will focus on being responsive to student engagement and guided practice, providing a strong foundation for learning before advancing to complex tasks.

Students participate in Physical Education, Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships, Performing Arts, Visual Arts as part of Specialist program.

Alongside English and Maths, students participate in Auslan, Science, Inquiry (Humanities) and Religious Education. All curriculum content is guided by the Victorian Curriculum and Catholic Education Sandhurst.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

As a Catholic school within the Parish of St Joseph's Rochester, we hold spirituality and faith formation in high regard as essential elements of our community and mission. Children receive 2 – 2 1/2 hours of Religious Education instruction a week. There are opportunities to participate in Sacramental programs and attend Mass and Liturgy during the school terms.

## **LIBRARY**

St Joseph's has a well-stocked library for the use of all. Classes access the library weekly, and children are encouraged to borrow on a regular basis.

# **SCHOOL FEES**

## **Understanding school funding and fees at St Josephs**

### **What Government funding Covers**

Government funding for catholic schools is provided through the Victorian catholic education authority and supports the essential, every day running of the school. This includes:

- Teacher and support staff wages
- Classroom resources curriculum materials and literacy /numeracy programs
- student support services including learning support, disability inclusion and wellbeing
- utilities and operational costs like electricity, water, cleaning, insurance, and maintenance
- system-level support from Catholic Education Sandhurst

This funding ensures the school can operate safely and meet required standards.

### **What St Joseph's Fee Cover**

School Fees allow St Joseph's to offer programs and opportunities that go beyond the basics covered by government funding. Our annual fee includes:

#### **1. Family Fee**

Supports classroom consumables, general learning resources and specialist programs such as AUSLAN, arts, PE and Wellbeing. Two levels apply:

- One Student
- Two or more Students

#### **2. Curriculum / ICT Levy**

Funds digital learning tools, software, devices, classroom TVs, Internet access points, STEM and literacy resources, online subscriptions, photocopying and printing.

Foundation students receive headphones at the start of the year

#### **3. Camp, Sport, Excursions Levy**

Cover most compulsory activities, including

- Camps (3/4 Swan Hill, 5/6 Cave Hill Creek)
- Swimming, Sports Carnival, Kelly Sports and interschool Sports
- Excursions and incursions (e.g. Kyabram Fauna Park, Discovery Centre, Courage and Crowns, The Blurbs)
- Transport for all Camps, Excursions and Sports days
- Preschool bus visits to St Josephs

## **FEE RELIEF**

Families who experience significant financial difficulty are encouraged to contact the Principal. The following Fee support for 2025 is available if needed, please don't hesitate to make an appointment if you wish to discuss this further.

## **CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSION FUND (CESF)**

Families who hold a current Pension or Healthcare Card will be eligible for the CSEF Relief and are asked to apply for this funding as it helps the school to cover the costs of travel and sporting activities that occur during the year, not just the scheduled camps for Grades 3 to 6. If you have applied in past years your student will remain funded while your card is active. Any new students will need to be included in a new application. Please see the school office for a form. In 2025 the amount of relief which will be used towards camps sports and/or excursions is \$154 per student per year.

## **SCHOOL INITIATED FEE RELIEF**

As directed by the Catholic Education Office, we will be offering additional fee relief to those families who meet our set criteria. Certain conditions are to be met to qualify. Please contact our office for more information.

Families that hold a current Health Care Card in the parent's name are eligible for this fee relief.

## **FEES & LEVIES**

Payment can be made by Cash, Direct Credit, Direct Debit or EFTPOS.

Direct Credit Details:

St Joseph's School Rochester

BSB: 083-543 Account No: 457828991

Reference: Family Name or child's name

## **FIRST AID / ACCIDENTS**

Our school is equipped with a sick bay.

When illness or accident occurs, parents are notified and when necessary, are asked to take their child home or to a doctor. All Staff regularly complete courses in Level 2 - First Aid with specifics to Asthma, Anaphylaxis and CPR training.

### **Head Injury**

Parents/Carers will receive a phone call from the school if their child has had a head knock.

## **Infectious Diseases**

In the interest of all students and families, children with infectious diseases are asked to be isolated from school in accordance with health authority guidelines.

In Victorian schools, unvaccinated students can be excluded during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases (like measles, chickenpox, pertussis) or if they've been exposed, even if they aren't sick, to prevent spread, based on the Health Department's exclusion table, with specific periods for cases and unvaccinated contacts.

Where temporary isolation is required, it will be implemented with care, respect and appropriate supervision, with a strong focus on student wellbeing.

