



## **St Brendan's Catholic School**

### **Parent Handbook**

Dear Lord,

Together we come to praise you  
for the natural beauty you surround us with,  
the families we belong to and the happiness in our lives.

We pray that you will always keep us close to you  
each and every day, as we grow in faith and knowledge.  
Help us to become "Alive in Christ", caring for others, doing our best,  
and spreading the Good News just like St Brendan.

Bless us today with Your Spirit. Amen.



This handbook is a summary of some of the policies and procedures which our school has developed. Complete versions of all school policies are available at the office upon request

### **PARENTS AS PARTNERS AT ST. BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

Parent voice is crucial to maintaining and nurturing the open and respectful relationships which form the foundation from which we work to ensure the best outcomes for all students.

Our aim at St. Brendan's is to support and supplement the efforts of parents in providing a holistic education for all students. It is expected that staff and parents work in partnership to encourage the students to express Christian values in all they do and say. St Brendan's community provides all students with opportunities to experience creativity, mutual help, sincerity and caring relationships with others. Each student is supported to develop their academic, physical and social abilities.

St. Brendan's School Community strives to:

- \* create an atmosphere where Christ is seen as the centre of our lives
- \* develop an understanding of the Catholic faith through its teaching, traditions and the Gospel values
- \* promote the growth of the whole person spiritually, socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically
- \* cultivate within the individual an awareness of developing and living in harmony with the environment
- \* foster within each person an awareness of their uniqueness and the dignity and worth of others
- \* encourage the family in its role as the primary educator of the child.
- \* provide a quality education and promote a desire for excellence within the individual.

### **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

Principal: Mrs Luanna Fletcher

Assistant Principal: Ms Kellie Prendergast

Religious Education Co-ordinator: Mrs Jacqui Nenandovic

School Address: St. Brendan's Catholic School, Carters Road, Lake Munmorah NSW 2259

School Telephone: 02 4358 1501

Email Address: [sblm@dbb.catholic.edu.au](mailto:sblm@dbb.catholic.edu.au)

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

Parish Priest: Father Tiziano Torresan

Parish Phone: 02 4396 4455

St. Brendan's was founded on 30 January 1989. Currently, the school is made up of 22 classes. The school also has a K-2 composite class (the Hive) to support students with learning needs. The school is staffed by dedicated teachers who provide quality education to the students in all Key Learning Areas. There are also a number of specialist staff members who provide quality learning experiences in Physical Education, Music and Library.

#### **DAILY TIMETABLE**

7:50 am		Teacher supervision begins <i>(No student to be dropped at school prior to 7.50 am)</i>
8:20 am	- 10:20 am	Morning classes
10:20 am	- 10:50 am	Recess/Play
10:50 am	- 12:50 pm	Mid-morning classes
12:50 pm	- 1:30 pm	Lunch/Play
1:30 pm	- 2:30 pm	Afternoon classes

#### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

The content of RE lessons enhances religious knowledge whilst affirming the transfer of this knowledge into everyday life.

The school aims to promote an active, conscious and genuine participation in liturgical celebrations. The community regularly celebrates our Catholic faith through Masses and liturgies. St Brendan's community also very much values opportunities to demonstrate their love of God and discipleship in action through supporting initiatives which broaden our knowledge and understanding of those less fortunate.

#### **CURRICULUM**

The Key Learning Areas of English, Mathematics, History & Geography, Science & Technology, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health & Physical Education are all taught across all grades.

## **HIGHER ABILITY STUDENTS**

At St Brendan's there is a highly valued culture of supporting students to perform to the best of their ability. To support those students who are capable a co-ordinator of higher ability programs works closely with classroom teachers to design programs to meet the student's needs.

## **LEARNING SUPPORT**

The Learning Support team at St Brendan's work together with class teachers to support individual student needs.

## **STUDENT WELLBEING**

### **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)**

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (CASEL, 2016)

At St Brendan's we use the Social and Emotional Learning Continuum developed by the Broken Bay Diocese to monitor and track student growth in SEL. The SEL Continuum is broken up into five core competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision Making.

