

St. Theresa's Primary School

Parent Handbook



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Principal: Mr Robert Macklin
Parish Priest: Fr Barry Hughes

*"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.

Our School Vision

St Theresa's Albion, a school that welcomes families into an inspiring Catholic community dedicated to excellence in education and social justice.

Our School Mission

Each person is created in the image of God and called to communion with God. Therefore, all human life is sacred and every human being has an innate dignity. This understanding of the human person and that the children in our care are central to all that we do is at the heart of the values that underpin Catholic education at St Theresa's School.

St Theresa's Catholic School's mission therefore is:

To witness Jesus Christ in a learning community dedicated to the formation of the human person enabling them to reach their full potential.

To integrate Faith, Culture & Life by teaching and celebrating the Catholic faith and traditions enabling us to live the Gospel values as presented in Catholic Social Teaching.

To develop life-long learners by providing an excellent inclusive, comprehensive, contemporary and holistic education that caters for spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.

To share the responsibility for all children in the school and to work in partnership with the home.

To act with integrity, respect, authenticity, presence and responsibility, acknowledging the richness and diversity of each other, and to live harmoniously, equitably, justly and sustainably for the common good.

To provide a safe, stimulating, happy and caring environment that protects children and promotes their health, development, and wellbeing.



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 under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

St. Theresa's currently has an enrolment of about 240 children. The school has nine classes catering for children from Prep to Grade 6. The average size of each class is around 26 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 37, including some part time staff. The staff are 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 staff keep up to date with current practices and teaching.

St. Theresa's has a diverse population. 172 families represent 33 different nationalities. Almost 36% of the children come from a home where a language other than English is spoken regularly. This provides for a very wide range of rich cultural experiences which the children bring to their classes. 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, that aims to extend the learning and experience of every individual student. The curriculum is based on the curriculum guides developed by the Victorian Department of Education known as The Victorian Curriculum. There is a strong emphasis given to Literacy and Numeracy. The Learning areas covered in the curriculum are The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, The Humanities, Languages, Mathematics, Science and Technologies. Woven through these learning areas is a focus on four general capabilities which are Critical and Creative Thinking Capabilities, Ethical Capabilities, Intercultural Capabilities and Personal & Social Capabilities. The school is mindful of the diversity of learning styles and abilities and differentiates to cater for these. In addition, targeted intervention programs occur. In Literacy three programs exist: Reading Recovery at Grade 1, a general program for other children requiring extra assistance, and a program for children for whom English is not their first language. In Numeracy an intervention program exists for students from Grades Prep to 6 for children requiring extra help. Gifted and talented students are also catered for with Individual Learning Plans. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) plays an important role in contemporary learning enabling higher levels of collaboration and engagement as well as many other benefits. The provision of technology at St Theresa's is high.

Children can also be involved in many specialist programs offered by the school. These include Outdoor Education, School Camps, Swimming, Interschool Sports, School Productions, etc. Private piano lessons can also be accessed at school.

Pastoral care is the responsibility of all at this school. We endeavour to approach student management and discipline with a fair and just outlook for all. Every child, parent and staff member shares in the responsibility for the welfare of others. Much effort goes into developing the children's Social and Emotional Learning with proactive programs such as the Bounce Back resilience program and the Better Buddies program. Bullying is not tolerated and a clear anti-bullying policy is in place. Cyber-safety, OH&S, yard supervision and privacy are all carefully attended to. The school is fully committed to Child Safety Standards as directed under legislation. Staff members are Level Two First Aide trained and annually receive training in anaphylaxis management. The school employs a company a company called Dynamiq to train staff in emergency management and to conduct drills and provide appraisals of staff responses.

St. Theresa's Primary school welcomes parents and families at all times. We are well supported by our Advisory Board whose members are parents. 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, doing the important fundraising tasks, as well as socialising. We believe as a school that it's the atmosphere created by the community that shares these grounds which makes up the essence of the spirit which is uniquely St. Theresa's.

Our School Motto: *Do Small Things Well*

Student Motto: *Be Safe, Be Happy, Be Caring, Be Ready To Learn*



2021 TERM DATES:

Term 1: Friday 29th January to Thursday 1st April
Wed 27th Jan – Pupil Free Day
Thurs 28th Jan – ‘Goal Setting’ interviews
Fri 29th Jan – Preps at school morning only
Mon 1st Feb – All Children Prep-Gr 6 attend school



Term 2: Monday 19th April to Friday 25th June

Term 3: Monday, 12th July to Friday 17th September

Term 4: Monday 4th October to Wednesday 17th 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
(unless signed in to Before School Care)

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

11-11.30am Recess

1.30-2.10pm Lunch

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.

SCHOOL ABSENCE:

Please contact us if your child is absent from school.

If your child is away, please make contact before 9am explaining the reason for your child's absence. Contact can be made by telephoning the office, using Skoolbag App, emailing office@stalbion.catholic.edu.au or email/note to their classroom teacher. Any unexplained absences must be followed up by office staff on the day by contacting parents.

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.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Before and After School Care is available for St. Theresa's students on school premises through an outside care provider – OSHClub. Before School Care is available from 7 to 8.30am, After School Care is available from 3.15 to 6.15pm. Centrelink Childcare Benefit (CCB) and Childcare Rebate (CCR) can be applied to reduce the cost of this for your family (if eligible). For more information, contact OSHClub through their website: oshclub.com.au.

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 at www.stalbion.catholic.edu.au. School fee receipts/statements are emailed.

