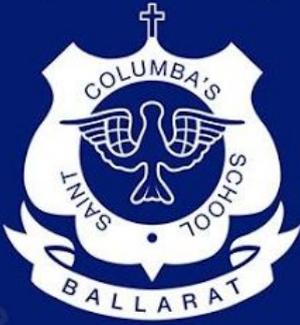
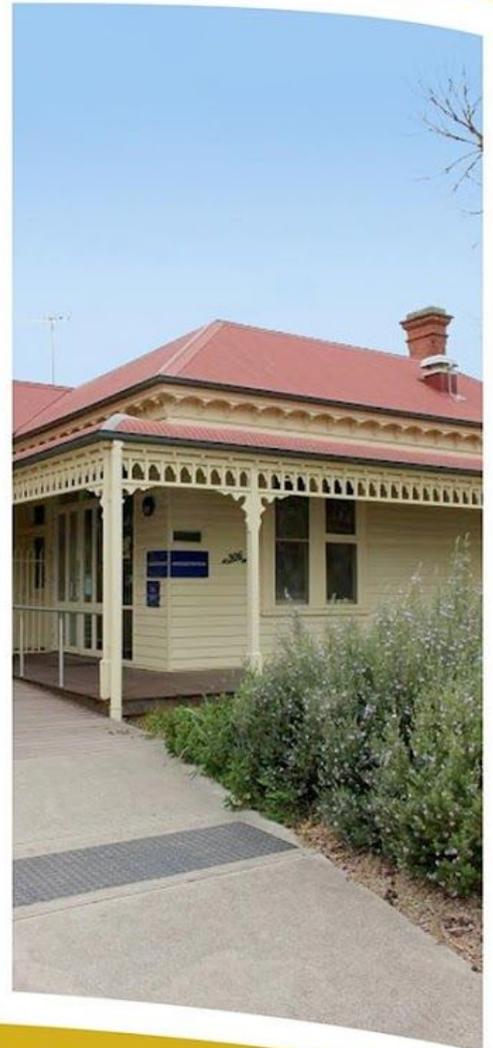


"The whole of life
belongs to God."



St Columba's School

Engaging • Inspiring • Empowering



Parent Handbook

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Welcome to our School Community

Dear Parents & Guardians,



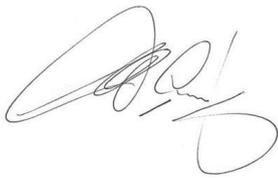
On behalf of the St Columba's community, I welcome you to our parish school. The parish thanks you for the commitment you have made to our school. I hope that our association will be a fruitful one.

I hope we can share in a partnership that develops your child socially, academically and spiritually. Our aim is to enable your child to make a valuable contribution to a world of peace, justice and beauty.

As a parent or caregiver in our community, I encourage you to become an active participant in your child's education and in the St Columba's community. There are many and various ways in which you can contribute and the more you are able to do so, the more your child and our school will benefit.

I hope that you find this information booklet useful and that it provides you with the relevant and pertinent information about our school.

Yours sincerely,



Fr. Marcello Colasante
St Columba's Governing Authority



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We welcome you and your child to St Columba's School and hope your association with our school will be a happy and rewarding one.

As a Catholic school, St Columba's is a community of faith which openly recognises Christ and seeks to live and proclaim the Gospel message. Underpinning everything that happens in our school is our commitment to making the presence of Christ obvious to everyone who enters. We promote this in the way the children treat each other, in their relationships with staff and parents and in the atmosphere of respect, co-operation and friendship that permeates throughout our daily activities.

Every child is unique. Every child is special with different needs, interests and particular characteristics that set them apart. At St Columba's, we celebrate these differences and, through a broad and versatile curriculum, ensure that we cater for them. Our teachers place students at the centre of the learning process and are committed to the growth and development of the whole child: emotionally, academically, physically, socially and spiritually.

We recognise the unique contribution made by parents to the life of our school and to the learning of the children. At St Columba's, staff, students and parents work together in a spirit of co-operation in the task of enabling our children to reach their full potential. We strongly encourage you to become as involved in the life of our school community as you can.

Thank you for selecting St Columba's School for your child's primary education. We look forward to our partnership in their learning journey.

Kind Regards,



Shaun Mohr
Principal



Quick Guide to St Columba's

Principal	Shaun Mohr
Assistant Principal	Julie Cooper
Business Manager	Chris Jenkins
Administration/Reception	Kathy Haintz – Cathy Coffey

Contact information

School address	306 Howard St Soldiers Hill, 3350
School telephone	03 5332 4894
Email	office@scballarat.catholic.edu.au
Website	www.scballarat.catholic.edu.au

School Houses

Donegal (Green)

Argyle (Blue)

Clonard (Red)

Iona (Gold)

School hours

First bell	8:45am	
School commences	8:50 am	(Classes begin)
Break 1	10:50am	
Break 2	1:30pm	
Dismissal	3:15pm	
End of term dismissal	2:30pm	(except term 4)

2019 Term dates

Term 1

29 January, staff resume and School Office opens

30 January Staff Professional Development Day

31 January - 1 February , compulsory student testing (by appointment)

5 February, classes commence all year levels.

5 April, End of Term 1

Term 2 23 April – 28 June

Term 3 15 July – 20 September

Term 4 7 October – 20 December

Public holidays

Term 1 Labour Day Monday 11 March

Term 2 ANZAC Day Thursday 25 April

Queen's Birthday Monday 10 June

Term 4 Ballarat Show Day Friday 8 November

Engaging, Inspiring, Empowering

At St Columba's we believe that all children will be successful. We personalise learning in a stimulating environment to develop the whole child. Collaboration and shared ownership underpin all we do.

We aim to provide an environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life, without any concern for their safety.

We are a community invited to a relationship with God and are called to bring the Gospel to life.

Who was St Columba?

Columba was born in Donegal a member of the royal house of Ireland in 521 AD. His family name was Argyle. His father was a chieftain and his grandmother the daughter of a king. In 545AD, Columba was ordained and he founded his first monastery, Clonard in the area of his birth. In 563AD, he migrated to Iona off the coast of Scotland and with twelve companions, developed a Christian community. He established a number of monasteries in Ireland and Scotland. He was a skilled writer and poet. He delighted in the beauties of nature he believed "the whole of life belonged to God". He died on June 9, 597.

Our House groups, Donegal (Green House), Argyle (Blue House), Clonard (Red House) and Iona (Gold House) are named after a significant link with St. Columba's life.

St Columba's Blessing

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you

Deep peace of the shining stars to you

Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you

Deep peace of the flowing air to you

Deep peace of the bright blue sky to you

Deep peace of the Prince of Peace to you



Our History

The history of our school goes back over 100 years. The Lydiard Street site, on which St Columba's stands, was purchased by the Bishop of Ballarat in 1910 for the sum of £500. Work on a school building on the corner of Armstrong and Gregory streets, started that same year.

