



St Joseph's
Primary School
Chiltern

Living - Loving - Learning

St Joseph's Chiltern is a child safe school.
We value, respect, and empower all our
students to be safe.

Parent Information Handbook 2025



Welcome!

St Joseph's is a vibrant and inclusive community where our children are encouraged to live out our motto of 'Living, Loving, Learning'. We look forward to working with you and your family in our welcoming community, where the staff are committed to providing the best possible environment for your child to flourish.

We are a small Catholic Primary School and the size of our school allows staff to know each child both as a person and a learner. Our small class sizes and unique facilities allow us to offer an all-encompassing education with the capacity to meet the needs of each child.

We nurture our students so that they feel safe and secure in the school environment, and through a rigorously planned curriculum, challenge learners to be the best they can be. We provide students with a wide range of opportunities to engage in all aspects of school life, with our wide range of academic, sporting and creative activities on offer throughout the year.

As educators our role is to work in partnership with parents, acknowledging that parents are the primary educators of their children. We strive to create positive partnerships with families and provide many ways to communicate and engage parents in all aspects of school life. We pride ourselves on the warm welcome and inclusiveness of our community.

As a Catholic school, we provide an education that equips our young people with the knowledge, skills, hope, and optimism to live meaningful lives and shape and enrich the world around them.

St Joseph's Chiltern is a Child Safe school with an atmosphere of respect, encouragement, and positive relationships between staff, students, and families.

The staff and I look forward to welcoming you to St Joseph's School community.

Libby Dickinson
Principal



Vision Statement

At St Joseph's we strive to:

Model and live the teachings of Jesus.

Encourage action for social justice and hope.

Educate and nurture the whole child, spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally and physically.

Provide an engaging and challenging learning environment that encourages excellence and lifelong learning.

Develop students who have respect and care for God's creation and the need for sustainability.



Graduate Outcomes

At St Joseph's we commit to educating students to:

1. Be open to the wonders of God among us.
2. Be able to make moral judgements and stand up for what is right.
3. Embrace diversity, culture and the individuality of all.
4. Be equipped with strong foundations in literacy and numeracy and all academic pursuits.
5. Be confident and inspired learners, willing to experience new challenges and broaden their horizons.
6. Be positive and resilient individuals with the ability to love and be loved.
7. Be compassionate, contributing and reconciling members of their community.
8. Be faithful stewards of the planet.

General Information

School address: 142 North Road, Chiltern 3683
P.O. Box 102 Chiltern 3683

Telephone: (03) 57 261 388

Website: www.sjchiltern.catholic.edu.au

Email: principal@sjchiltern.catholic.edu.au

Principal: Mrs. Libby Dickinson

Parish Priest: Fr. Peter Taylor

Administration Officer: Ms. Sharon Stone

Classroom Teachers

Miss. Kerrie Hill (F/1/2 Teacher)

Mr. Luke Ellis (3/4 Teacher)

Ms. Frances Ardern (5/6 Teacher)

Ms. Stephanie Zahra (Performing Arts/Mental Health In Schools Practitioner)

Ms Debbie Riley (Learning Support Officer)

Mrs Miv Lewis (Learning Support Officer)

Term Dates 2025

Term 1: Thursday, 30th January to Wednesday 4th April

Term 2: Monday, 28th April to Friday, 4th July

Term 3: Monday, 21st July to Friday, 19th September

Term 4: Monday, 6th October to Thursday 16th December

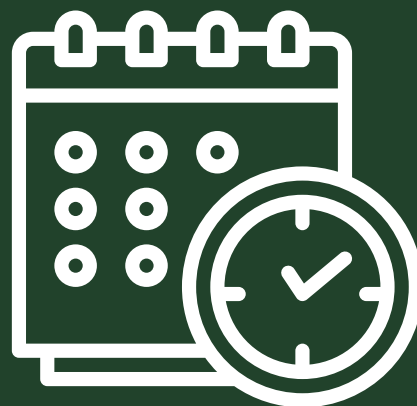
Daily Timetable

9.00am: Classes commence

11.00 - 11.45am: Lunch break

1.45 - 2.30pm: Recess break

3.30pm: School finishes



Our school curriculum

St Joseph's offers a comprehensive curriculum covering all learning domains in the Victorian Curriculum version 2.0. St Joseph's provides learning programs, including assessment and reporting of student achievement and progress. As a diocese we are implementing 'Magnify Sandhurst', our evidence-informed school improvement initiative, which is centred around the science of learning.

