



ST MICHAEL'S SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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Excellence, Nurture, Community

Friday August 29th 2025

God of Comfort and Peace,
We hold in our prayers and hearts the police officers who were shot in
Porepunkah, while serving the community.
We pray for their families, colleagues, and all who carry the weight of
this tragedy.
Inspired by St. Francis of Assisi, help us bring healing where there is
injury,
courage where there is fear,
and compassion where there is sorrow.
We give thanks for all who serve to protect and care for others, espe-
cially first responders.
May their commitment and service remind us of the sacredness of life
and our shared responsibility to create everlasting peace.



Amen.

Dear Families,

Last week, I was fortunate to gather with more than 1,400 Catholic educators, leaders, clergy, parents, and stakeholders at the Cairns Convention Centre for the 2025 Australian Catholic Education Conference, united under the theme “Hope, Anchored in Faith.”

The Welcome to Country by Professor Henrietta Marrie AM during the opening ceremony was a highlight. In a powerful reminder, she courageously noted the ceremony sequence—asserting that such acknowledgments should be given their rightful place of primacy, distinct from performances. This act exemplified synodality in action—not just giving voice, but truly listening to those with cultural wisdom. Under the pillars of Faith, Excellence, and Access, the conference delivered a richly varied program. Highlights included keynote addresses, masterclasses, panel discussions, and workshops on Catholic identity, learning and teaching, leadership, parent and community engagement, advocacy, and infrastructure. Renowned educators including Prof Dylan Wiliam and Dr Simon Breakspear brought fresh insights—Simon’s masterclasses on “strategic subtraction” and “Teaching Sprints” offered practical strategies to elevate teaching and learning practice in schools.

The theme “Hope, Anchored in Faith” was more than words—it was woven through each plenary, workshop, and cultural offering. The conference’s emphasis on synodality, reconciliation, and educational excellence offered both challenge and comfort, reminding us that faith-centered hope can guide courageous listening and transformative action.

Many thanks to Shay King who led the school in my absence.

Words in Winter

Last Sunday, a number of students were acknowledged for their entries in this year's Words in Winter competition. The feedback from the judges was that children's responses to the theme 'Light In The Dark' were wonderfully creative and the number of entries with undeniable merit made the judges task a difficult one.

Congratulations to award winners **Sophia Chen and Eliza Gardiner** and congratulations also to the following students who received a commendation for their entries: **Beckett O'Brien, Maksym Steinocker, Frankie Wroe, Eliza Gardiner, Hope Hardwick and Mila O'Halloran**. These students were also acknowledged at this morning's assembly. Many thanks and well done to **all students** from St. Michael's who had an entry submitted.



Book Week

Last Friday, we enjoyed a terrific celebration for Book Week! Well done to the students and staff who got dressed up in the most amazing outfits and thank you to the parents and carers who assisted with costumes and/or came along to support students at our parade.



Zoo visit

Congratulations to the students and staff from Discovery 1 and 2 on their successful excursion to the Melbourne Zoo this week. It sounded like a terrific day of engaging learning was enjoyed by all and the students represented our school very well. A big thank you to the parents and carers who gave up their time to assist with this very valuable experience for our young students.



MPower Girls Day

Many thanks to Helen Kelly who helped to facilitate a wonderful day of learning for all girls in Years 3-6 this week. We were also joined by students from St. Mary's Clarke's Hill and Yandoit Primary School. The anticipated outcomes of the day were for students to:

- Better understand different relationships between peers and practice new ways of relating to one another
- Develop confidence so students can express feelings openly and honestly
- Explore feelings in a personal and social context
- Develop and practice different forms of communication.

Helen's MPower reflection

On Wednesday, Year 3-6 girls from St Michael's, St Mary's Clarkes Hill and Yandoit Primary School came together for a day to participate in the MPower Girls Program, facilitated by Ozlem from Stride Education. The program is designed to help girls build positive relationships, using the themes of being a good friend, knowing the impact we have on others, developing social skills, and celebrating the importance of kindness and inclusion.

Throughout the day, the girls took part in interactive activities, team challenges, and meaningful discussions. They explored what it means to be a good friend, what are friendship 'makers' and 'breakers', how to resolve conflicts respectfully and assertively, and how to build a supportive network with others. The energy and engagement from the girls made the day affirming and fun.

The girls have taken home a student manual. We hope they will share some of their learning with you and also encourage conversations, like these, to continue at home.

A very special thank you to the Daylesford Foundation for generously funding this event. Their support allows access for our students to meaningful opportunities to grow in confidence and empathy within our community.



Year 5 SEED visit

Many thanks to Louise Morris and Laura Buby who supported our Year 5 students with their SEED visit to Damascus College last Monday. The students are to be commended on their willingness to fully engage with the activities provided for them on the day.