The skills within each of these core competencies are taught in class and students are encouraged to set goals to improve in their areas of need. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's SEL development and be a part of goal setting at parent teacher meetings at the beginning of each school year.

### **KIDSMATTER**

St Brendan's prides itself on being a KidsMatter school. KidsMatter is a government initiative designed to promote and support student mental health and wellbeing. KidsMatter concepts are regularly discussed at the Wellbeing Team meetings. This Team meets on a regular basis and plans initiatives to encourage and deepen awareness of mental health and wellbeing in students and families.

### **POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR for LEARNING (PBL)**

St Brendan's follows the POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR for LEARNING (PBL) framework. This is a research-based program that encourages positive behaviour that supports student learning. Students are explicitly taught the ROSE Rules. ROSE is an acronym for Respect Others, Self and the Environment.

**Corporal punishment is not allowed at St Brendan's School.** Parents, staff and visitors to the school are strictly forbidden from administering any corporal punishment.

### **SCHOOL FEES**

A tax invoice for the year will be sent home at the beginning of the year. The standard arrangement for payment of fees is in three instalments – once each in Terms 1, 2 and 3. Upon application to the principal, alternative arrangements may be made. All fee payments should be completed by November each year.

The Diocesan Schools Board of the Diocese of Broken Bay has set school fees for 2017 as follows:

### **TUITION FEE 2019**

First Child: \$1607.00 per annum

Second Child: \$1285.60 per annum

Third Child: \$ 803.50 per annum

Fourth Child: nil

### **DIOCESAN BUILDING FUND 2019**

Billed to the eldest child in a Diocesan school, this fee will be included on your school fees account. The 2017 fee for the Diocesan Building Fund is: \$970.00 per annum per family

### **EDUCATION FEE 2019**

This fee (\$541) is billed to each child and covers all school related expenses, e.g. excursions and incursions; sport levies and general sport expenses; curriculum resources; cleaning of the school and associated grounds maintenance and security. Expenses not part of this fee include: Year 6 Canberra Excursion (\$350); Year 6 Graduation (\$40); Year 5 Leadership Camp (\$110) and Year 2 Swimming (\$50).

**FUNDRAISING LEVY 2019:** \$72 per family

### **STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM and STUDENT COUNCIL (SRC)**

The student leadership team consists of two Year 6 students who are elected as School Captains and two Year 6 students who are elected as Vice Captains. In addition, there are several leadership pillars across Year 6: Sports, Environmental, Mission, Learning and Wellbeing. These students represent the school at a variety of functions and liaise with the community about important leadership initiatives.

In addition, one student is selected to represent their class on the school's Student Representative Council (SRC). The purpose of the SRC is to ensure that student voice is valued at St Brendan's. Generally, the Student Councillors and School Captains make formal speeches, discuss social awareness activities, promote the Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) framework and participate in other ceremonial activities.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **ABSENTEE NOTES**

All absences should be telephoned through to the school and then followed up with a written/ emailed note explaining the absence.

### **BAPTISMAL AND BIRTH CERTIFICATES**

Baptismal and Birth Certificates must be sighted on enrolment.

### **BUDDY PROGRAM**

This program is designed to assist Kindergarten students to settle into our community. Each Year 5 student is buddied with a Kindergarten student to support them through their first two years at school.

### **CANTEEN**

Our school canteen is fully operational 5 days a week.

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND CONTACT DETAILS**

The school is obliged to keep accurate records of all pupils and therefore should you change your address, telephone number, etc. you are requested to notify the school immediately.

### **COUNSELLING SERVICE**

To access this service, parents complete a confidential request for Counselling form which is sent to the Catholic Schools Office. Once processed, the School Counsellor will contact the parent to discuss how they can be of assistance. The counselling service provides a confidential environment where students can talk about difficulties they face. The Counsellor helps students develop problem-solving and coping strategies that can be used to deal with difficult situations and help them get back on track when things aren't going so well. Please contact the school office if you wish to find out more about this service.