## **Medication Administration**

All parent requests for the administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medications to their child must be in writing on the Medication Authorisation Form (available on the website, newsletter and from the office) and must be supported by specific written instruction from the medical practitioner or pharmacist. The medication must be provided in the original packaging with the medical practitioner or pharmacist's instructions.

It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that medication is update and provided when requested.

## **HATS**

St Joseph's is a SunSmart school. Children are expected to wear their school hat when the UV is high or extreme. We ask that hats are kept at school for easy access when needed. The wearing of the school hat is compulsory from the start of September to the end of April .

St Joseph's School has a no hat, no play policy. This includes moving from one area of the school to another.

## **INSURANCE**

Our school through Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd has taken out a blanket Student Accident Insurance with Locton Insurance (underwritten by Arch) covering the total school enrolment. This policy covers students "whilst at school" only—that is, on the school premises during school hours only and whilst participating in school camps or authorised activities away from school. It does not include travel to or from the school. There is no additional cost to parents as this expense is built into the fee structure. Full policy details are available from the school upon request.

## **DEVICES**

St Joseph's Primary School uses technology to support and enhance learning for all children.

Many technology platforms significantly boost student engagement and facilitate efficient and collaborative learning environments. At St Joseph's Primary School, we are strategic about when and how we use devices, ensuring they serve the learning rather than become a default.

For students with learning difficulties, using assistive technology can help support and strengthen learning while reducing some of the challenges they experience. This support helps students access their learning more confidently and experience greater success at school.

## **LUNCH ORDERS**

Orders are available on Wednesdays & Fridays supplied by the Rochester Bakery. Lunch orders are placed online via <https://www.schoollunchonline.com.au>. They are delivered to school at 11.30am in time for children to eat.

## **LOST PROPERTY**

It is important that all clothing is clearly marked with the child's name. This makes it much easier to identify articles of clothing in the first instance.

Lost property is located in the north store room in the Kildare Centre and may be inspected by parents at any time. There will be spot checks on student uniforms for names. (need to change where we store lost property – maybe the pavilion kitchen)

## **PARISH COMMUNITY**

Our school and church working together is what makes us a vibrant parish community.

Our Parish Priest, Father Ashley Caldwell invites and encourages children and parents to be active members of our Parish.

We look forward to celebrating our faith and connecting with Fr Caldwell and St Joseph's parishioners.

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Are available on the St Joseph's School Website ([www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au)) or parents may request hard copies from the school office.

## **PUPIL FREE DAYS**

All schools can take closure days during the year for staff professional development. Parents will be given advance notice of such days.

Please take note of the dates already planned for.

- Tuesday 27 January
- Wednesday 28 January
- Thursday 29 January
- Monday 20 April
- Wednesday 6 May
- Friday 5 June
- Wednesday 5 August
- Monday 2 November
- Wednesday 16 December

## **SCHOOL BUS**

The school is serviced by town and country buses. The town bus is run by a local company, while the country buses are organised by Rochester Secondary College.

All bus enquiries are to be directed to the bus coordinators Kristy Roulston and Simone Walsh at the Rochester Secondary College, they can be contacted on 54841844. All children travelling on buses are dropped off and picked up at the Priory St entrance to the Delany Pavilion.

There is a teacher on duty at Rochester Secondary College, and a teacher on duty before school AND after school at St Joseph's, to supervise students accessing the bus.

Should a young child be travelling home this way, we will pair them up with a 'buddy' until they are confident.

## **SCHOOL CROSSING**

All children are expected to use the school crossing when crossing Campaspe Street. A staff member on duty is assigned to assist students/families before school from 8.30am and after school. Children are not to cross the crossing on their own or without supervision.

## **INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY**

St Joseph's Primary School ensures that all students are actively engaged in learning with their peers, have equitable access to learning and achievement, and are welcomed, valued and supported in the school. St Joseph's Primary School is committed to having a strong and vibrant learning environment that celebrates diversity and is committed to ensuring the achievement and participation of all students. Accessing the curriculum 'on the same basis' as their peers, acknowledges that some children and their families have intersecting identities or additional needs that schools may need to take into consideration.

Teachers and school leaders, through ongoing assessment and monitoring, will identify students, then together with Parent/Guardians, communicate information and explain the obligations for supporting student's needs based on the Disability Standards. However, if a student has been identified as needing support but does not fall under the categories for funding, we aim to provide support based on their needs. At each level teachers will communicate information about the student's learning including opportunities to support your child both at home and school.

## **Fire Carrier Program**

Educating about the truthful history of the First Nations Australian is an important part of St Joseph's School.

Our F.I.R.E Carriers program educates our students about Reconciliation and ensures the First Nations history is integrated throughout the curriculum. Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week is celebrated through school liturgies and classroom activities.

