



# PARENT HANDBOOK



## General Information

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### Absences

If a child is absent through illness from class for a day, or part of a day, government regulations require that a parent/carer provide a written explanation noting the length of absence.

Parents need only ring the school office if their child is sick with an illness that may affect other students or teachers and/or will mean they are absent for more than 2 days.

The office will generate a note informing the teacher of the student's absence. A note from the parent/carer is still required on return to school. Unexplained absences are recorded as "Absent Without Reason". A follow up note will be generated from the school requiring a reason for every absence/partial absence if a note is not received from parents after 3 days.

Where a student will be absent for short term leave [1-5 days] or for extended periods of leave [more than 5 days] - for example, parents taking the family overseas - parents must request leave from the Principal at least three weeks prior on the 'Application for Extended Leave' form (available from our website). The Principal will consider the application and a certificate will be issued to confirm the leave.

The absence will be marked as 'Leave' on the attendance roll. Where a student is habitually absent - for example habitual unexplained absence for more than a few days, habitually absent on a given day, or habitually absent on carnival days or excursions - parents will need to attend an interview to explain the reason for the absence. This is also the case where a student consistently arrives late to school.

### Before And After School Care

St Bernadette's Before School Care operates from 6.45 – 8:45 am and the After School Care operates from 2:45 – 6:15 pm.

The centre is run by the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Parramatta. Catholic Out of School Hours Care (COSHC) is contactable on 0408 582 535 (Lauren Kane) for enrolments enquiries, enrolment forms and any other information.

You can also visit the St Bernadette's COSHC website: <http://www.coshc.catholic.edu.au/castle-hill-st-bernadettes-primary> for further details.

### Buddy System

We buddy the Year 6 children with the Kindergarten students to enhance the students leadership skills and responsibility for others.

The Kindergarten students benefit from the learning activities that the Year 6 students involve them in during the year. Year 5 and Year 1 also use this buddy system.

### Bus Passes

School Opal Cards are available for children in Years 3 to 6 living 1.6km or more from school, measured on a radius from the centre of the school site. All children in Kindergarten and Years 1 and 2 are eligible, regardless of distance.

Children can apply for a School Opal Card from [transportnsw.info/school-students](http://transportnsw.info/school-students).

Only those children who will be catching a bus to or from school should apply for a School Opal Card. For further information you can contact the School Office.

## Canteen

Our canteen is run by Healthy Bites. It operates every day at recess and lunchtime. Lunch orders must be placed in the morning by 8am via the online Quickcliq system. Orders are then ready for lunchtime and delivered to your child. School lunches must be pre-ordered.

At recess, an assortment of snacks and drinks are available for purchase, or via the online system, which students collect themselves from the canteen. The canteen operates in accordance with the NSW Healthy Canteen guidelines and uses an approved AMBER menu.

A menu is sent home at the beginning of each year and a copy is available on the website in the *Community/School Notes/Canteen* section. Late lunch orders will not be accepted.

## Changes In Afternoon Routine

Any change in afternoon routine for children going home MUST be notified in writing to the Class Teacher. In the case of an emergency a call to the office before 1.30pm is appreciated.

Please note that unless a note has been received, the child/children will be sent home by the normal route. Children can easily forget the changed arrangements.

## Collecting Children From School

Please park in the main car park and then collect children from the Tuckshop area. Special arrangements are made during first term for Kindergarten. Children are cared for in the Office if something unforeseen happens. Children are not left unattended under any circumstances. Please be very careful when backing out of car spaces in the car park. Be aware of small children and other cars behind you.

Car Pick Up Service - this operates from 3pm every day. Parents enter the car park via Brisbane Road and display a 'yellow number card' in their front windscreen. This number is then called out and students proceed into their parents car and then parents drive back down the driveway to Brisbane Road.

## Driving Children To School

Please note the following directions if you drive your child to school:

- enter and exit via Brisbane Road
- drop child in Kiss and Drop zone
- on exiting turn left at the end of the driveway (am/pm)

A Kiss and Drop zone is used in the morning to ease traffic congestion.