### **EXCURSIONS/CAMPS**

Parents are required to complete and sign a permission form when children are going on excursions and camps.

### **FLO AND CLASS PARENTS**

The St Brendan's community is very fortunate to have the services of a Family Liaison Officer (FLO). The FLO works to build a sense of community and social cohesion within the school. by providing opportunities for parents to be involved in various events within the school. The FLO supports parents by linking them to other support agencies and providing information or workshops on topics of need identified by the community.

### **HAIR**

Hair should be neat, tidy and natural in colour. Hair below collar length is to be tied up at all times. All hair accessories, including hair ties, must be in school colours.

### **HELPERS / VOLUNTEERS**

The participation, involvement and help of parents, close relatives and other volunteers are welcome and appreciated for various activities. It is important that all volunteers are aware that they are subject to child protection legislation.

This means all volunteers must:

- sign on at the front office, be inducted and get a visitors badge from the office as per school procedure.
- check with the school what the current requirements are for the working with children
- not engage in any inappropriate behaviour towards any children. In particular although volunteers are technically not employed by the school, they are considered to be 'staff' for legal purposes and need to be aware that complaints about inappropriate behaviour towards any child or young person must be investigated (see Child Protection).

### **HOMEWORK**

The school's Homework Guidelines are reflective of current research into the validity and learning gains of homework.

### **IMMUNISATION**

It is important that your child is fully immunised before commencing school. We have been advised by the NSW Public Health Department that, "changes to the NSW Public Health Act 1991 mean that parents with children starting school in the Kindergarten class, must present an Immunisation Certificate at the time of school enrolment".

### **JEWELLERY**

Children are allowed to wear one pair of sleepers/studs only. No other visible jewellery is allowed. Any necklaces/chains must be worn under the school uniform.

### **MEDICATION**

Teachers are not permitted to dispense medication to children. Any necessary medication will be administered via the School Office but only after relevant medical forms have been completed by the parent/carer and doctor.

### **NEWSLETTER**

The weekly "NETMA" newsletter is our means of communication with you. Please note that the newsletter is available on-line. You can access it through the school website, have it sent to you via email or choose to receive a hard copy.

### **PARENT ADVISORY GROUP**

St. Brendan's has a Parent Advisory Group who help with all aspects of the school. At times their support may include hospitality and organising educational and social functions. The group also discusses and assist school staff to implement various components of the annual School Improvement Plan (SIP).

### **PARENT/CARER INVOLVEMENT**

We encourage parent engagement with, and involvement in, the school. Parent/teacher interviews and information sessions are held each year and, if required, parents may obtain interviews at other times with class teachers at a time convenient to both. Appointments may also be made with the Principal. Written reports are sent home twice during the year.

### **SCHOOL BANKING**

School banking is available through the school each Tuesday. New account forms can be obtained on request. We have banking arrangements with the Commonwealth Bank, and all school banking is done through our computer terminal.

### **SCHOOL FACEBOOK PAGE**

St Brendan's have an official Facebook page which is updated regularly with news and events. We ask that you refrain from commenting on posts on this page and that you are respectful when discussing the school on any social media sites.

### **SCHOOL SUPERVISION**

Normal school supervision commences at 7:50am and concludes at 2:50pm. Parents are advised that children are not supervised outside these hours. The Catholic Care Outside of Hours School Care operates on the school site. Contact: 4358 8157.

### **SCHOOL UNIFORM**

Our uniform supplier Cowan & Lewis. Please contact them for all uniform requirements. Website: [www.cowanlewis.com.au](http://www.cowanlewis.com.au)

Phone: 9449 9777

Fax: 9440 8931

Email: [sales@cowanlewis.com.au](mailto:sales@cowanlewis.com.au)

### **Summer Uniform**



School shoes are to be black and polishable while joggers for sport days are to be predominantly white. A school hat must be worn at all times when outside. School hats and bags are available from Cowan and Lewis. It is expected that every child will wear their correct school uniform each day. The parent body operates a Clothing Pool which sells second hand uniforms.

