St. Theresa’s Primary School
Parent Handbook 2016

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Principal: Mr Robert Macklin
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“The purpose of a school is to help a family educate a child”

Don Edgar
Welcome to St. Theresa’s Primary School

Parents are always welcome in our school and we hope you will join us as often as you can for the many great learning opportunities that we offer throughout the year.

Working together, we can offer your child great learning experiences that can help them achieve their best.

St. Theresa’s Primary School.
St. Theresa’s is one of two catholic primary schools in the Parish of St. Theresa, Albion. Albion is in the western suburbs about 20 minutes from the centre of Melbourne. The school first gained registration in February 1951 and grew quickly to be an important part of the local community.

St. Theresa’s currently has an enrolment of about 200 children. The school has eight classes catering for children from prep to grade 6. The average size of each class is around 24 children. The small size of the school has its benefits in that the whole community has the opportunity to get to know all of the other members relatively easily. The children have a special relationship with each other and the staff where they take a genuine interest in the needs and achievements of those around them.

St. Theresa’s currently has a staff of 24 including some part time staff. The staff is very committed to providing quality education for the children in a caring atmosphere which promotes all of the catholic values which our school stands for. Professional development is highly regarded and the staff keeps up to date with current practices and teaching.

St. Theresa’s has a diverse population. 142 families represent 19 different nationalities. Almost 53% of the children come from a home where a language other than English is spoken regularly. This represents 14 languages spoken by families. This provides for a very wide range of rich cultural experiences which the children bring to their classes. 15% of the children attend another school to study their native language or that of their parents. St. Theresa’s offers Italian, which is studied by all children as part of our normal curriculum.

At St. Theresa’s we strive to create a community where people matter and learning is valued. We endeavour to foster the development of the children as independent and responsible learners. We believe it is essential to share our Catholic Faith and traditions with all at our school.

The Religious Education Program at St. Theresa’s is a vital part of the day to day events. Participation in paraliturgies, school masses, classroom prayer and sacramental programs, form the basis of the faith, which the children bring to school. Each celebration is recognised as an important aspect of the life of St. Theresa’s School.
St. Theresa’s always tries to involve itself with the community and neighbouring schools. Children participate in programs with nearby secondary colleges as well as being involved in the local Primary School Interschool Sports program for three terms of the year. All of these activities are very valuable experiences and enable the school to make good use of resources and facilities in the area.

St. Theresa’s offers a diverse curriculum centred around the experiences of the children and aims to extend the learning and experience of every individual student. We aim to provide a multitude of experiences covering all of the National Curriculum. Children also can be involved in many specialist programs offered by the school. These include Outdoor Education, School Camps, Swimming, Piano lessons, Buddy System for our Grade 6’s and Preps, Interschool Sports, School Productions etc.

Pastoral care is the responsibility of all at this school. We endeavour to approach discipline with a fair and just outlook for all. Every child, parent and staff member shares in the responsibility for the welfare of others.

St. Theresa’s Primary school welcomes parents and families at all times. We see parents in partnership with teachers, in classrooms working with children, at sports activities supporting and coaching, on school camps, at cultural evenings and art shows and doing the important fundraising tasks as well as socialising. We believe as a school that the atmosphere created by the community that shares these grounds makes up the essence of the spirit which is uniquely St. Theresa’s.

Our School Motto: ‘Do Small Things Well’
2016 TERM DATES:

Term 1: Wednesday, 27th January to Thursday, 24th March
Students commence school on Monday, 2nd February
Good Friday is Friday, 25th March
Easter Sunday is Sunday, 27th March

Term 2: Monday, 11th April to Friday, 24th June

Term 3: Monday, 11th July to Friday, 16th September

Term 4: Monday, 3rd October to Tuesday, 20th December

Prep children will attend full days and have each **WEDNESDAY** off during February.

SCHOOL HOURS:

**CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE AT SCHOOL BEFORE 8.30am**

8.30am School gates are opened and the children will be supervised in playground

8.45am Bell for children to go to class. All children should be at school by 8.45am

8.55am Classes begin

3.15pm Classes finish

During fine weather, children are dismissed from the yard and all teachers will be available to parents at this time.

****** PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO BE ON TIME EACH DAY ******

Children who are dropped off in the morning should enter via the gates in King Edward Avenue, Adelaide Street or Drummartin Street.

SACRAMENTS:

St. Theresa’s is a catholic school and each year the children are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

- Reconciliation will be in grade 3.
- First Eucharist will be in grade 3.
- Confirmation will be held in grade 6.
Parents are expected to take an important part in preparing their children for the sacraments and there will be opportunities to be involved in these programs.

**SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:**

The school newsletter is a very successful form of communication between parents and school. A hard copy of the newsletter will be sent home each Thursday. A copy is also emailed and sent via skoolbag app. It is very important that you and your child read this together. The newsletter will also be available on the school website each Thursday at [www.stalbion.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stalbion.catholic.edu.au). School receipts/statements are emailed.

Skoolbag app is available and is used to remind parents of upcoming events reminders or school notices. We encourage families to download our app and be aware of emails from the school office.

**SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD:**

St. Theresa’s has a School Advisory Board. Parents are elected each year to be a part of the Board. The Board meets regularly to discuss educational issues and school policies and make recommendations to the Parish Priest and Principal.

**INSURANCE:**

All children will have limited medical accident insurance through CCI Insurance. This cost will be met by the school.

**ARRIVING LATE / LEAVING EARLY:**

Children who arrive late or need to leave early **MUST** be signed in or out in the folder located at the office.

**VISITORS / PARENT HELPERS:**

All visitors to the school during school hours must be signed in and wear a badge. You must sign out when leaving. This includes all parents who help out in classrooms, tuckshop etc. All school helpers need a Working With Children Card. See details further on in the Handbook.

**SCHOOL ABSENCE:**

**Please send a note if your child is absent from school.**

If your child is away, please supply a note or ring the office before 9am explaining the reason for your child’s absence. If your child is absent from school for more than a week, please ring us and let us know what is happening.
SCHOOL FEES:

School Fees can be paid using various methods such as cash, cheque, eftpos (cheque, savings, credit), credit card or by direct debit.

Fees can also be paid by monthly instalments using 10 envelopes from Feb – Nov. Each envelope is dated. Please ensure these are paid by the due date.

Fees can be paid all at once, by term or by arrangement through the office.

School Fees for 2016 are $850.00 per family.

LEVIES (such as books, stationery, excursion):

This levy covers art supplies, books, paper, classroom needs and excursions.

This Levy is payable for EACH CHILD and is due by the end of February.

Levies for 2016 are $240.00 per child.

MONEY / NOTES for the OFFICE:

All money for the office MUST be secured in an envelope marked clearly with your child’s name, the amount and what it is for. The envelope with the money or any forms that need to be returned, are to be placed in the RED TUB provided in each classroom. The red tub is then sent to the office by 9.15am each morning.

CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT FUND:

We can arrange for a Savings Account to be opened with the Catholic Development Fund in your child’s name. Bank books are to be handed in at the office on Wednesdays. This is a great way for children to start saving.

CANTEEN:

The school has a Canteen which operates some lunchtimes selling zooper doopers. Occasionally, the Canteen will offer hot dogs or soup for sale. Volunteers are welcome to work in the Canteen at lunch time to sell zooper doopers to the children. (It would be great if you were able to help.)

Lunch orders are available on Wednesdays and Fridays. This arrangement is with an external company who provides this service. Every family will be given the price list at the commencement of each year.
SCHOOL UNIFORM:

Our Uniform Shop is open every Friday morning from 8.45am till 9.15am. Orders can be taken at the office any other time but payment and collection is on Fridays. Children are required to wear the school uniform every day, except Physical Education day, when they wear the sports uniform.