## Parents And Friends Association

The Parents and Friends Association operates to support the school. Meetings are held once a term, usually Wednesday of the fifth week of term.

The aims of the association are:

- to promote an atmosphere of Christian life
- to assist in keeping the school in good order and repair
- to raise funds for the provision of equipment and teaching aids as may be deemed necessary
- to confer with the Parish Priest and the Principal in matters relating to the needs of the school
- to provide a means of meeting socially for all associated with the school
- to promote a wider interest within the association of the principles and methods of education in general, and Catholic education in particular
- to give public expression, when the occasion arises, in matters affecting Catholic education.

## **Punctuality And Partial Absences**

The school bell rings at 8.30am. All children are expected to be at school in time to assemble with their peers for the morning greeting.

If your child is late, accompany them to the office, and obtain and complete the Partial Absence slip provided. Latecomers may disrupt morning prayers and children's learning, therefore, parents are urged to ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Punctuality is a sign of respect and courtesy towards others.

If your child needs to go home during the course of the school day, you need to provide a note to the teacher and visit the office to sign out your child(ren) on the Partial Absence slip provided. Your child will then be sent to the school office. The note is forwarded to the class teacher via the office bag and the details are entered into the class roll.

## **Regional High Schools**

The regional high school is Gilroy College, Castle Hill, which is a co-educational systemic school catering for Years 7 to 12. This school communicates closely with us and continues student progress and development within a very similar environment of care, faith and excellence. We encourage families to continue their children's schooling in the Christian environment provided by Catholic high schools

We are also well served by other local Catholic high schools such as Marian College, Kenthurst; Oakhill College, Castle Hill; Mt St Benedict's College at Pennant Hills; Our Lady of Mercy College at Parramatta; and Loreto Normanhurst.

## **School Hours**

Please make sure that you are familiar with our hours of operation as well as the break times for students. If you need to collect your child, it is preferred that this is done during one of the break periods so as to minimise classroom disruptions.

School hours: 8:30am - 2:45pm

Recess: 10:30am - 11:00am

Lunch: 1:00pm - 1:40pm

Afternoon Dismissal: 2:45pm

## **Staff Development**

Teachers are professionals who regularly update their knowledge and skills to provide quality education. They spend a great deal of time engaged in planning and professional development.

Throughout the school year, every school suspends classes for six pupil free days. When staff development days are planned, you will receive at least four weeks notice of the date and purpose of the day.

On occasional days throughout the year, class teachers are released from class to attend in-service courses. Qualified relief teachers continue the teachers' daily programs on these days.

## Student Management / Pastoral Care

At St Bernadette's Castle Hill...

1. We are a Christ-centred community where the growth of each individual is nurtured.
2. Our actions are based on mutual respect between staff, students, parents and the community, and on the core values of respect, honesty, care and compassion, forgiveness, and tolerance
3. Reward, praise and encouragement of appropriate behaviour are central to our philosophy.
4. Students need to know the rules and their rights as well as their responsibilities and the logical consequences for not keeping the rules.
5. Our goals are to help students become self-disciplined, to respect the rights and needs of all, to make responsible choices, and to accept the consequences of their actions.
6. We set clear, high standards and expect the best.
7. The co-operation of parents is vital in supporting and implementing this policy. Parents are the first and foremost educators of their children and we are there to assist them on this journey of growth and learning.
8. This policy is directed towards encouraging the students to become more effective and responsible members of society.

We aim to develop in each child a respect for each other. Each member of our school community is held in high esteem and our policy is seen as part of this broad dimension of pastoral care.

Our five core values of Respect, Honesty, Care and Compassion, Forgiveness, and Tolerance form the basis of how we treat other people. Our Student Management aims to be just, fair and aims to uphold the dignity of the person. Parents are informed about children's behaviour as we endeavour to develop children who are able to live with self control and discipline in their lives.

Pastoral care envelops our community. We celebrate the good, welcome the new, sympathise with the sad, encourage the lonely, and interact regularly.