## Winter Uniform



## Sport Uniform



### **SCREENING OF THOSE WORKING IN SCHOOLS**

Working With Children Checks are undertaken by staff working in our school. External tutors and coaches working with students in dance, music, sport, art etc are also expected to obtain a check which is verified prior to engagement. The purpose of the check is to exclude people from working with children who are not suitable. A person who has been convicted or found guilty of a listed serious offence against children (whether in NSW or elsewhere) is prohibited from working in a child-related role.

Volunteers who are not the parent or a close relative of a child at the school will be expected to undertake a Working With Children Check.

- A 'parent of a child' includes a carer or person who has legal responsibility for a child.
- A 'close relative' includes a spouse or de facto partner, child, step-child, parent, step-parent, sibling, step-sibling, grandparent, step-grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew. In the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, a close relative includes people who are part of the extended family or kin of the child according to the indigenous kinship system.

Similarly, any volunteer working in a high risk role will be required to undertake a Working With Children Check. High risk roles are those where volunteers are working with particularly vulnerable children:

- Providing personal care with intimate contact to children with disabilities
- Providing mentoring services

Further information on the Working With Children Check can be found on the website for the Office of the Children's Guardian at <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/>.

If you would like further information regarding any of the above please speak to your Principal first or feel free to contact the CSO Child Protection Team on:

**Phone: 9847 0618 or Office Fax: 9847 0611**

### **SICKNESS**

If your child is sick before leaving for school **please don't send** him/her to school. This is especially important if they have heavy colds, flu, etc. as germs from such are easily spread. If your child is sick or has an accident at school you will be notified immediately. The school has Ambulance Cover with the N.S.W. Ambulance Service.

If your child contracts a contagious infection such as Measles, Chicken Pox, Conjunctivitis or Impetigo please contact the office immediately and refer to the NSW Health Authority website where you will find information about isolation periods.

### **SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES**

All classes have a weekly PE lesson taught by a specialist teacher. In addition, all classes have a Sport lesson weekly. Year 2 students participate in a 'learn to swim' program offered in Term 4. Years 3-6 can choose to participate in Gala Days in a variety of sports including cricket, soccer, netball and rugby league. There is also a Diocesan competitive pathway for those exhibiting excellence in sports.

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS**

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Broken Bay allows each school five Staff Development Days per year for professional learning. Dates will be advertised well in advance in the NETMA and children will not attend school on these days.

### **SUN SMART**

St Brendan's is a Sunsmart School. The children must wear a hat to play in the sun. "No hat, play in the shade" rule applies.

### **VALUABLE ITEMS AND MOBILE PHONES**

The school takes no responsibility for loss or damage to items brought to school. If a parent chooses to send a mobile phone to school for emergency out of school hours contact, a letter from the parent must be given to the school explaining the need for the phone. Students must leave the phone at the office in the morning and pick it up at the end of day.

### **CHILD PROTECTION**

We take our responsibility to protect children seriously. All staff are expected to promote child safety by having a clear understanding of their legal child protection responsibilities and act in accordance with those responsibilities.

In particular the school will:

1. Maintain professionalism in our interactions with children at all times by exercising appropriate duty of care and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
2. Follow an established process to address allegations of inappropriate behaviour by staff towards children.
3. Ensure all people working in our school who are required to undertake a Working With Children Check have a valid clearance.
4. Respond appropriately when we suspect a child is at risk of significant harm due to possible abuse or neglect by a parent/carer or other adult.



## **CHILD PROTECTION: COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT**

We take complaints seriously and try to resolve them in the most appropriate, efficient and confidential manner possible:

- If you or your child has a complaint about another student other than your own child you should raise it with your child's class teacher.
- If you or your child has a complaint about a staff member relating to teaching and learning, the issue should first be discussed with the relevant teacher or the principal.
- If you or your child has a complaint about the inappropriate behaviour of a staff member towards any child or young person, your concern should be directed to the Principal and confidentiality must be maintained (see Child Protection).