WINTER UNIFORM:  
Boys: Grey trousers, polo shirt, windcheater, grey socks, black shoes, jacket  
Girls: Tunic, polo shirt, windcheater, blue tights, black shoes, jacket

SUMMER UNIFORM:  
Boys: Grey shorts, polo shirt, grey socks, black shoes, school hat  
Girls: Dress, white socks, black shoes, school hat

SPORTS UNIFORM:  
(Boys/Girls) White shorts, school polo shirt, white socks, hat, runners.

MISCELLANEOUS:  
School bag, raincoat, head ties

RUNNERS: Children are to only wear the appropriate runners for physical education on sports days. You will be notified what days these will be.

HATS: School hats are essential for ALL CHILDREN and staff in terms 1 & 4 as part of our SunSmart Policy. We have a No Hat No Play Policy.

PLEASE PUT A NAME ON ALL ARTICLES OF CLOTHING, YOUR CHILD’S BAG, LUNCH BOXES, DRINK BOTTLES. ETC.

A lost property bin is situated in the Sick Bay. Please check there if your child has lost something. All named clothes or items will be quickly returned to their owners.

LIBRARY BAG:

All children MUST have a library bag to borrow books from the school library. This is very important to help us maintain our resources stay in good order.

SCHOOL EXCURSIONS:

School excursions are a very important part of our school curriculum.

A permission note will be sent home for all excursions. Children will NOT be able to attend without written permission.

A general permission form will go home to gain your consent for local excursions which occur on a regular basis. i.e. walk around the block, Inter School Sports.
Parents are welcome to attend most excursions as organised by the teachers. Please note that numbers are often limited and all parents may not always be able to attend.

**SAFETY:**

It is **IMPORTANT NOT TO DOUBLE PARK** when you are collecting or dropping off your children. **IT IS DANGEROUS.** Children must only get out of properly parked cars. Teachers will monitor this after school.

When dropping children off and collecting children, parents **MUST NOT** use the **STAFF CARPARK, this is a dangerous place for children and not to be used.**

All gates leading to the school will be locked at 9.10am each morning and unlocked at 3.00pm each afternoon. This is for the safety of all children.

During school hours 9.10 –3.00pm all visitors must enter through the front door, sign a visitors book and collect a visitors badge. Visitors **MUST** sign out on leaving.

Please make sure you use the supervised crossing in Adelaide Street.

**INJURY / SICKNESS:**

Parents / Guardians will be notified as soon as possible in the event of injury or sickness whilst your child is at school. It is essential that we have up-to-date medical information as well as sufficient and reliable contact phone numbers.

Medical forms will be sent home to help with this information. If your child is treated in the sick bay you will receive written notification.

**MEDICINES AND TABLETS:**

Children cannot keep tablets and medicines with them or in their bag. The school cannot let children take medication without a written note from home showing the dose and when it must be taken.

Medicine will be kept and administered from the office. There is a form to complete if you require your child to be given medication at school.

Unwell children should remain at home until they are fit for school.
Children who suffer from asthma must have an “Action Plan” completed by the student’s doctor and an inhaler purchased and supplied to the school to be kept in the office.

Children who have suffered from any allergies and/or anaphylaxis, must have an “Action Plan” completed by the student’s doctor and an epipen purchased and supplied to the school to be kept in the office/staffroom. An Action Plan can be obtained from the Office.

**IMMUNISATIONS:**

As part of our enrolment procedure, an immunisation certificate issued through Medicare offices is required. All children require this to enrol.

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:**

The staff at St. Theresa’s considers parental involvement an integral part of the education of the children.

Our experience together with current research have proven that the benefit of parental involvement is very valuable to all concerned, particularly the children. The children see both teachers and parents working together for their benefit and therefore, develop positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Parents who have worked in our classes have commented that they now have a better understanding of how their children learn and feel more confident about helping their children at home.

Throughout the school year there are many opportunities to become involved. The school runs regular Activity Days, where parents are invited to work with groups of children. Excursions are an important part of curriculum and parents are encouraged to join us.

Staff are keen to involve parents in working within classrooms in many different areas, for example, maths and language group work.

If you are interested in being involved in any way please approach the teachers and you will be welcomed with open arms.