On January 31, 1911, St Columba's School was opened by the Sisters of Mercy who travelled each day from Ballarat East to teach students.

The original school building was built to accommodate 120 students and three teaching Sisters from the Sisters of Mercy convent in Ballarat East- Sr Bonaventure, Sr Joseph and Sr Augustine-were charged with educating them.

For the next eighty years, a strong bond was established between the Sisters of Mercy and the parish of Ballarat North until the last Sister retired from her role as Principal in 1980.

The State Inspectors' Report Book of 1913 notes that enrolment was 128 students with an absentee list of 88 pupils home with whooping cough and measles on the day of his visit!

In 1919 a wooden church, built in 1892 as the original Redemptorist Monastery Chapel in Wendouree was moved adjacent to the school on the site of the current St Columba's church.

By 1956 there were 442 pupils enrolled at the school. The average number of pupils in the junior grades was 60. To cope with these numbers, seven new classrooms were built.

In 2011, St Columba's celebrated its centenary and the school community was delighted to complete a major building and redevelopment program. The heritage Federation style convent on Howard Street was renovated and extended to incorporate a new administration wing, staff area and multi-purpose learning space.

In 2016/17 the Columba Wing was fully refurbished. Our 3/4 and 5/6 Learning Communities now work in beautiful open flexible learning environments. As part of this project, a new 'purpose built' Foundation Learning Space was also developed and opened mid 2017.

In 2019, the school will have an enrolment of approximately 324 students and a passionate and committed staff of 42.



School dates and times

2019 Term dates

Term 1	29 January, staff resume and School Office opens
	30 Jan – Staff Professional Development Day
	31 Jan- 1 February, compulsory student testing (by appointment)
	5 February, classes commence all year levels
	5 April, end Term 1 (Holy Thursday)
Term 2	23 April – 28 June
Term 3	15 July – 20 September
Term 4	7 October – 20 December

Foundation days

The children in Foundation have full days, however they do not attend on Wednesdays during Term 1 except during short weeks. For example, the Labour Day holiday week.

Curriculum days

Children do not come to school on curriculum days, which are used for staff professional development and training. There are usually 4 curriculum days per year. Where possible these will be finalised prior to the beginning of each school semester. Notification will be sent out via the school newsletter, posted on the St Columba's Website and the St Columba's app.

School timetable

8.45am	First bell rings
8.50am	2 nd bell and school day begins (children should be in their classroom)
8.50-10.20am	1 ½ hour block of learning
10.20-10.50am	Break No 1 (30 minutes take snack outside)
10.50-12.50pm	2 hour block of learning
12.50-1.05pm	Supervised eating time (lunch 15 minutes)
1.05-1.45pm	Break No 2 (30 min outside play)
1.45-3.15pm	1 ½ hour block of learning

Please note: On the last day of each term, the school day finishes at 2:30pm. (Except for Term 4)

School ground supervision

Students will be supervised in the school ground during the following times:

8:30am – 8:45am Before school starts

10:50am -11:30am Break 1

1:30pm – 2:15pm Break 2

3:15pm – 3:30pm Gates after school

Please note: Morning and lunchtime play usually take place outside in the school yard under the supervision of teachers on yard duty. The exception is wet days and extremely hot days when children are supervised in classrooms.

School drop offs and pick ups

It is important that your child is at school by 8:45am ready to begin school at 8:50am. After 8:50am all school gates will be locked. If your child arrives after this time a parent/adult will need to go to the office to fill in the Late Arrival Register via the Chrome Book for their child. If picking up your child please arrive promptly at 3:15pm when school finishes. If it is necessary to collect your child from school at any time during the day prior to 3:15pm you are required to sign them out via the Chrome Book for Early Departures at the office prior to collecting your child.

Absentees

If your child is unable to attend school, please notify the school prior to 8:45am by phoning the office on 5332 4894, emailing office@scballarat.catholic.edu.au via PAM or use the 'St Columba's Ballarat North' smartphone app.

The importance of punctuality

Good social habits should be established as soon as possible and we ask that you make every attempt to be punctual at all times. Arriving on time for school is important for a number of reasons. The first 10 minutes of school is a vital time of the day when the day's routine and structure is established. It is a time for 'tuning in' and focusing on the learning intentions for the day. It is very difficult for children arriving late to school to 'catch up' on this missed information. Furthermore when your child is late it disrupts other students who are engaged in their own learning.

After school care

St Columba's families who require After School Care can access the service through the Ballarat YMCA.

The After School Care Program is located at Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School (OLHC), Wendouree in the Mercy Performing Arts Centre and is open to all children in years Foundation-6.

Casual bookings are received and permanent bookings can also be made.

St Columba's children enrolled in the program, wait with the teacher on duty at the Armstrong St gate. The teacher supervises the children to board the mini bus that will take them up to OLHC. Children are picked up from OLHC by their parents/carers.

Contact the YMCA reception for enquiries, bookings and fees: Phone: 03 5329 2800



Getting to and from school safely

Sustainable transport

St Columba's actively encourages students and families to use healthy, safe and sustainable modes of transport to travel to and from school. These include walking, cycling or travelling via scooter or skateboard. All bikes, scooters and skateboards should be parked in the designated area located just to the right as you enter the school gate via Armstrong Street North.

Road safety

All students and families are expected to comply with all road rules when travelling to and from school. This includes:

Obedying parking signs and road rules. Parking too close to the corner makes it dangerous for students crossing the road.

Wearing a properly fitted helmet when riding a scooter, bicycle or skateboard.

Using designated pedestrian crossings. A school crossing supervisor is present at the crossing in Lydiard Street morning and afternoon. Teachers supervise crossings areas in Gregory Street, Armstrong Street and Howard Street till 3.30pm.

St Columba's Staff

Teaching Staff for 2019:

Foundation	Michelle McMahon / Whitney Bruty
Foundation	Anne Petrie
1/2	Timothy Gilbert
1/2	Torie Waight
1/2	Megan Bourke
1/2	Emily Mullane
3/4	Lucy Quanchi
3/4	Sarah Jones
3/4	Nicky Russell
3/4	Alison Thorpe
5/6	Kelly Leoncini
5/6	Shane Bruty / Susan Vowles
5/6	Cleta Forrest
5/6	Lucy Quinlan

Specialist Program

All students will participate in specialist programs in the areas of the Arts (Visual & Performing, including music), Japanese and PE/Sport.