Guide Dogs visit

Yesterday, 5 lucky students from Connection were able to visit some Guide Dog puppies in Kew. Following the great fundraising efforts which started with our Connection class, our school was given the opportunity to name a new guide dog puppy. After much deliberation, the name 'Maple' was given the green light! Throughout the process of our fundraising efforts for Guide Dogs Victoria, it has been pleasing to hear children regularly reflect upon why we offer this support - to bring fullness of life to all. Here is some more information from Laura, Fox, Harvey, Vaughn, Cynthia and Sienna:

- The biggest litter for Guide Dogs Victoria was 14 and the smallest was 1 (which is rare as well)
- They have around 100 puppies a year
- When the puppies are 8 weeks old, they go to live with their puppy foster families (all volunteers) until they turn 12 months old at which stage they come back to headquarters for training
- Guide Dogs Victoria have around 600 volunteers
- Working guide dogs work for around 2hrs a day and get to be a regular dog for the rest of the time (they have their harness on when working)
- Working guide dogs can not enter the nursery so our guide Erin (who was vision impaired) couldn't bring her dog, Jet, so Fox helped to guide her down to the nursery and Cynthia guided her back to headquarters.

Here are some thoughts from Erin Goedhart who hosted us on the day:

I just wanted to say thank you so much for allowing a group of your students to visit us yesterday. It was so enjoyable for me to meet your students and see how excited they were to meet their puppies. They were inquisitive, polite, happy and had some great answers for some of the questions I threw at them. Fox and Cynthia both took turns in being my sighted guide as we went to and from the nursery and did a better job than most adults! I also can't overstate what an incredible job Laura did. Our whole office was talking about what an enormous job it would have been to drive down and back in a day. She did superbly and is such a genuine, kind person.

I hope this whole experience has been a good one for your school, and we would love it if you decided to participate again next year.



Staff News

We were delighted to welcome **Claire O'Connor** back to school this week.

This week, we welcomed **Alana Jiruse** to our school. Alana is completing a pre-service teaching placement in the Discovery 1 class until the end of the term.

Next week we welcome **Lara Cattapan** to our school. Lara will be completing her Year 10 work experience with the Connection class.

Dates for Term Three

Week 7

Friday September 5: Father's Day/Special People's Breakfast at school (8am), Father's Day/Special People's Liturgy (9:05am) and Playgroup in the Presentation Centre (10am-11am)

Week 8

Thursday September 11: Art Show in the Presentation Centre from 2:15pm-5:30pm

Friday September 12: Discovery 2 Assembly beginning 9:05am in the Presentation Centre and Playgroup in the Presentation Centre (10am-11am)

Week 9

Tuesday September 16: Winter Sports for Years 3-6 students

Friday September 19: Show Your Colours Day (casual dress - bring a gold coin) and final day of Term Three (2:15pm finish)

The first day Of Term Four for students will be **Monday October 6**

LEARNING & TEACHING

At St. Michael's, we believe that learning is a journey we take together — students, teachers, and families all play an important part. Every day, our classrooms are filled with curiosity, discovery and moments of growth as children explore new ideas and build the skills they'll carry with them for life.

Learning: A Lifelong Adventure

For our students, learning isn't just about books and tests — it's about asking questions, solving problems, and finding joy in discovery. Whether they're sounding out their first words, participating in Physical Education lessons, or exploring new ways to express themselves through art and music, our learners are encouraged to be creative, confident, and resilient.

Every child learns in their own unique way. That's why our staff work hard to provide a variety of activities that suit different learning styles — from hands-on tasks and group discussions to quiet reflection and digital learning tools. We celebrate effort and progress, knowing that mistakes are stepping stones to success.

Teaching: More Than Just Lessons

Teaching at St. Michael's is about much more than delivering information — it's about building relationships, inspiring a love of learning, and supporting the whole child. Our dedicated teachers are constantly learning too, staying up-to-date with the best practices and adapting their methods to meet the needs of every student.

Teachers work together across year levels and subjects, sharing ideas and strategies to create a positive and inclusive learning environment. They also collaborate closely with families, because we know that children thrive when school and home work hand-in-hand.

How Families Can Support Learning at Home

Parents and carers are partners in children's education. Here are a few simple ways you can support learning at home:

- **Read together** every day — even just 10 minutes makes a big difference
- **Talk about school** — ask open-ended questions about what your child learned or enjoyed
- **Celebrate effort** — praise hard work and persistence, not just results
- **Create routines** — a regular bedtime and a quiet space for homework help children focus

Together, We Make a Difference

At St. Michael's, we're proud of the supportive community we've built. Learning and teaching are at the heart of what we do, and when we work together — students, teachers, and families — we create a place where every child can shine.

WELLBEING

Anxiety & Young People

Anxiety is a natural and expected part of growing up. In fact, it plays an important role in helping young people prepare for challenges, stay alert to potential dangers and adapt to new situations. It can motivate them to study for a test, practise before a performance, or tread carefully in unfamiliar settings. However, for many children and adolescents today, anxiety can shift from being a helpful response to becoming intense, persistent and disruptive.