There are several key components to the Magnify Sandhurst approach:

- understanding how the brain learns
- understanding how literacy is effectively taught
- the use of a low variance, knowledge-rich curriculum to support a calm, positive classroom environment that maximises learning time.

Magnify is deliberately bold and wide-ranging, generating whole-of-system improvement.



English

At St Joseph's, we believe that a high-quality English curriculum is essential for every child's success. We are committed to developing confident and capable readers, writers, speakers, and listeners through explicit, evidence-based instruction.

As part of the 'Magnify Sandhurst' initiative, we implement the MultiLit literacy programs: InitialLit for Foundation to Year 2 and MacqLit as a targeted intervention for Years 3 to 6. We also use the Ochre Education curriculum to guide our planning and practice. Each morning, our two-hour literacy block is dedicated to focused, high-impact teaching in reading and writing.

Every child's progress is closely monitored through individual assessment, allowing us to tailor instruction to their needs. Our goal is to ensure that all students are supported and challenged to reach their full potential as literate, confident learners.

Mathematics

Magnify Sandhurst has collaborated with Ochre Education to provide evidence-based mathematics curriculum resources from Foundation to Year 6. Each maths lesson is dedicated to high quality teaching and learning, using a knowledge-rich, explicit approach to instruction.



Religious Education

Religious Education at St. Joseph's is based on the Source of Life core documents which have been set for the Sandhurst Diocese. Religious Education topics are related to the students' life experiences. With careful reflection and guidance, the children are led to new insights about life, living, and faith. We celebrate our faith together through prayer, liturgy, and the sacraments. Prayer is a very special part of the day in each class. We celebrate special days and events with school and class Masses, Assemblies and Liturgies.

Science

At St. Joseph's our Science program encourages students to develop knowledge and skills in the areas of biological, chemical, earth and physical sciences, in line with the Victorian Curriculum. We aim to make St. Joseph's a sustainable school and we have adopted a whole-school approach to better manage waste, energy, water, and biodiversity. Our chooks and veggie gardens enhance our ability to recycle and engage the children in nurturing plants and animals.

Performing Arts

Students at St Joseph's have specialist classes in Performing Arts each week with Ms. Zahra. The program is fun and engaging and follows the current Victorian Curriculum.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)

Students are given the opportunity to explore many areas of STEM using technology and other tools that support them to become 21st century learners. Students have access to resources that develop their understanding of coding, robotics, as well as information technology.

LOTE (Languages other than English)

At St Joseph's, we support students to understand how language influences relationships, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours across different cultures and communities. We are committed to nurturing a respectful appreciation of cultural and linguistic diversity within our school, while supporting students to grow, succeed, and participate confidently as global citizens.

Technology

At St. Joseph's, students have access to a range of technologies that are used to enhance their educational outcomes.

We have an innovative and exciting 1:1 iPad program to support and enhance student learning and engagement from Foundation to 6.

Visual Arts

Our specialist Teacher provides lessons and all students are encouraged to explore their creativity through the Performing Arts curriculum.