Specialist Teachers

PE/Sport

Wayne Lynch

Performing Arts/Choir

Ruth Hackwill

Visual Arts
Japanese

Clare Fuller
Erica Hare

Positions of Leadership

Principal	Shaun Mohr
Principal	Kim Butler
Religious Education Leaders	Torie Waight / Shane Bruty
Learning & Teaching Leader (P-2)	Julie Cooper
Learning & Teacher Leader (3-6)	Susan Vowles
Additional Needs Coordinator	Megan Walton
Wellbeing Leader	Julie Cooper
ICT Leader	Shane Bruty
Sustainability Coordinator	TBA
School Social Worker	Narelle White

Learning Support Officers (LSO's)

Raelene Cushion
Maryanne McKenzie
Cathy Harris
Kim Taylor
Kelly Stevens
Louisa Godbold
Tony Davis
Marge Crosier

Library Technician	Sarah Gale
Library Assistant	Jayne Fuller

Administration/Office	Chris Jenkins Kathy Haintz Cathy Coffey
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Leadership team

The Leadership Team comprises of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Religious Education Leaders and Learning & Teaching Leaders. The Leadership Team's core purpose is to enable the living out of the Catholic faith, to make a positive difference to each individual child, to empower the staff and to strategically plan for school improvement.

Student Learning

Our Approach to Learning

At St Columba's we believe it is an essential element of a child's education to engage all members of the community in a child's learning. We work to create an educational environment that is driven by the identified needs and interests of our students, drawing upon the Walker Learning Approach (WLA).

Preparing students to succeed within a rapidly changing social and technical environment, our focus is on developing critical thinking skills, problem solving, risk taking and resilience as well as the integration of technology in the daily processes of the classroom. There is also a strong focus on building connections through student learning experiences to the real world and broader community in which we live.

As a Catholic school it is important to us that student learning reflects the vision of our school/parish community and an authentic understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus.

We aim to maximise student potential in a safe and caring community in which academic achievement, positive self-esteem, cultural diversity and the rights of all are highly valued and respected.

Learning Communities

Foundation Learning Community

1/2 Learning Community

3/4 Learning Community

5/6 Learning Community

The Walker Learning Approach

Over the last few years a great deal of research has gone into the most effective way to engage and teach Primary School students. It is clear that students learn best when they are most engaged, and by using The Walker Learning Approach (WLA), students are involved in exciting, personalised and authentic learning experiences that reflect the particular needs, interests and strengths of the individual child.

The Walker Learning Approach is based on developmentally appropriate practice. It seeks to ensure that children are highly motivated and are learning how to learn through a mixture of active investigations and formal instruction. The Walker Learning Approach is based on student empowerment, engagement and ownership and is supported by teacher direction and instruction.

For our Foundation to Year 2 students this means that all students will be involved in active, hands-on experiences known as Investigations four times a week.

The experiences of the children and the explicit teaching that takes place during Investigations are used as a springboard into the formal teaching of the day.

Investigations require intentional rigorous planning and include:

Tuning in – reflect and discuss current learning. This provides children an opportunity to use the language of learning and start the day tuned in to current learning intentions. The teacher has an emphasis on the day's focus children and tunes them in to their investigation work for the day by discussing the area they would like to work in and what their plans are. The reporter and photographer will be allocated a task by the teacher, which will be carefully chosen to match the individuals learning needs and current learning intentions, making links with some learning that will happen later in the day.

Investigation time – children will have approximately 45 minutes to engage in self-directed learning. They are free to decide on the area they would like to work at and there are often ongoing projects that the children return to work on. The teacher spends time scaffolding each focus child and the reporter and photographer in their learning.

Reflection – The focus children, reporter and photographer report back to the class on their learning while the teacher draws out explicit links to Literacy, Numeracy or developmental learning intentions. This is the most important time for the children to see the connections between what they have been learning through Investigations with formal learning.

Rosters are created to ensure all children are a focus child at least once a fortnight as well as an opportunity to take on the role of photographer and reporter. We encourage families to discuss these special moments with their children.

In Years 3-6, students will continue to have their normal explicit teaching sessions for literacy and numeracy, in addition to a subject focus area such as science or history. Students are provided with some content on this subject and are then given the opportunity to link in with their own interests and talents to negotiate with their teacher, an Educational Research

Project (ERP). Part of the project involves an "Expo", organised by the students which provides an opportunity to showcase the learning that has taken place as well as present their various artefacts.

In practice, the Walker Learning Approach uses a mix of active hands on project based work, alongside group clinic times, personal reflection times, projects, skill instruction and other learning experiences provide by the school throughout the day.

We want children in these years to have a sense of empowerment and ownership of their own learning and to view the learning process as meaningful to their own lives now and for the future.

For more information on the Walker Learning Approach visit www.walkerlearning.com.au

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

St Columba's operates under a model known as Professional Learning Communities (PLC). This model focus' on three core concepts with a particular focus on learning, collaboration and student outcomes.

As a community of learners we recognise the added value that comes when all teachers have a shared responsibility for all students to be successful learners. This model is further supported through our open learning environments allowing staff greater opportunities to work collaboratively together to both support and learn from one another.

The PLC learning cycle begins with the curriculum, identifying what is considered essential learning. Learning is then targeted at individual student's current point of need, ensuring a personalised curriculum is provided with regular monitoring and feedback. This process supports students in becoming independent learners through the use of targets and goal setting. Wherever needed additional time and support is provided to ensure ALL students learn to high levels.

Religious Education

All primary and secondary Catholic schools in the Ballarat Diocese follow the Awakenings Education Curriculum for the teaching of Religious Education. This program is provided to support and enliven learning and teaching in Religious Education throughout the Diocese of Ballarat.

The children from Grades Foundation to Grade 6 have the opportunity to participate in 2.5 hours of Religious Education learning during each week. In addition, throughout the year students organise and participate in school led masses and liturgies.

All baptised Catholic children at St Columba's are offered the opportunity to participate in the Sacramental Program (Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation) coordinated by the St Columba's Parish.

Enrolment information will be provided to families through the school and parish newsletters. For any questions regarding the Sacramental Program, please contact the St Columba's Parish Office on 53311012.

Physical Education

The physical education (PE) program is a comprehensive physical skill development and fitness program. All children from Foundation to Year 6 have a PE/Sport session with a specialist teacher each week. Foundation students also take part in a Perceptual Motor Program (PMP) during the year. In addition all children in St Columba's participate in the annual Athletics Carnival. This is usually organised late in Term 1 and takes place at Llanberris Athletic Reserve.

For children who are interested, there are a number of opportunities to represent the school and participate in sports outside of school hours. Some of these activities are coordinated by the school, for example netball. Others by parents for example basketball and Futsal or private organisations such as the Kelly Sports Program. Opportunities to be involved in these groups will be promoted through the school newsletter.

The Arts

All children from Foundation to Grade 6 participate in a visual and performing arts (including music) session with a specialist teacher each week.

A major school concert is held biennially. Every alternate year, a Visual and Performing Arts Showcase is held to celebrate the student's achievements in these areas.