The world young people are growing up in is fast-paced and often demanding. Academic pressures, social expectations, family changes and the constant presence of digital media, can all contribute to heightened stress and worry.

When anxiety is left unrecognised or unsupported, it can begin to affect a young person's wellbeing, learning, friendships and self-confidence. That's why it's so important for adult carers to understand how anxiety may present in children. Everyone experiences anxiety differently, and there's no one-size-fits-all solution.

This edition of SchoolTV raises awareness and provides families with practical strategies to help young people manage anxiety in healthy, constructive ways. For more information, click on the following link:

<https://smdaylesford.catholic.schooltv.me/newsletter/anxiety-young-people-au>

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

St. Vinnies Winter Appeal

Donations of good quality clothes, toys and household items (no electronics) can begin to be brought to school as of next week. Thank you in anticipation of your support for this worthy cause.

Father's/Special People Day

We look forward to welcoming all fathers and special people to our school next **Friday September 5 for breakfast (8:00am) and a special liturgy in the Presentation Centre (9:05am)**. We ask that all families send a photo of their father/special person to Sarah Mooney by **3:00pm, Monday September 1**. Sarah's email address is: smooney@smdaylesford.catholic.edu.au

Mini Vinnies

This week, students involved in our Mini Vinnies group gathered to discuss ideas focused on how we can 'hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor' over the remainder of the year. We look forward to sharing more information with you about some upcoming events taking place later this term/early next term. When asked who would be willing to join a choir and perform a concert at Hepburn House next term, it was heartening to see the majority of our Mini Vinnies students express an interest in this. It is hoped that students interested in being part of the choir will have an opportunity to practice together prior to the end of the term.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Foundation 2026 Information Evening

It was wonderful to see so many families at our Foundation 2026 Information Evening held on Wednesday. We look forward to continuing our work with families on the following dates:

October 15 – Foundation Information Night #2 (5:30pm-6:30pm)

October 21 – Foundation Morning #1 (9am-11am)

November 25 - Foundation Morning #2 (9am-11am)

December 2 - 'Going Up Day' (9am - 11:30am)

Photo here - Helen

Playgroup

Sessions will continue on Fridays from 10am-11am throughout the term. All new and existing families are most welcome to attend.

Parent helpers wanted

With a number of events taking place this term, there are 2 in particular that require additional support:

Friday September 5: Fathers Day/Special People's Breakfast

Tuesday September 16: Winter Sports (Years 3-6)

Both events require parents or carers to assist in cooking BBQs and we will also need parents and carers to assist with the canteen for Winter Sports. If you are available to help out, even if only for a short amount of time, please email: thogan@smdaylesford.catholic.edu.au

Thanks in anticipation of your support.

Swiss Italian Fiesta

St. Michael's will once again be involved in the Swiss Italian Fiesta. Our school will be involved by marching in the parade. We invite all students and families to join in! For those participating, the parade takes place on Saturday October 25. We will meet at the Savoia Hotel at 11:30am.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Accounts

Due to a recent change in our finance system, we are currently unable to issue receipts to families regarding the payment of school fees. We are hopeful that receipts will resume being issued over the coming weeks. We thank you in anticipation of your patience and understanding.

Thank you to the families who have attended to this matter already this year. It is imperative that fee obligations are met by families as a means of maintaining the normal function and operation of our school. If you have outstanding fees, could you please attend to those ASAP. Alternatively, if you are having trouble paying your fees, please contact me to discuss further.

Our NAB account details are **Account Name: St Michaels General BSB 083 004 Account No 711437401**. Our preferred fee paying method is direct debit, these forms are available from the office. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Have a great weekend!

Tim



Free Parenting Program



Tuning in to Kids - Daylesford

Eager to learn how to help your child manage feelings and emotions and develop emotional intelligence?

Children with emotional intelligence have greater success making and keeping friends, are more able to be calm when upset or angry and have better concentration at school.

In this program you will find out how to help your child understand and manage feelings such as frustration, worry and anger through the concepts of emotional intelligence and Emotion Coaching.

✓ Support

✓ Strategies

✓ Understanding

Program Details:

Date: Thursdays 23rd October – 27th November

Time: 12.00am-2.00pm

Location: Daylesford Neighbourhood House
Paddock Room – 13 Camp Street, Daylesford.

Register:

W [Tuning in to Kids - CatholicCare Victoria](https://www.catholiccarevic.org.au/tuning-in-to-kids)

P (03) 5337 8999

E parenting.ballarat@catholiccarevic.org.au

This program has six weekly sessions.

Early registration is recommended. Express your interest via the QR code or contact us.



www.catholiccarevic.org.au

(03) 5337 8999 | 4-6 Peel Street North, Bakery Hill Vic.