Grade 5 students complete the F.I.R.E Carriers Program and are commissioned to be F.I.R.E Carriers.

## **SPORTS**

Ms McEvoy also facilitates a Physical Education session every Wednesday or Thursday. All students have the opportunity to participate in various team, track and field events during the year.

## **SURVEYS/DATA COLLECTION**

Parents & Students are sometimes asked to complete surveys. The information gained from these surveys is used for school improvement and strategic planning.

## **SWIMMING**

All children take part in a swimming and a water safety program annually, in Term 3. In 2026, Swimming will be held at the end of Term 3 at the Echuca Aquatic Centre. Information will be sent to families as the time gets nearer.

# WELLBEING

Education at St Joseph's is centred on the student, this emphasises a focus on the distinctive learning needs, behaviours, and wellbeing of everyone, fostering a comprehensive approach to personal development.

In this framework, students take an active role in shaping their educational experiences, which strengthens their motivation and sense of ownership. Educators facilitate supportive environments that promote positive behaviour, emotional resilience, and social skills in conjunction with academic achievement.

By concentrating on individual interests and strengths, St Joseph's School is educating children to be collaborative, inclusive, confident, compassionate, and courageous, thereby enhancing both intellectual and emotional wellbeing.

The classroom and playgrounds are designed to be a safe space where students feel valued, respected, and empowered, equipping them with the confidence to navigate challenges and achieve success in various aspects of their lives.

Student Wellbeing is a priority for us at St Joseph's. If you have any concerns for your child's wellbeing please don't hesitate to speak with your child's teacher who will gather support for your child from the Wellbeing Leader.

National School Chaplaincy Project:

School wellbeing officers and chaplains work in collaboration with school communities to support the wellbeing of school students through:

- Providing pastoral care
- Organising volunteer activities within the school community
- Running programs such as breakfast clubs and lunchtime activities
- Coordinating excursions, school incursions and parent/carer workshops.

## **TRANSITION**

Transition is not a point in time event; it is an experience that begins well before the move is made. To help students adjust, staff from current and future educational settings work together to ease students through this time.

In 2026, St Joseph's will offer a number of opportunities for prospective students and families to get to know our school and to see learning in action.

St Joseph's Transition Program for Pre-school children will run in Term 3 and 4. During Term 3, parents will be required to remain onsite with their child. Sessions in Term 4 will be open to children on their own.

Transition to Secondary School begins with an Information Session at the learners Secondary School of choice. This information is advertised in the newsletter, through PAM, on Facebook and Instagram. St Joseph's School will support all Grade 6 learners to connect with their Secondary School during the year, with transition visits culminating in the Statewide Transition Day.

## **TRANSITION DAY**

Is held on the second Tuesday of December, in Term 4. On this day all children spend time with their next year's teacher. Year 6 students spend the day at their new Secondary College and the new Foundation students join us for the morning.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM AND SHOES**

Children are expected to wear our school uniform. St Joseph's uniforms are available from Sportspower in Gillies Street.

School Shoes can be sneakers. Ideally black sneakers with good soles as the children will use these for everyday wear and sports. We encourage school shoes with support, focusing on features like cushioned midsoles (EVA foam), stability, arch support, durable leather/mesh, and flexible rubber soles for active kids, with many brands offering specific models with running shoe comfort for the playground.

Something to consider is ankle stability, breathable materials, shock absorption, and proper fit for all-day comfort.

## **VISITORS & CONTRACTORS**

All visitors to the school are asked to sign in at the front office. Visitors and contractors will also be asked to show their Working with Children Check and agree to follow the school's Code of Conduct while on site.

## **VOLUNTEERS PROGRAM**

At St Joseph's we value the support of volunteers. Over your child/ren's journey through Primary School there are many opportunities to volunteer and support your child and the school.

At St Joseph's Primary School, Rochester the safety and wellbeing of our students is our highest priority. To uphold our commitment to child safety, ALL Volunteers are required to review and acknowledge our Child Safe Code of Conduct, Staff & Students Professional Boundaries Policy and Photography & Video Policy and Procedures. Additionally, Volunteers must complete a Volunteer Registration form and successfully complete the CESL School Volunteer Induction before commencing their role as a Volunteer.

Details and links for the Registration form and accompanying modules are available on the school website.

## **Working with Children Check**

All adults who work with students, classrooms, excursions, camps etc. and who are on the Parents & Friends and School Advisory Council, are expected to have a Working With Children check. These forms are available online at: [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)



# **St Joseph's Primary School**

When strength meets kindness, learning thrives.