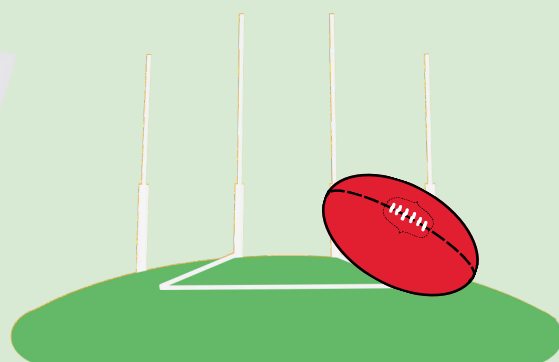
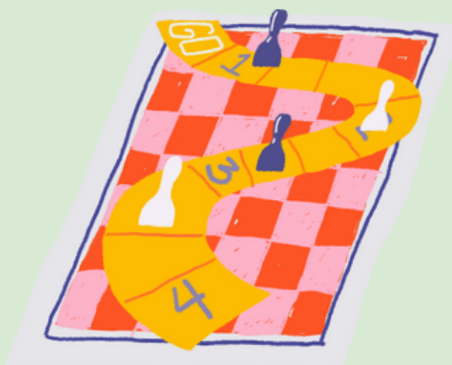
Health & Physical Education

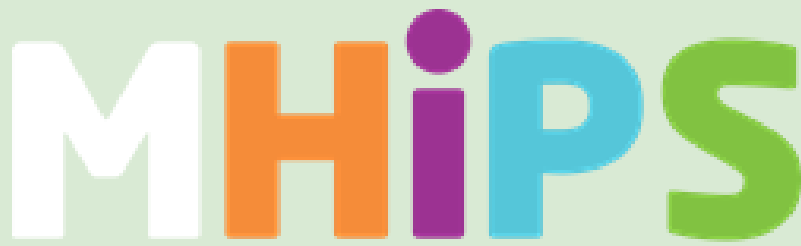
Our Physical Education program consists of athletics, swimming, tennis, dance, minor and major games, and outdoor education. The school holds an annual athletics sports and cross country competition. All students at St. Joseph's participate in the My Future Academy program every fortnight. This program is a unique health and movement education program that utilises the physical activity domain to develop the whole child.

Lunchtime clubs

St Joseph's provides a variety of activities to ensure all children's passions & interests can be met throughout the day. Our current lunchtime clubs are:

- Knitting & crocheting
- Feel good choir
- Games
- Footy fun & skills
- Gardening
- Book club





Mental Health in Primary Schools



MHiPS (Mental Health in Primary Schools)

MHiPS is a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Our Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader works across the school to implement a mental health and wellbeing program, to:

- Build the capacity of school staff to identify and support students with mental health concerns.
- Support the school to create clear referral pathways and connect to local services for students identified as needing further assessment and intervention.
- Coordinate targeted mental health support for students by working with school staff, school community and external agencies.
- Implement effective mental health strategies aligned with social and emotional learning and embed a whole-school approach to wellbeing and learning initiatives.

Children's rights to child safety

The staff and volunteers of St Joseph's Primary School encourage students to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them. We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

Valuing diversity and inclusion

We value and celebrate diversity, especially cultural diversity and we do not tolerate discriminatory practices.

To achieve this, we promote the:

- Cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students and their families
- Cultural safety, participation and empowerment from culturally and/or linguistically; and
- Personal safety, participation and empowerment of student with a disability and diverse backgrounds and their families and make them feel welcome and part of all aspects of school life.



School behaviour expectations

The aim of our school is to work towards building on the social skills that are valued at school and at home. The school expectations which are continually encouraged and reinforced at school and can be implemented into everyday home life. As a school we are working towards a school wide positive behavior approach with all students taking responsibility for their actions.

We are respectful

We are learners

We are responsible

Buddy program

Each child in our Foundation class is paired with a senior buddy from the Grade 5/6 class. This program fosters friendship, provides support, and includes a range of cross-age learning activities.

Children with diverse learning needs

We recognise that all children have different intellectual and emotional needs. Staff assessment practices allow for early identification of children with special needs. We are able to cater for children with special needs in a variety of ways through school organisation and being able to access needs-based resourcing for equipment and staffing.

Co-operative learning opportunities, problem-solving activities, planning and individualised learning plans are utilised to meet the needs of these students in mixed ability classrooms

Pastoral Care & Wellbeing

As outlined in our Vision Statement, we are committed to providing strong pastoral care and support for all students and their families. The Wellbeing Program at St Joseph's is grounded in Christian values and supports students across physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic needs.

