



**SACRED HEART  
SCHOOL  
CASTERTON**

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**



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

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# PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

## A Message from the Principal

Welcome and thank you for considering Sacred Heart, Casterton, as a school for your child. We look forward to many years of exciting learning experiences and appreciate the opportunity to get to know you and your family.

This booklet has been written to provide you with information that will be helpful in understanding the organisation and philosophy of Sacred Heart School.

Sacred Heart is a Catholic primary school catering for children from Foundation (Prep) to Year 6 and is located in the town of Casterton in South West Victoria. I am proud to say that the staff and students of this small vibrant school are a pleasure to work with and that this school is teeming with laughter, fun and friendship.

Sacred Heart has a rich assortment of programs, strategies and processes to make each day a positive learning experience for each child. The teaching staff and Learning Support Officers are highly skilled at assisting students to achieve their best. They are incredibly

dedicated, hard working and willing to find new ways to cater for students with diverse learning needs.

At our school, we believe a caring environment is vital for children to flourish, and as a Catholic school, we embrace Jesus Christ as our foundation and inspiration. We strive to provide excellence in education by nurturing and respecting the dignity and individuality of each person. We aim to ensure all children feel safe, valued and included. We have a strong focus on student well being by promoting positive, respectful relationships and protecting the right of all to learn.

If you choose to enrol your child at Sacred Heart, you will be warmly welcomed in the school community by all. I am confident that this hidden treasure of Casterton will provide the educational and pastoral care needs of your child. If you have further questions about the school's ability to cater for your child's individual learning needs, please feel very welcome to contact us at any time to make an appointment.

Suzie McManus  
Principal



# OUR PHILOSOPHY



At Sacred Heart School, we believe that learning is more effective if it takes place in a caring environment and where individual needs are addressed. It is our wish that as children progress through the school, they will be guided by Catholic values to reach their full potential. Our aim is that they will emerge with confidence and willingness to make worthwhile contributions to the world in which they live.

## ALL FAMILIES ARE WELCOME

Families of all Faiths, religious or non-religious, are welcome to attend Sacred Heart on the understanding that they respect the Catholic ethos of the school.

*Sacred Heart Community,  
Where Hearts are Sacred.*



# OUR VISION & MISSION

- **Our Vision**

At Sacred Heart School in partnership with our community and open to God's presence, we pursue fullness of life for all.

- **Our Mission**

Sacred Heart Catholic School uses the five areas of effective Catholic schooling to fulfil its Vision. Sacred Heart is compliant with the 'Child Safety Standards.'

- **Catholic Identity**

Inspire to be like Jesus by promoting compassion and care for all.

Continue the Mercy tradition of outreach; carrying forth Gospel values

- **Community Engagement**

At Sacred Heart we actively seek ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with families, parish and the wider community

- **Leadership And Stewardship**

Staff and school leaders work collaboratively to improve student learning and wellbeing

- **Learning And Teaching**

The school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of being a successful learner.

We provide learning experiences that are current, relevant, needs based and rigorous.

- **Wellbeing**

The school promotes and supports positive, respectful relationships between all members of the school community. The school values and protects the right of all to learn and to be safe in the teaching and learning environment. Sacred Heart School commits to providing a safe and nurturing culture for all children.



# PLAY BASED LEARNING



In 2020, Sacred Heart implemented the Walker Learning Approach (WLA) in our junior classroom. Walker Learning is a research based approach to learning, designed to provide a balance of explicit teaching of literacy, numeracy, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and other curriculum areas, with time for children to actively investigate a range of skills and experiences for life, through planned play, or projects.

'Investigation time' takes place 4 mornings per week. The aim of the WLA classroom is to promote a sense of wonder, exploration, investigation and interest by providing a rich range of materials, resources and opportunities in which children can engage. Play and active investigation gives children opportunities to develop physical competence, to explore and make sense of their world, to interact with others, to express and regulate their emotions, and develop problem solving abilities. Research shows strong links between play and foundational capacities such as memory, oral language capabilities, self-regulation, social skills and success at school in general.

The investigation stations change every 2-3 weeks and are based on the children's interests and what is being taught in other curriculum areas. The investigation areas include Dramatic play, Science & Environment, Mathematics, Construction, Tinker Table, Reading, Writing, Art & Collage and Sensory. These stations give the children a chance to extend or support the learning from all curriculum areas based on their individual needs.



# PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

## Programs and Initiatives include:

- A Restorative Practices approach to behaviour management and student wellbeing focusing on forgiveness and teaching desired behaviours
- Building respectful relationships
- Small classes to promote student engagement
- A commitment to improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students
- Sacred Heart is an OLSEL school (Oral Language: Supporting Early Literacy)
- Student Leadership Teams - Where all students have a voice and work collaboratively with staff, the school families and wider community to solve problems and better our schools.
- Staff trained in making adjustments for students with diverse learning needs.
- LSOs trained in phonological awareness and reading intervention programs.
- A student outreach program: Mini Vinnies—Students learn about raising awareness about Social Justice issues and Fundraising for; Caritas, Catholic Mission, Cancer Foundation and St Vincent de Paul Society
- 'Community Freezer,' which provides meals for families in need.
- School involvement in local community events e.g. Kelpie Parade, ANZAC Day, Casterton Show

## Response to Intervention (RTI)

At Sacred Heart, we know that while some students have a straight road to achieving their learning goals, others have a longer path to travel. We have a multi-tier approach to classroom learning, which enables teachers to identify the abilities of individual learners and provide additional instruction to learners who may benefit from support in smaller, more targeted settings.

Student achievement is closely monitored to help both teachers and students understand how their development is progressing, and to celebrate success in their learning. Teachers use this data to make decisions about a student's instructional needs and whether they may need a higher level of intervention.

Three Tiers of Intervention

**Level 1** - Good classroom teaching using high impact teaching strategies.

**Level 2** - Boost teaching for low or high achieving students, which involves an extra teacher or Learning Support Officer coming to class to take small pull out groups.

**Level 3** - Students who are well below the expected standard, are given the opportunity to attend evidence-based programs. At our school we offer MiniLit, Gillon Phonological Awareness Program, MultiLit Reading Tutor Program and ERIK.

# WESTERN TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL NETWORK

## Western Trinity Catholic School's Network

Sacred Heart School combined with St Malachy's, Edenhope, and St Joseph's, Coleraine, are now known as: The Western Trinity School Network', these three small Catholic primary schools banded together to tackle the problem of teachers working in isolation. The Western Trinity School Network has grown from termly planning meetings for teachers, to the schools becoming one PLC. From the outset, the 'Western Trinity' principals were keen to refine the joint planning sessions. All three schools embraced the PLC methodologies and practices to drive collaboration. We created a Guiding Coalition that meets fortnightly via Video Conferencing and Professional Learning Teams of teachers who meet weekly.



**Our Mantra is 'United, we all succeed.'**

## Professional Learning Community (PLC):

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are an approach to school improvement where groups of teachers work collaboratively at the school level to improve student outcomes. PLC schools start from a simple idea: students learn more when their teachers work together. Building a PLC is a proven way for schools to increase student learning by creating a culture that is:

- focussed on continuous improvement by linking the learning needs of students with the professional learning and practice of teachers
- committed to professionalism
- fuelled by collaborative expertise.





# ACHIEVEMENTS AND SPECIAL FEATURES

## SPECIAL FEATURES

- Shared playgrounds for Junior and Senior students
- Buddies Program
- Language other than English—Indonesian
- School Advisory Council combined with a Parents and Friends Association
- A whole school approach to Inquiry Learning, based on student interest and aligned with the Victorian Curriculum in History, Geography, Economics and Civics and Citizenship
- School camps and excursions for all students
- Regular sports sessions
- Opportunities to compete in district, region and state sports
- Modern gymnasium and art room
- Comprehensive swimming program
- Our school combines with our Western Trinity partner schools for three sports days each year, those being Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics.
- Sacramental Programs for Catholic children
- Parish and School Liturgies and Masses



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Educating in Faith

Sacred Heart School assists parents to develop their child's faith. Children participate in Religious Education lessons using the curriculum document called *Awakenings*, which has been provided by the Catholic Education Office Ballarat. Religious Education focuses on Life to Faith to Life. This means starting with the children's experiences, teaching about faith and relating the faith traditions into life.

## Special Needs

Children with special needs are supported and fully integrated into the life of the school. Children with specific learning, physical, emotional and/or social needs. If a student has a disability, the school makes adjustments to a child's education program so they can participate like all other children. Adjustments may be in the form of additional programs, extra one to one time with a Learning Support Officer or extra equipment, such as, a dedicated iPad for use in class.

## Camps and Excursions

Sacred Heart School has a sequential camps program. This program begins in Foundation and Year one, with day excursions. Year two and three children have an overnight camp in the local region, travelling up to 2 hours away. The Year four, five and six students attend camps with the theme of bush, sea or city for up to three nights in an area ranging from 1 hour away to Ballarat or Melbourne.

## School Counsellor

Our school has a school counsellor. This service provides wellbeing support for students and families in need. It also provides wellbeing tips to support staff in their teaching roles.



# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

## “Parents are the first educators of their children.”

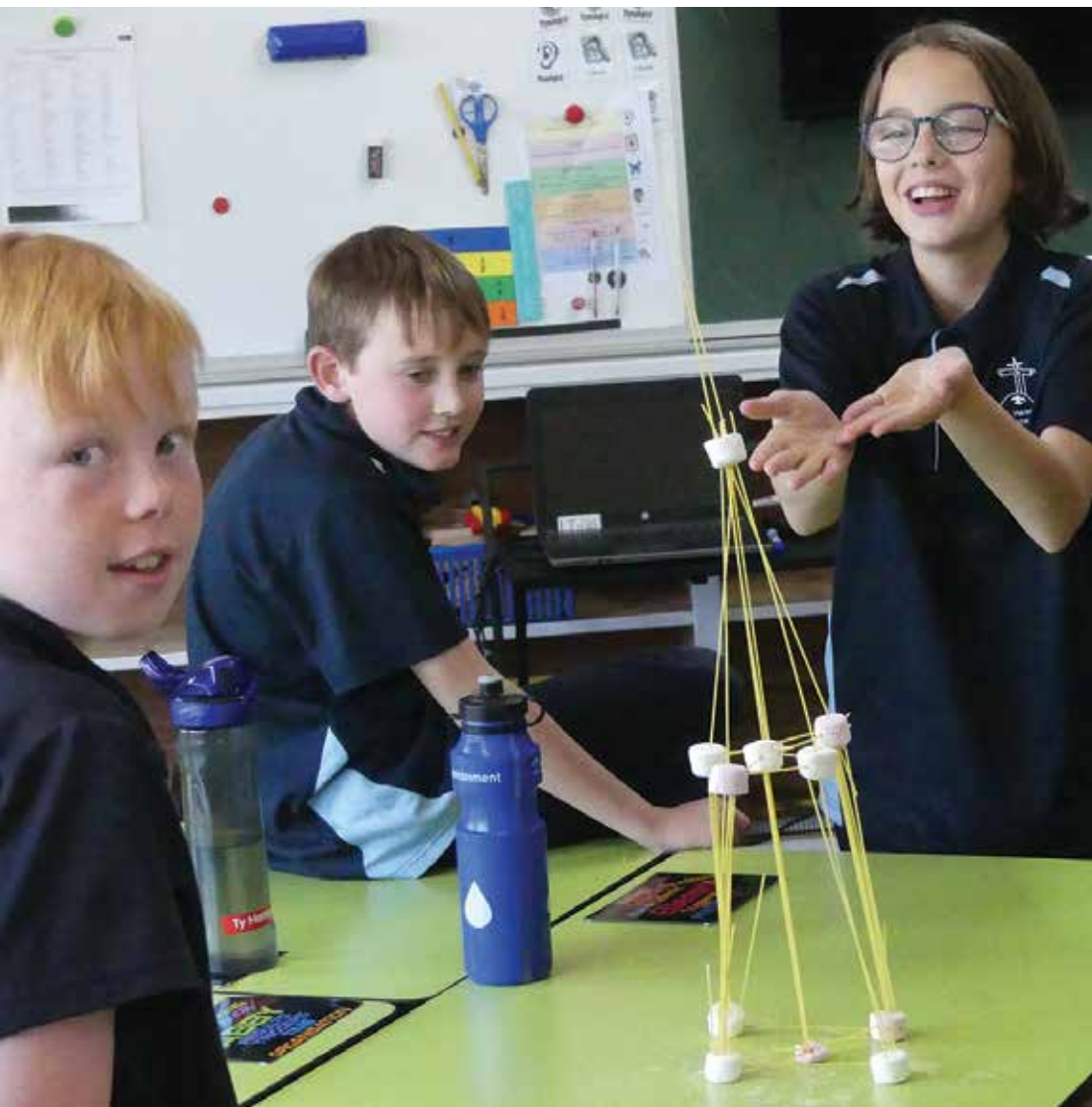
At Sacred Heart School we believe that parents are our most important partners in children’s development. Parents are warmly invited to be involved in their child’s education and in the life of the school.

Parent satisfaction with the school is rated as being a major strength at the school, ranked in the top 8% for all Victorian Catholic primary schools

Sending your precious children to school is always a big step and we like to think that you see the school as partners in the ongoing development of your child/ren. Therefore, parents and carers are always welcome at any time, we want you and your child/ren to feel at home.

## Enrolment

Children who will be five years of age, on or before April 30th of the year they commence Foundation (Preparatory), may be enrolled at school. Birth Certificates, up to date Immunisation records from MyGov and Baptism Certificates (if applicable) are to be presented when submitting enrolment forms to the school. A comprehensive transition program between kindergarten and school is offered to all children at the end of each school year so the students beginning their school journey are well prepared.





# SACRED HEART SCHOOL CASTERTON

The staff, children and community wishes to thank you for considering Sacred Heart as an educational option for your child. We sincerely hope this booklet has assisted you in making an informed decision about your child's educational needs. If you would like to enrol your child at Sacred Heart please complete the enrolment form and return it to the school office. If you have any further questions, please contact us.