Any students from Grades 3-6 who love to sing, are able to join the St Columba's School choir. The Choir is a non-auditioning choir with a focus on musicality and singing for pleasure. The choir perform at school events, masses and community events such as The Ballarat Choral Festival and Royal South Street.

Mr Maurice Cowie has a private arrangement to teach keyboard to children from Grade 2 onwards during school hours. These lessons take place in small groups (2-4 students) and a concert is held at the end of the year where each child has the opportunity to perform a solo. For details regarding keyboard lesson including tuition fees, please contact the office.

Languages (Japanese)

All students from Foundation to Grade 6 will participate in 60 mins of Japanese each week with a specialist Japanese speaking teacher.

Digital Education and Cyber Safety

At St Columba's we see technology as a powerful learning support. As such, we aim to incorporate the latest ICT resources in order to enhance our teaching and learning environments. Currently we have a student to device ratio of 1:1 in the senior school, 1:2 in the middle school and 1:3 in the junior school. This includes a mix of iPads and Apple Mac Books (laptops).

In the Foundation – Year 2 area students use these devices in a variety of ways including for research, the use of our online reading app Raz-Kids and for their role throughout investigations. In the Year 3-6 learning community, students also use the devices for research and apps including Raz-Kids and i-Movie for creation. A key use of technology is in the support of collaborative learning. To help facilitate this, each Year 3 to 6 student has a Google for Education account. This gives them the ability to email and use online applications such as Google Docs and Forms in a safe online environment to share their work with other students throughout the 3-6 area. The learning environments throughout the school are fitted with either an Interactive Smartboard or a 55 inch flat screen TV that has an Apple Mac Mini attached to them. Students make use of the large screens regularly, connecting to them via their device to share and collaborate on their work. The school also has a video conferencing unit that allows us to build connections and links throughout the world bringing experts into the classroom.

At St Columba's smart, safe, responsible use of ICT is essential. Students regularly participate in cyber safety sessions throughout the year and safe technology use is a key component of our school's culture. The students and parents are also required to sign the Digital Education policy, which is discussed with the students at the start of each year.

Excursions and incursion

St Columba's will hold a number of excursions/incursions to enrich your child's education through real life experiences. These activities are designed to simulate and motivate learning, to provide experiences not readily available, to help children understand the relevance of curriculum to the wider community and to develop social skills in a real life setting. All children are expected to participate in school activities. The cost of excursions/incursions is included as part of the annual school fees.

Permission forms

Every year parents will be asked to sign a Parental Authority and Consent form via. This form provides permission for children participating in all activities and excursions within the Ballarat City area and the travelling to and from these activities including walking and travelling by bus. All activities will be advertised beforehand via the school newsletter and school app. Separate signed permission will be required via Caremonkey for all excursions that take place outside of the City of Ballarat, and any travel by private car.

Assessments

All students participate in a one-to-one Mathematics Assessment with their teacher at the start of the school year. This assessment is designed to measure the progress of your child and identify any barriers to learning. For families with more than one child, the interviews can be scheduled concurrently.

On-going standardised and formal testing is conducted throughout the year

It is a Federal government requirement that students in Years 3 and 5 (primary school) and 7 and 9 (secondary school) participate in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).



Student leadership

There are a number of opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and passions.

School captains

There are two school captains and two vice-captains elected by students and the staff at the end of each year. These four students represent the school at a number of functions and greet and guide important visitors to our school. They also lead school assemblies and other similar events.

The Voice

Each class elects a representative to sit on the Student Representative Council known as The Voice. This group discusses areas of concern to students and provides advice to the School Leadership Team and feeds back information to each class.

House Captains

Each house at school (Donegal, Clonard, Iona and Argyle) is represented by two House Captains. These students help the sports teacher organise sporting events and represent their houses at these events.

Environmental Reps

Each class has two Environmental Representatives. These students meet as a committee to discuss and organise environmental initiatives within the school.

Arts Council

Each class nominates a representative to attend Arts Council meetings. This group is focused on integrating arts initiatives within the school.

Choir Captains

Each year, the Choir members vote for two Choir Captains who are usually Grade 6 Students. These Captains assist the Choir Conductor at rehearsals and during performances.

Mini Vinnies

Students in Grades 3-6 who are interested in social justice are able to nominate to join the Mini Vinnies. Mini Vinnies students look for opportunities to help those in need within the school, local or international community.

Communication between Parents and Staff

Formal Reporting

Each term a formal method of reporting is used to advise how your child is progressing at school:

Term 1: Parent –teacher conferences take place

Term 2: Formal reports are sent home at the end of term

Term 3: Three-way conversations (parent-teacher-child) are held early in the term

Term 4: Formal reports are sent home at the end of term

Additionally, for students with special needs regular Parent Support Group (PSG) meetings are held.

School diaries

Each student has a personal diary given to them at the start of each year. This is used to record upcoming events and also as a means of communicating with your child's teacher. Diaries are checked by the class teachers daily. **Students in the 5/6 Learning Community make use of targeted resilience project diaries incorporating gratitude and mindfulness activities**

Meeting with your child's teacher

If you have any concerns/questions about your child you do not need to wait until a formal method of reporting takes place. Additional communication can take place at the request of a parent/carer or the teacher.

Step 1: Ask the teacher if you can arrange a time that is suitable to you both for a meeting. This could be done before school or after school. If you are working, you may like to forward a note, write in your child's diary or leave a message at the office for the class teacher to return your call so that you can make arrangements to meet. Individual teachers are not expected to meet with parents in the evenings.

Step 2: Inform the teacher about the nature of your inquiry. Teachers care about your child and want to know if there are any issues which may have arisen.

Step 3: A positive outcome for all involved will occur if each party is willing to listen to the other's view and all work towards finding a solution that is in the best interests of your child.

Meeting with the Principal

There may be times when you wish to speak with the Principal. For example matters that may involve family, health, finance and other personal issues. To speak with the Principal please contact the Office to make an appointment and, if appropriate, inform the Office staff of the nature of your concern/query.

Keeping informed – what's going on in the school community

For general information (not specifically relating to your child) there are a number of ways you can keep up to date with what's going on:

The school newsletter link is emailed to parents every second Wednesday and is posted on the St Columba's school website and on the school app. The newsletter communicates important information to parents about what is happening within the school.

School app. Download the 'St Columba's Ballarat North' app from the Apple store or Google Play store.

The St Columba's website. Visit www.scballarat.catholic.edu.au

Facebook page. Like 'St Columba's Ballarat North' on Facebook.



Staying in touch

Smartphone App

Our App 'St Columba's, Ballarat North' is powered by SkoolBag and provides access to a whole range of information at the touch of a button on your smart phone and/or tablet. We encourage you to download from Apple "App Store" or Google "Play Store" and explore. This is our most commonly used source for communication. Please ensure you request 'push notifications'.

Facebook

Our 'St Columba's Ballarat North' Facebook page will allow us to post information in real time, share celebrations and create an online community for those who can't always make it into the school grounds.