Participation is not only achieved by helping in classes. School and home can work together in many other ways.
By taking time to read information, access the class blogs, answer notes or talk to your children about school, you are helping them understand that what happens at school is important. We hope you can really work closely with us to develop a very positive attitude to school life for everyone.

Communication and co-operation between staff and parents is the key to successful education.

Other ways that parents may also wish to be involved is through our Fundraising Committee or Garden and Maintenance Committee which work to support the school.

**WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK:**

It is now the law that any person who works with children requires a Working With Children Check.

We advise that **ALL** parents obtain this check by applying via the following website: [http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/)

You will need this to have **any involvement** with your child at school, even things like going on excursions.

Please attend to this important matter as we would love to have you involved with your children at St. Theresa’s

**WORKING BEES:**

The school will run occasional working bees where we ask your help in different projects to support our school and keep it well maintained for your children.

**TECHNOLOGY:**

St. Theresa’s values the contribution that current Technology can make to your child’s education. We endeavour to provide access to up to date technology and computers so that **all** children develop the necessary skills to be competent in this important area of their education. All children will have access to the internet through a safe pathway and children will be encouraged to use technology across the different curriculum areas. All classrooms are fitted with interactive data boards to enhance children’s learning.

Children are not permitted to use mobile phones etc. at school and these will be kept at the office for the children during school hours. Our policies regarding the use of technology are detailed and available on our web site. These policies are reviewed and altered regularly to keep in line with current good practice.
INTERVENTION PROGRAMS:

We offer Reading Recovery as an extra strategy / program in grade one made available to some children who may benefit from the extra support in reading. This is offered on a needs basis to Grade 1 children only.

In 2016, we will also be offering Literacy and Maths Intervention Programs across the school for children who need extra support in these subjects and an EAL (English As An Additional Language) program for relevant students.

ARTS:

We acknowledge the importance of the arts. We regularly involve children in Art Shows, School Productions and Concerts. This is an exciting and valuable part of school life. We have a Visual Arts specialist, Music lessons are a part of the normal program for all children and private piano lessons are available at an extra cost during school time.

INTERSCHOOL SPORT:

Grade 5 and 6 participate regularly against other local schools in sports activities. This includes Summer and Winter sports as well as cross country running and athletics. On some occasions we involve grade 4 children.

SWIMMING PROGRAM:

Each year, St. Theresa’s is involved in a swimming program for all grade levels. This is always subject to booking availability and costs.

All children should take advantage of this program as it is an important part of the curriculum. Swimming will be in Term 4 in 2016 at Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre.
**OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM:**

St. Theresa’s is committed to its Outdoor Education Program. Activities vary each year.

This program includes:
- Prep/1 Late stay and dinner at school
- Grade 2 Overnight stay at school
- Grs 3/4/5/6 Camping at bush or seaside venues

Once again all children should participate in this important program. The program differs from year to year depending on the makeup of the classes.

Parent support is always welcomed at these activities when possible. Parents are usually required to support our school camps and are welcome to contact the teachers about being involved.

**ASSEMBLY:**

We have assembly at school 2.30 pm in the Multipurpose Room every second Friday.

Parents are very welcome.

The assemblies are conducted by the children each week and this is advertised in the newsletter weekly.

**SCHOOL CLOSURE DAYS:**

Each year the school will usually have five school closure days. There will be no school for the children on these days.

You will always be notified well in advance of these dates.
**ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING:**

School Reports will go home twice a year, in June and December.

**PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES:**

Formal opportunities to meet with your child’s teacher will be held in Term 1, 2 & 4.

- Term 1 will be a grade level meeting.
- Term 2 – individual parent teacher interviews.
- Term 4 – will be by individual appointment

Our school policy invites you to contact your child’s teacher at any time throughout the year to support their learning. Please take advantage of this offer at any time.

**DISCIPLINE & ANTI BULLYING POLICY:**

The school has a positive student behaviour approach. Both policies are available on our school website – [www.stalbion.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stalbion.catholic.edu.au).