Students are encouraged to be active members of the local community and to understand their responsibilities as citizens. They participate in events such as the annual Anzac Day service, local celebrations, and various community activities.

Parent and caregiver involvement

Parent and caregiver involvement in their child's education is actively encouraged and can take many forms. All families are members of the Parents & Friends, and family members may also choose to participate in the School Advisory Board.

Parents & Friends (P&F)

The P & F meets each month during school term time. Parents are encouraged to attend meetings and to be involved in all Parents and Friends activities whether they are of a social or fundraising nature.

School Advisory Council

The School Advisory Council is made of up to five parent members, the Parish Priest (or his representative), the Principal and a member of staff. The Council advises the Principal with the running of the school.

Parent information evenings

Parents are invited to the school, for:

- Parent/Teacher/Student goal-setting sessions
- Parent/Teacher interviews
- School information sessions
- Sacramental programs
- Christian Education for Personal Development program (Grade 6 only).



Working with Children Check (WWCC)

It is a requirement of the Victorian Government that any parent who takes part in school activities with students either in the classroom or going on an excursion, needs to have a Working With Children Check. The paperwork involved in these checks is now online via the link below.

<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/individuals/applicants/how-to-apply>

When the paperwork has been completed these forms need to be submitted to the Post Office for processing.

General information

Administration Office Hours

Sharon's hours are Tuesday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm.

As part of our child safety responsibilities, parents **must** ensure they sign in at the front office prior to going to their child's classroom.



Absences or early departures

To support student safety and meet legal requirements, we ask parents to log all absences using PAM (Parent Access Module). If you are unable to access PAM, please contact the school by phone or email to inform us of your child's absence. If we have not received notification by 9:30am, we will contact you to confirm the reason for the absence.

If your child will be collected by someone other than a parent or guardian, please provide written permission in advance.

For any late arrivals or early departures, parents must sign their child in or out at the office using the sign-in/out book. If your child returns to school later the same day, please ensure they are signed back in.

Art smocks

We strongly suggest that each student has an art smock to protect their uniform during various art activities. An old shirt remodelled works just fine!

Assembly

Our main weekly assembly is held every Friday at 9:00am in the 5/6 classroom. The whole school gathers for prayer, general announcements, celebration of student achievements, and the presentation of weekly awards. Parents are warmly invited to attend.

Camps and excursions

Excursions are planned throughout the year to support a broad and engaging education through practical, safe experiences. School camps are also organised for students in Grades 3/4 and 5/6. We value and welcome parent involvement in these activities.

Excursion costs are included in school fees and are supported by additional funding from the Catholic Education Office for small regional schools. However, separate fees apply for school camps, as well as for the swimming and water safety program. The following outlines the progression of excursions and camps from Prep to Grade 6:

- **Foundation-Grade 2:** Day excursions to expand understandings of theme studies.
- **Grade 3/4:** Day excursions each year and a one night camp every alternate year.
- **Grade 5/6:** Day excursions and a 2 night camp every alternate year.

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)

CSEF is provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the cost of camps and sporting activities. To be eligible a parent must hold a Centrelink Health Care Card. Applications for this allowance will be sent home at the start of each year.

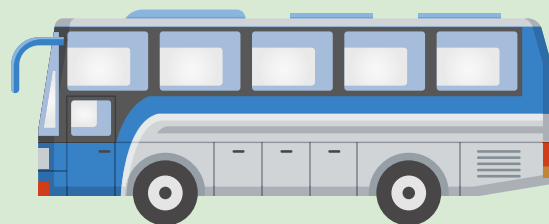
Class groupings

Class groupings are based primarily on overall school enrolment numbers and the staffing allocation provided by the Catholic Education Office. We believe that multi-age classes offer valuable learning opportunities and aim to structure our classes to reflect this approach.

Children grow and learn at different rates and have varied interests – just like adults. Multi-age groupings allow us to better cater to these differences than traditional single-year classes. This structure supports the development of individual competence, leadership skills, and a strong sense of contribution from every student.