To start following our Facebook page:

1. If you don't have one already you will need to set-up your own Facebook account
2. Type 'St Columba's Ballarat North' in the search window.
3. Click on 'Like' our page
4. You will then receive our posts in your newsfeed.
5. We encourage you to share, like and comment on our posts, **but please no tagging**. A full list of guidelines will be circulated to families or can be obtained from the school office.

A 'Social Media' approval form, will need to be completed advising if you are happy for your child or children's photo to appear in Facebook posts. No names will be used in any posts.

Support for children and families

At St Columba's we believe that education is about considering the whole child. The Catholic Education Office Ballarat have a strong and committed welfare team that works with a range of organisations to provide the necessary support for students and their families both at school and home. Students and families at St Columba's are able to access any of these services when needed. If you have an issue you would like to discuss or feel you or your child needs additional support please contact either the Principal, Shaun Mohr or Additional Needs Coordinator, Megan Walton.

Our School Social Worker is Narelle White. Narelle is a trained counsellor who is able to provide individual counselling sessions to students and families. Narelle will work two days per week from 8:30am - 4:00pm (currently Tuesday & Wednesday). If you feel your child might benefit from working with Narelle, please contact the school office. All enquires will be handled with the strictest confidence.

Specialist support for students with a disability

Some students need additional support to help them meet their potential and extra funding is available through the Catholic Education Office for students who meet the criteria for the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Program.

To be eligible for funding through this program, the student must have a significant intellectual, sensory, physical, social or emotional impairment or more than one of those impairments.

The objective of the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Program is to improve the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students, particularly in literacy and numeracy, by contributing funding for additional teaching and learning assistance.

Applications for funding are made on the student's behalf by our Special Needs Co-ordinator, Megan Walton. Parents/family or Carers are closely involved in this process.

If you believe your child may be eligible for additional funding under the LNSLN Program, please contact Megan Walton by email mwalton@scballarat.catholic.edu.au

Wellbeing team

The Wellbeing Team consists of the Principal Shaun Mohr, Well Being Coordinator Nicky Russell, the School Social Worker Narelle White and other interested staff. The Wellbeing team meets regularly to ensure that wellbeing continues to be seen as a priority at St Columba's.

Becoming involved in the school

At St Columba's we are fortunate to have a very active and engaged parent community. We strive at all times to be welcoming and encourage parents and caregivers to use their gifts and talents to contribute to the life of the school. Following are some of the opportunities to become involved in the St Columba's school community:

Parents & Friends

St Columba's has a very active Parents & Friends committee. This group holds a meeting every four weeks and supports the school through fundraising and social activities. We encourage all parents wherever possible to attend these meetings and support this group.

In addition, you can support the school by volunteering to help in the uniform shop or joining the icy pole selling roster during Term 1 & 4.

Classroom co-ordinators

In each classroom, parent coordinators work with the Parents and Friends executive and classroom teacher to help coordinate fundraising and special event activities.

Classroom helpers program

There are a number of ways you can help out in the classroom. For example, volunteering weekly to help with literacy activities or running a once-off clinic with students. A parent helpers program is run at the start of the school year to provide parent volunteers with a frame-work for helping in classrooms. In addition we require all classroom helpers to have a current working with children check. Applications are available online via the Department of Justice Website (see below). Volunteers are also required to complete the schools online volunteer's module. This can be accessed via the school's website under the school community tab, child safe school, volunteering at St Columba's. When you fill this out you will be sent an email with the link to the online module. This must be completed before you can help in any capacity at the school.

School Advisory Council

The Advisory Council meets twice a term. This group supports and advises the Principal and the Leadership Team in setting the strategic direction of the school and developing future goals.

Working with Children Check

If you are assisting in the classroom or attending excursions you will require a current Working with Children Card.

If you do not have a Card you will need to apply via the Department of Justice website www.departmentofjustice.vic.gov.au and follow the links to begin the process.

Once you receive your card, please bring it into the school office in order for a copy to be made for our records.

You will also need to complete an online module under the Child Safe Standards which the link can be found on our school website or the office staff will answer any questions in relation to this.

Attending school events

Participating in school events is a great way to be involved in the St Columba's community. Some of the activities held regularly are:

Technology fee \$115 per child

Book and stationery fee \$170 per child

Excursion fee \$40 per child

Outdoor education fee:

Foundation – Grade 2 \$35 per child

Grades 3 / 4 \$120 per child

Grades 5 / 6 \$235 per child

Financial support

If there is difficulty meeting the school fee, please contact the Principal who will arrange for payment of a fee which you can afford. This contact will be handled with the strictest confidence.

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat offers a Catholic Education Family Fee Assistance Scheme. If the Parent or Carer of at St Columba's student holds a Health Care Card or Pension card, then that family is able to apply for the Family Fee Assistance Scheme. Please contact Chris in the office for more information. All applications are handled with the strictest of confidence.

School Uniform

Summer (Term 1 & Term4) |

Winter (Term 2 & Term 3)

Girls

(option1)

Navy & white check dress
Royal blue woollen jumper with school emblem
Plain white socks
Black school shoes
Royal blue hat with school emblem

Gold polo shirt with school emblem
Royal blue woollen jumper with school emblem
School tartan tunic / skirt
Navy tights
Black school shoes

(option 2)

Navy blue shorts
Gold polo shirt with school emblem
Royal blue woollen jumper with school emblem
Plain white socks

Black school shoes
Royal blue hat with school emblem

Summer Uniform

Winter Uniform



Boys**Summer**

Navy blue shorts
 Gold polo shirt with school emblem
 Royal blue woollen jumper with school emblem
 Plain white socks
 Black school shoes
 Royal blue hat with school emblem

Winter

Navy school pants
 Gold polo shirt with school emblem
 Royal blue woollen jumper with school emblem
 Navy socks
 Black school shoes

Girls &**Boys****Sports (All Terms)**

Royal blue rugby jumper with school emblem
 Royal blue track pants (straight leg or cuff)
 Navy blue shorts
 Gold polo shirt with school emblem
 Plain white sports socks
 Runners
 Royal blue hat with school emblem

Accessories

Royal blue backpack with school emblem
 All hair longer than shoulder length must be tied back. **Hair ribbons and headbands to be blue or yellow only. (No white)**
 Jewellery is limited to a watch
 For safety reasons only gold or silver studs and small sleepers are to be worn in pierced ears
 No nail polish

Purchasing uniforms

All St Columba's school uniform items can be purchased from the St Columba's Uniform Shop which is located upstairs in the Columba Wing. The uniform shop is open on Tuesday mornings from 8:30am - 9:00am and Thursday afternoons from 3:00pm - 3:30pm. If you prefer, you can leave an order at the office and it will be filled the next time the shop is open and can be collected from the office. The price list and order form can be downloaded from the St Columba's website.