## **RESPONDING TO RISK OF HARM**

- All school staff are mandatory reporters. This means that if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of 'significant harm' from abuse or neglect, then a report must be made to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline (CP Helpline).
- School staff are expected to inform the Principal if they are concerned that a child may be at risk. It is the role of the Principal (or delegate) to make the report to the CP Helpline.
- In making a report the Principal will consider all of the information and seek appropriate advice from the CSO's child protection team (CP team). Any information about a child at risk is kept confidentially by the Principal.
- In situations where a child is considered to be at risk the school will work with the child and family to assist them as much as possible.
- If you have concerns about a child who you consider may be at risk, please discuss your concerns with the Principal as soon as possible and maintain confidentiality.

## **MAINTAINING PROFESSIONALISM**

All staff are expected to act professionally and in accordance with the school's expectations regarding staff conduct toward children. Members of staff receive guidance and professional development in relation to appropriate interactions with students, how to exercise duty of care and how to maintain professional boundaries.

We understand that staff have a duty of care to:

- Ensure no child is exposed to foreseeable risk of harm
- Take action to minimise risk
- Supervise actively
- Report concerns to the Principal or seek further advice If we see others acting inappropriately with children

School staff also understand that they are in a position of trust, authority and influence in relation to children and that it is important that we do not take advantage of that position to mistreat or misguide students either intentionally or inadvertently.

Staff strive to:

- Demonstrate appropriate relationships with children that cannot be misinterpreted as overly personal or intimate;
- Remain within the responsibilities of their roles and allow those appropriately trained to deal with student welfare concerns;

- Minimise physical contact with children unless it is necessary to exercise appropriate duty of care;
- Follow the school's policies and procedures relating to pastoral care and wellbeing including serious incidents and reporting risk of harm.

### **ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR BY STAFF**

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for both students and staff. This includes addressing complaints of inappropriate behaviour by staff towards any child or young person.

Such complaints are handled differently to other types of complaints which may arise in the school because of legal obligations established by the NSW Ombudsman Act 1974. The NSW Ombudsman is a government agency which requires schools and other organisations working with children to ensure systems are in place for recording and responding to all allegations of a child protection nature against staff. 'Staff' includes volunteer helpers as well as paid staff. If you have concerns about alleged inappropriate behaviour by a staff member towards any child or young person it is important that you discuss your concerns with the Principal who in turn will consult with the CSO's Child Protection Team.

All complaints are investigated and resolved through a fair and confidential process which involves listening to 'both sides of the story' and giving all involved an opportunity to be heard. If the concerns involve alleged criminal behaviour they will be reported to the Police and the CSO will wait for the outcome of the Police investigation before continuing its own investigation.

At the end of an investigation a finding will be made and appropriate follow up determined. In relation to the staff member this may include no action, increased support, professional development, increased supervision/monitoring or disciplinary action, removal from duties or termination of employment.

If harm has occurred to a child, counselling or other support will be offered to the child.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Please know that in choosing to come to St Brendan's Catholic School you choose more than just an education. You choose to belong to a community of believers who work in partnership for the good of all. We take pride in and draw strength from our motto, "Alive in Christ". In doing so, we give expression to our Catholic beliefs by making relevant connections to the contemporary world.

Staff members at St Brendan's are committed to ensuring vibrant, purposeful learning experiences which nurture all students to develop a love of learning, to be respectful and to fulfil their potential. All learning takes place within the context of an authentically Catholic community where young people are encouraged to live out the characteristics of discipleship daily.

If you have any questions or would like further information please contact the school office. School tours can be booked at mutually suitable times for you to view our facilities and learning in action! Further information can also be found on our website and Facebook page.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to achieve the best outcomes for your child.