Conveyance allowance

Conveyance allowance is paid to assist parents with travel expenses incurred. To be eligible for this allowance students must reside more than 4.8 km from the nearest bus stop or 4.8 km from St Joseph's with no bus available. Contact the office for an application form.



Enrolment guidelines from Kindergarten to Foundation

Children can be enrolled in school if they turn five years old before 30 April. If there are any concerns about your child's readiness for school, please discuss them with the Principal or Kindergarten teacher.

The enrolment process includes the following:

- Kindergarten children visit St Joseph's to help them become familiar with the school environment.
- The Foundation teacher and selected school students visit the Kindergarten to support the transition process and promote leadership among older students.
- An Open Day and Information Session will be advertised via the school website, Facebook page, and through your child's Kindergarten.

Families are welcome to enrol their child at any time, but preferably before the end of August each year. As part of the enrolment process, all families will have an interview with the Principal to share information about the school and their child.

At the beginning of the school year, a Parent Information Evening is held for new families to introduce curriculum programs, classroom procedures, and school routines. Enrolment and transition dates will be confirmed by the end of Term 1.

Lost property

All articles of clothing and belongings should be clearly marked so that each child can clearly identify his or her own articles.

Parent Access Module (PAM)

St Joseph's Primary School uses the Parent Access Module (PAM) to communicate with parents about student learning, newsletters, excursion forms, and weekly events. PAM is an interactive, online platform that parents can access at any time to stay informed and engaged with their child's education.

Parent access orders

If your child is in the care of one parent and the other parent is not permitted to see or collect the child, it is vitally important for the school office to hold a copy of the parenting access order. We have no legal right to refuse access to a parent if we do not have the required documents.

Parent enquiries or concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about classroom activities or school matters, please contact your child's classroom teacher or the Principal. The classroom teacher should always be your first point of contact for any inquiries about your child. We value and welcome suggestions from parents and encourage you to share them respectfully. For more information, please refer to our website for school policies.

Parent/Teacher/Child Interviews

If one parent has sole care of a child and the other parent is not permitted to see or collect them, it is essential that the school office has a copy of the relevant parenting or court order. Without this legal documentation, the school cannot lawfully prevent access by the other parent.

Pupil free days

We will always aim to give you at least one month's notice before a "Pupil Free Day." These days are set aside for staff professional development to stay up to date with the latest teaching and learning practices.

School newsletter

The school newsletter is emailed home every second Friday, and it is also available on PAM and our website. The newsletter provides important information about school activities and upcoming events. We encourage you to read it to stay informed about what's happening at school. Any updates from the P & F are also included.

If you come across any educational articles that might interest other parents, feel free to share them with us for inclusion in the newsletter. You can view the newsletter on our website at www.sjchiltern.catholic.edu.au.



School nurse

The School Nurse visits annually to assess Foundation students, once a completed Health Questionnaire has been received. If any health concerns are identified, parents will be contacted. Students in other year levels may also be assessed at the request of either a teacher or parent.

Student reports

Written reports on your child's progress are sent home mid-year and at the end of the year. These reports outline your child's achievement in relation to the Victorian Curriculum and include comments on their progress through the school's planned program, as well as their social and emotional development and attitude toward learning.

Parents are encouraged to maintain regular communication with their child's teacher to work together in supporting and promoting their child's learning.

Victorian Student Number (VSN)

Every child is assigned a Victorian Student Number (VSN) when they first enrol in a Victorian school. The VSN is a unique identification number issued by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to all students in government and non-government schools, as well as those in Vocational Education and Training institutions. This number is used as a key identifier on the student's school records and remains with them throughout their education, up to the age of 25.

Uniforms

All children are expected to wear the school uniform, which reflects pride in both their appearance and the school community. The uniform represents St Joseph's publicly and should be worn neatly. It is based on the school colours of green and gold.

The school approved full uniform is available from Chiltern Post Office.

Summer uniform



Winter uniform



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