Eftpos is available at the uniform shop or the office.

Second hand uniforms are also available for sale and purchase through the shop.

School uniform is a parental responsibility

If a student is not wearing correct uniform a written note explaining the reason must be given to the child's teacher or the school office.

Don't forget to label!

All removable clothing, lunchboxes, containers, bags and water bottles must be clearly marked with your child's name. Iron-on labels, permanent marker and laundry pens are best. A few minutes spent in marking your child's belongings will save worry and expense.

St Columba's is a Sun Smart School

A school logo Hat is compulsory for all children to wear in Term 1 and Term 4. Children who do not have their school hat, will be directed to sit under shelter.

Sunscreen with a SPF 30+ will be provided by the school for the use of the children.

Children with allergies are asked to provide their own sunscreen.

Lost property

Did your child come home without a windcheater, jumper, lunchbox, socks? If your child has lost any belongings, please check the Lost Property Box located near the school office and also the Junior Learning Communities.

Personal Belongings

Occasionally children bring expensive items to school. These can be easily damaged or lost. We advise children **NOT** to bring these items to school. Private property brought to school by students is not insured. The school does not accept responsibility for any loss.

Food at School

Help establish good eating habits for your child

Schools play a vital role in educating children in healthy eating behaviours and parents play a vital role in providing their children with a healthy and balanced food for snack and lunch. We believe school age is the perfect time for children to learn and establish healthy eating behaviours.

Anaphylaxis and nut products

St Columba's is a "Nut Aware School". We have a number of students at St Columba's who have a severe allergy to all nuts and nut products. Even exposure to very small amounts could be serious and life threatening for them. It is essential that we all play a role in supporting these children and their families with this very important issue. As a result of the seriousness of this issue, we ask that no parent send products to school that have nuts listed on the ingredients section of the packaging.

Packaging

St Columba's encourages 'nude' food. Students are requested to bring their lunch and snacks in re-usable containers to reduce rubbish at school and minimise rubbish going to landfill. To encourage 'nude' food, St Columba's promotes wrapper free Wednesdays.

Healthy snack

Students are encouraged to bring a piece of fruit or vegetable (may or may not be cut up) or cheese to snack on in class during the morning.

Snack

In addition to the morning healthy snack, children are able to have a further snack during Break 1 (10:50am – 11:30am). We suggest you provide a healthy snack such as fruit, cheese, carrot or yoghurt.

Lunch

Lunch is eaten under supervision of the class teacher immediately following Break 1 between 11:30-11:40. Please keep your child's lunch simple and consider healthy food options. Teachers try to make sure that any food not eaten is returned home so that parents can gauge the correct amount needed.

Drinks

Students are encouraged to drink water at school, particularly during hot weather. All students are required to have a drink bottle (no glass please) clearly labelled with the child's name that can be taken home daily and refilled with water.

Lunch orders

Lunch orders are available on Fridays only and are purchased via Bodega Cafe. To place a lunch order you are required to:

- Provide a brown paper bag
- Write your child's name, room number and lunch order on the bag
- Place the correct money in the bag
- Place the order in the lunch tray in the classroom.
- In Term 1 and Term 4 the P&F sell icy poles on Friday for \$1

Birthdays and special occasions

You are welcome to bring cakes etc to the classroom for your child's birthday so that the whole class can participate in birthday wishes. If you are bringing something to school we ask that you check with the teacher what would be safe to share as we have children in the school with severe allergies. We also ask that you do not bring anything that contains nuts.



Transition program

Transition to school from kindergarten

As a school we are aware of the importance of preparing children for the next exciting stage in their lives. Our Foundation Transition Program runs at the end of the year and provides an opportunity for children to meet their teachers and make some new friends before they begin their new life at primary school.

The program involves 3 sessions at school where children have a chance to become familiar with the Foundation rooms, get to know the teachers and take part in a number of activities that will help them find out more about school life.

A Parent Information Session is held in late November where families can find out more about getting ready for school and the expectations we have at St Columba's.

Secondary school transition

A transition to Secondary School Program begins in Year 5. Students in Years 5 and 6 are invited by the Catholic secondary schools to visit their school as part of the primary/secondary transition program.

Upon completion of Year 6, students participate in a Graduation Mass and families are invited to enjoy supper together afterwards provided by the school.

Going Up day

Each December the school has a 'Going Up' day where students spend a few hours in classes with the teacher and classmates they will have for the following school year.



Foundation Supplement

Becoming familiar with school

As time gets closer to starting school, there are a number of ways you can help your child settle into school happily:

Talk about what your child will eat for munch and crunch, snack and lunch

Let your child select their new lunch box/drink bottle. Show your child his/her school uniform

Let your child wear his/her school uniform for a day at home

Foundation Transition days

Children enrolled in St Columba's take part in 3 orientation sessions held during Term 4.

All families will meet with the Principal or Deputy Principal during Term 3

Grade 5 buddies visit children at their kindergarten early in Term 4

Children attend 2 transition days (2 groups)

'Going up' day runs for 2 hours during the first week in December. Students will spend time with their Foundation teacher and class group.

Early November a Parent Information Evening session will discuss the practicalities around starting school.

Transition days are an important time for your child to become familiar with the school and its routines. During these sessions we find that a quick goodbye and reassurance that you will be back at the end of the session is most effective. If your child seems upset they will usually settle quickly after you have left. (Don't worry, our teachers are trained to deal with this and will talk to you if they have any concerns)

School days and times

The first day of classes for ALL students will be Monday 5th February. Compulsory testing dates will be held on Thursday 1st February and Friday 2nd February.

During first term Foundation children will attend school from 8:45am – 3:15pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. They will not attend on Wednesdays, except where there is a shorter week. For example, the Labour Day holiday week. Foundation children attend school five days per week from Term 2.

Leaving your child on the first day

Smile, cheerfully say 'goodbye' and have a great day, I'll see you this afternoon' and leave straight away. Please tell your child beforehand that this will happen. Your child may shed a tear, but will very quickly become absorbed in classroom activities. You may shed a tear too!

After you have dropped off your child, you are warmly invited to go to the staffroom for a cuppa and morning tea provided by the Parents and Friends Committee. This is a great opportunity to meet other parents, talk to staff and debrief about the first day experience. Toddlers, pre-schoolers, Grandparents and other important people are also most welcome to attend.

Collecting children after school

Please collect your child promptly from the classroom at 3.15pm. We ask that all Foundation children are collected from their classroom at dismissal time at least until the end of Term 1. Please wait outside the building until children are dismissed.

At the end of the day your child will be tired and may not feel like talking about school. This is very natural! Don't feel upset if you ask your child 'What did you do at school today?' and the reply is 'Nothing!' Your child will tell you about his/her day when ready.