Skoolbag app is available from your phone's AppStore and is used to remind parents of upcoming events or other school notices. We encourage families to download our app and be aware of emails from the school office.



CareMonkey

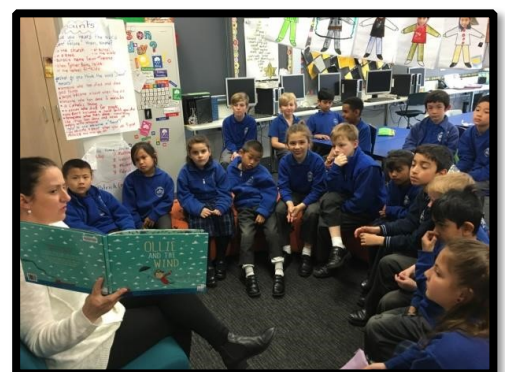
At St Theresa's we take the health and safety of our students very seriously. As such, we have adopted a new health and safety online application named CareMonkey.

CareMonkey is an innovative parent controlled electronic Permission Form for schools, clubs and other groups with a duty of care. It's an electronic version of the paper based forms for excursions, camps, interschool sport, etc. It provides parents the opportunity to update medical, emergency, dental, doctor information promptly and accurately while providing the school with instant access to the emergency information provided by you.

From the school's perspective, this information will only be visible to the relevant staff for your child and will be managed in accordance with the Privacy Act.

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.



INSURANCE:

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

SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD:

St. Theresa's has a School Advisory Board. Parents are elected 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.

SCHOOL FEES:

School Fees for 2020 are \$1,010 per family.

LEVIES:

The Student Levy for 2020 is \$405 per child. This levy covers art supplies, books, paper, classroom needs, excursions, and our swimming program (Grade Prep - 4). This Levy is payable for **each child** and is due by the end of **February**.

A Capital Levy of \$150 per family is being applied in 2020 to help cover the cost of maintenance and building improvements.

This Levy is payable for **each family** and is due by the end of **February**.

It is probable that these amounts will be increased in 2021 due to government funding changes.

School Fees and Levies can be paid using various methods such as cash, eftpos (savings, credit, cheque), cheque, internet banking transfer or by direct debit.

School Fees can be paid all upfront at the beginning of the year, by term, or in regular installments by arrangement through the office.

A Quarterly Fee Statement will be sent out via email at the beginning of each term.

Other costs include: Uniforms, Camp, Fundraising Events, etc.

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.



CANTEEN:

The school has a Canteen which operates some lunchtimes selling zooper doopers as a fundraiser for the school. 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, Thursdays 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 Uniforms are available for purchase from the PSW Store in Deer Park and online at www.psw.com.au. PSW Store is located at Unit 2, 51-53 Westwood Drive, Ravenhall (Deer Park). Please check their website for opening hours and uniform price lists.

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, white socks, black shoes, (jacket optional)
Girls: Winter Tunic or grey trousers, polo shirt, windcheater, blue tights or long white socks, black shoes, (jacket optional)

SUMMER UNIFORM: **Boys:** Grey shorts, polo shirt, white socks, black shoes, school hat
Girls: Summer dress, white socks, black shoes, school hat

SPORTS UNIFORM: **Boys and Girls:** Navy blue shorts (summer) or royal blue tracksuit pants (winter), school polo shirt, white socks, hat, runners

MISCELLANEOUS: School bag, raincoat, hair 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, Play in the Shade 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.***

SCHOOL EXCURSIONS:

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

A permission note will be sent home via CareMonkey for all excursions. Children will **NOT** be able to attend without signed permission.

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.

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 9.10am – 3.00pm all visitors must enter through the front door, sign in via the iPad located at the office and collect a visitor's badge. Visitors **MUST** sign out on leaving.

Please make sure you use the supervised crossing in Adelaide Street during drop off and pick up times.

INJURY / SICKNESS:

Parents / Guardians will be notified as soon as possible in the event of injury or sickness whilst your child is at school. In some circumstances we will require your child be picked up from school early.

It is essential that we have up-to-date medical information as well as sufficient and reliable contact phone numbers. Please inform the office if your contact details have changed, and keep your child's CareMonkey profile up to date.

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 suffer 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 template can be obtained from the office to be filled in by your doctor.

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. This is free for volunteers.

We advise that **ALL** parents obtain this check by applying via the following website:

<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.





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.

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 1 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*.

Literacy and Maths Intervention Programs are offered across the school for children who need extra support in these subjects and an EAL (English As An Additional Language) program for relevant students.

We also offer extra teacher support in Grade Prep/1 known as the 'Good Start Program' as well as in Grades 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6.

SWIMMING PROGRAM:

Each year, St. Theresa's is involved in an 8-day swimming program for Grades Prep to 4. This is always subject to booking availability and costs.

Children should take advantage of this program as it is an important part of the curriculum. Swimming is usually held in Term 4 at Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre.



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 and a Performing Arts specialist. Private piano lessons are available at an extra cost during school time.



OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM:



St. Theresa's is committed to our Outdoor Education Program. Activities vary each year.

This program includes:

Prep/1	Late stay and dinner at school
Grade 2	Full day camp
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.



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.

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 – individual 'goal setting' interview at the beginning of the year.
- Term 2 – individual parent teacher interview.
- Term 4 – optional parent teacher interview.

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.

POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR & ANTI BULLYING POLICY:

The school has a positive student behaviour approach. Both the Whole School Positive Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy are available on our school website – www.stalbion.catholic.edu.au.