Toilet routine

Children in Foundation are taken to the toilet at frequent intervals during the first few days. As they become used to the routine, they are then permitted to go during school time but they must always go with a partner. Teachers will remind children to go to the toilet at recess and lunch time.

If you have any concerns about potential toilet accidents, establish a toilet routine at home that encourages your child to go at similar times to the recess and lunch break and always emphasize the importance of washing hands afterwards.

In the event of 'an accident' a parent/carer will be notified immediately to bring a change of clothes or to take your child home. You may also like to pack a change of clothing in your child's bag.

Foundation buddy program

Children in Foundation are linked with a buddy (Grade 5 student). Buddies help make the transition from kindergarten to primary school more comfortable for children in Foundation.

Foundation-only play space

At first, the school yard can feel overwhelming for Foundation children and it can take a little time to become familiar and comfortable with such a large play space compared to kindergarten. To help this transition, for the first two weeks of Term 1 the sandpit will be designated a Foundation only play space.

Tips to help your child develop early numeracy and literacy skills

Hints to encourage your child to be interested in numeracy

Rote Count: Start to count small groups of objects by pointing to each object as the counting progresses

Number recognition: play games such as Snap or Memory which will help your child identify the number and associate it with its name

Use dot dice to play games. This helps your child to identify the dots as a number and encourages one to one counting as the moves are made

Hints to help your child learn to read

Talk to your child - help him/her to add to ordinary conversation

Read to your child - every time you read to your child you are building an appreciation of books and learning

Listen to your child - the more your child talks in general the better he/she is likely to read

Teach your child how to care for books

Build up a reading atmosphere at home - present a good model of reading. Let your child see you reading frequently.

Encourage your child to join a public library -Join yourself!

Buy games and puzzles for your child - These help in the learning of shape and form and assist your child to relate words to things

Buy books for your child – A child who owns good books is usually interested in reading.

Praise your child – Encourage your child. Set aside a regular time to hear your child read.

Health and Wellbeing

Student health and wellbeing are fundamental to inclusion in school activities. St Columba's provides an environment where staff and students feel respected and their physical and psychological health is supported and promoted. The information below is a brief summary of our policies and guidelines.

Sick Bay

If a child is feeling unwell he/she will be monitored for 15-20 minutes in the sick bay area. If, after this time the child is not well enough to go back to class a parent/carer will be contacted to take the child home. It is not the school's responsibility to care for a sick child for an entire school day. Parents who work must make arrangements for friends/relatives to be available to collect their child to be cared for at home if they are unable to leave work. If your child attends the sickbay area for treatment they will bring home a Record of Treatment Note. Should we be unable to contact you or your emergency contact, we will make arrangements for required medical care with the doctor indicated on your enrolment form. Please ensure that your emergency information and other details are kept up to date.

First Aid

All staff have current Level 2 First Aid qualifications. Usual treatment consists of cleaning a wound or injuries with water and applying a bandage, or applying an ice or cold pack to a bruise or sprain. Parents are notified immediately of more serious injuries or illness.

All injuries/treatment are recorded in the First Aid Register. Children are given a Record of Treatment Note to take home if they have visited the sick bay.

An Incident Notification Form will be completed where serious injuries to the head/eye/neck or injuries requiring medical, dental or hospital treatment or if a fatal injury occurs. These are then recorded on the injury management system according to Department of Education and Early Childhood Development guidelines.

Medication

Before sending medication to school please consider if your child is well enough to return to school or whether it is possible to administer the medication outside school hours. The following process is followed for medication at school:

All medication must be handed in to the office and a Medication Authority Form completed detailing timing and dosage. The administration of all drugs will be recorded in the Medication Administration Log.

The medication is stored in a secure cupboard either in the office area (for those medications that are required on a regular basis, e.g. prescribed short term medication such as antibiotics, adrenaline auto-injectors); in a secured cupboard within the sick bay, e.g. food requirements by diabetic students, etc. or in a marked section of the staffroom fridge (students are not allowed to access this equipment without adult supervision).

The authority to administer any medication (except in the case of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency) lies with Administration Staff, ie office staff, Principal or Deputy Principal.

In the case of a medical emergency regarding students with asthma (either diagnosed or not), anaphylaxis (either diagnosed or not) or diabetes, all staff have been trained in this area and will provide the necessary medication to ensure the well-being of any student.

Illness at school

Children who are ill are best cared for at home. In the interests of the health of children and staff, do not send your child to school if he/she is unwell or has been unwell overnight. Parents/carers will be notified to collect their child immediately if any of the following symptoms are apparent:

- Above normal temperature
- Discharge from eyes or ears
- Stomach pains, vomiting or diarrhoea
- Difficulty in breathing
- Severe headache or earache
- Head injury
- Severe asthma attack

Please note: It is important that parents inform the school immediately of any change of address or phone numbers.

Anaphylaxis

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform the school as soon as children have been identified as having a risk of an anaphylactic reaction. Individual ASCIA Anaphylaxis Management Action Plans need to be developed by the family in conjunction with their doctor and provided to the school. Children are required to have their medication at school at all times. Medication is kept in the child's classroom and in the school office.

Asthma Management

As with anaphylaxis, parents/carers should inform the school as soon as their child is identified as having a risk of an asthma attack. The Asthma Foundation's Asthma Careplan for Schools should be completed by the student's doctor in consultation with parents/carers.

This Plan must be reviewed annually and obtained from the doctor which will then be forwarded to the school to ensure that appropriate action is taken in the case of an asthma attack. (All named asthma pumps are given to the classroom teacher along with a current plan).

Headlice

Head lice infections are common and create concern for many families. Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp. They spread by head to head contact and also by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats. Whilst head lice do not carry or transmit disease, they are a cause of head itch and scratching that may lead to infection and therefore need to be controlled.

Parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice. Schools also have a role in the management of head lice infections and in providing support and information for the school community.

A Head Lice Alert Notice will be sent home to all families of children in the identified classroom notifying them that lice has been detected in the class and requesting that parents inspect and treat their children's hair.

It is a requirement that parents/carers refrain from sending their children to school with untreated head lice. It should be noted that students may be treated one evening and return to school the next day and that the presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion. Parents/carers need to be aware that one treatment is not sufficient to manage the problem.

Health Screening Services

The school medical nurse will visit our school – usually in Term 1 - to conduct health screening for all Foundation children. Most children find the process non-threatening and quite enjoyable! Parents/Carers are asked to complete a questionnaire about their child prior to the visit. The School Nurse contacts parents/carers if there are any area that require further investigation.

Immunisation Status Certificate

Parents must provide an Immunisation Status Certificate on school enrolment. This certificate can be obtained from Medicare Australia.

Infectious diseases

As required by the Health Act, and in order to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases, children with infectious diseases are excluded from school. A list of infectious diseases and the required minimum exclusion periods will be provided to parents and is available at the school office.

Medical Disability

Please inform the principal if your child suffers from asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, food allergy or other allergies, or any other condition that may require appropriate care at school. An emergency register is kept with action plans for students with special medical needs.

Schedule 7

Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts (*Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*).

In this Schedule, medical certificate means a certificate from a registered medical practitioner.

[1] Conditions	[2] Exclusion of cases	[3] Exclusion of Contacts
Amoebiasis (<i>Entamoeba histolytica</i>)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Campylobacter	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Chickenpox	Exclude until all blisters have dried. This is usually at least 5 days after the rash appears in unimmunised children, but may be less in previously immunised children	Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise not excluded
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased	Not excluded
Diarrhoea	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Diphtheria	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received following at least two negative throat swabs, the first not less than 24 hours after finishing a course of antibiotics and the other 48 hours later	Exclude family/household contacts until cleared to return by the Secretary
Hand, Foot and Mouth disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried	Not excluded
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Exclude until at least 4 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed	Not excluded
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness	Not excluded
Hepatitis B	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Hepatitis C	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Herpes (cold sores)	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible	Not excluded
Human immuno-deficiency virus infection (HIV/AIDS virus)	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing	Not excluded
Influenza and influenza like illnesses	Exclude until well	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary
Leprosy	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary	Not excluded
Measles*	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash	Immunised contacts not excluded. Unimmunised contacts should be excluded until 14 days after the first day of appearance of rash in the last case. If unimmunised contacts are vaccinated within 72 hours of their first contact with the first case, or received NHIG within 144 hours of exposure, they may return to the facility
Meningitis (bacteria – other than meningococcal meningitis)	Exclude until well	Not excluded
Meningococcal infection*	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed	Not excluded if receiving carrier eradication therapy
Mumps*	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	Not excluded
Pertussis* (Whooping cough)	Exclude the child for 21 days after the onset of cough or until they have completed 5 days of a course of antibiotic treatment	Contacts aged less than 7 years in the same room as the case who have not received three effective doses of pertussis vaccine should be excluded for 14 days after the last exposure to the infectious case, or until they have taken 5 days of a course of effective antibiotic treatment
Poliomyelitis*	Exclude for at least 14 days from onset. Re-admit after receiving medical certificate of recovery	Not excluded
Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (head lice)	Exclude until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced	Not excluded
Rubella* (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least four days after the onset of rash	Not excluded
Salmonella, Shigella	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is produced	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary
Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well	Not excluded
Tuberculosis	Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate from the treating physician stating that the child is not considered to be infectious	Not excluded
Typhoid fever (including paratyphoid fever)	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary
Verotoxin producing Escherichia coli (VTEC)	Exclude if required by the Secretary and only for the period specified by the Secretary	Not excluded
Worms (Intestinal)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded

Parent and Student: Complaints and Grievances Policy

Rationale

St Columba's School is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment. From time to time, students and parents can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening at the school that they believe requires attention, further investigation or change in procedures or a resolution.

Policy Statement

St Columba's School endeavours to ensure that complaints are managed and resolved fairly and timely.

Principles

- The complaints resolution procedure is implemented for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility.
- All cases of serious misconduct: sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents must be referred to the relevant regulator or authority.
- The principal has a responsibility to address unacceptable conduct or concerns that are observed or brought to the school's attention.
- It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.
- The principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
- Formal processes will be used when informal processes have not been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.
- This policy will be made available on the school's website and included in the Parent Handbook

Complaints Procedure

In the first instance, complainants should contact the person/s involved in the issue when it first arises so that it can be resolved quickly. In many cases this would involve the classroom teacher in the resolution of the complaint even if the complaint is not directly about them. The types of complaints could include

- issues related to student discipline procedures
- issues related to learning and teaching
- damage/loss of personal property
- bullying and harassment

Concerns about your child could be addressed by:

1. writing a note to the relevant teacher outlining your concerns and provide a contact number if the teacher needs to contact you for further information or follow up. This will usually be outside of classroom times.
2. making an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with the teacher, ensuring that you inform the school about the issue you wish to discuss. It is important to remember that teachers cannot always meet with you just before and after class times due to other responsibilities and meetings
3. arranging a meeting time or phone call through the school office (this is more convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students).

The teacher, together with any others who may be involved such as another classroom teacher, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction.

If the matter is urgent and the teacher is not available then contact the School Office to arrange for a member of the Leadership Team or other suitable staff member to either meet or contact you.

Concerns to be Raised with the Principal

Most concerns are resolved by discussing the issue with the relevant person. However, if the issue remains unresolved you can then ask to see the principal.

To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. Please note that:

- the principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.

If your concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised more formally (in writing) with the principal.

If the complainant after meeting with the principal believes that the school has not listened to their concerns or followed school processes then the complainant can take the issue to the school governing authority or Catholic Education Office Ballarat. It is important to note that the school will make decisions that are not always accepted by all the school community.

Maintaining a Safe Environment

At any stage in the complaint process, staff have the right to feel safe. Aggressive or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. In such instances, the staff member will end the meeting and refer the matter to the principal and the occupational health and safety officer.

If the complainant feels unsafe, they should end the meeting and refer the matter to the principal. In the case of it being the principal, then the complainant should contact the governing authority.

Making, Receiving and Investigating Complaints

At St Columba's School, all staff are expected to:

- listen carefully and deal calmly and respectfully with complaints
- document the complaint, actions taken and outcomes
- look at all sides of an issue
- focus particularly on issues that may be affecting the learning and/or safety of students
- resolve complaints in a timely manner
- provide feedback to the complainant on any actions/outcomes/decisions taken
- accept that it is not possible to resolve all complaints
- identify when a complaint cannot be resolved
- ensure privacy and confidentiality of information is maintained in accordance with relevant legislation
- refer more complex or unresolved complaints to the principal or the school governing authority

Those making complaints are expected to:

- be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss
- focus on the things that are genuinely affecting your child
- always remain calm and respectful, particularly when discussing the complaint in the presence of children
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss
- think about what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child that is consistent with school policy and procedures
- listen carefully to other sides of the issue
- be informed by checking the school's policies or guidelines, where relevant
- accept that it is not possible to resolve all complaints
- be aware that you have the right to seek advocacy, mediation, counseling or support from

Record Keeping

A record of a complaint should include the following detail:

- Date when issue was first raised
- Name of parent(s)
- Name of student(s)
- Detailed statement of concern/complaint including:
 - nature of complaint
 - identity of person(s) involved
 - time of allegation
- Description of the procedures applied and the time frame for reporting on the outcomes of any investigation
- Statement of outcomes
- Staff member(s) handling complaint

The record of complaint will be filed in school records management system.

VRQA Child Safe Standards	
Drafted:	March 2017
Ratified:	June 2017
To be reviewed:	2021