## Supervision Of Children

Morning supervision	Commences 8:00 am
Bus supervision	Children are supervised by staff until they board the bus
Brisbane Road walking line	Children are supervised at crossing
Old Northern Road walking line	Children are supervised at crossing
Parent pick up area	Children are supervised until collected
Before school care	Children attending COSHC are escorted to the playground by COSHC staff in time for the commencement of school
After school care	Children are collected from the school grounds by COSHC staff and taken to the COSHC centre. Special arrangements are made for collection of Kindergarten children in Term One.

Children are not encouraged to arrive at school before supervision begins at 8:00 am. If children need to be left before this, arrangements for their care can be made at the Before and After School Centre adjacent to the school. They should also be picked up by 3:00 pm. Children will be seated outside the staffroom until collected.

Any change in afternoon routine for children going home must be notified in writing to the class teacher/bus supervision teacher.

Unless a note has been received the child/children will be sent home by the normal route. Children can easily forget the changed arrangements.

## Visitors

St Bernadette's has a Work Health and Safety Committee which has asked that parents/carers keep in mind that the children's safety is our priority.

All visitors, including parents and carers, must report to the office on arrival. If entering school grounds, visitors must sign in using the iPad and wear the printed photo identification tag generated by the iPad.

Visitors who are not wearing their identification tag will not be allowed to remain on the school grounds.

# Communication

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## Important Information For Teachers

The class teacher must be informed if a child:

- has a medical appointment during school hours
- is attending any medical specialists, e.g. speech or occupational therapy
- has to wear glasses
- has a hearing aid
- is under medical treatment or has a health problem that may affect learning
- has any food allergies
- is to be absent for an extended period of time
- needs to leave school early
- has recently experienced a major upset (e.g. family break-up, death of a relative, moving house, etc.)
- is being collected by a parent or authorised friend from within the school grounds.

## Interviews

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your child's education, please arrange an interview.

Appointments with the Principal and the teachers can be arranged through the school secretary for a mutually convenient time. It is asked that parents not interrupt a teacher during class time. Messages regarding children can be conveyed through the school secretary. In all situations involving children's learning it is important to make an appointment to see your child's teacher in the first instance.

If further meetings are required, a meeting with the Stage Coordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal may be appropriate.

## Newsletter

Every Friday families receive our school e-newsletter via email with a link to the newsletter on our website. The e-newsletter is full of useful information, events for the following week and upcoming events.

It also has reviews from students on recent excursions/incursions and news on current events and issues.

It is a key link between home and school, and encourages a good home/school relationship by regular and open communication. Current and past newsletters can be found on the 'Newsletter' page on this website.

## Reporting To Parents

Parents and teachers are urged to have regular, open and honest communication regarding children's progress and development.

We welcome parents and invite them to meet regularly with the teachers. For a formal interview, or informal consultation, contact the office or teacher concerned to organise a mutually convenient time. It is asked that parents not interrupt a teacher during class time.

In all situations involving children's learning it is important to make an appointment to see your child's teacher in the first instance. If further meetings are required, a meeting with the stage leader, Assistant Principal or Principal may be appropriate.

We constantly strive to clarify our assessment and reporting of children's work to keep parents well informed of children's progress and learning.

## Term Calendars

A family calendar is available to view from our website. This informs families of upcoming events from special Masses/Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day and Grandparents' Day celebrations to excursions/incursions and sporting events etc.

See the 'Calendar' page of our website.

# Learning And Teaching

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## Enrichment Activities

Our children are involved in a wide range of special activities which aim to cater for the development of gifts and talents.

The children are able to participate in activities which develop the 'whole' person. These activities include Voice of Youth (public speaking), cross-country carnivals, NSW championship competitions in netball and basketball, the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS), incursions, excursions, swimming and athletic carnivals, a Kindergarten and Year 1 swimming program and other pursuits.

Also see: [Extracurricular Activities](#)

## Homework

We recognise the benefits of homework and we also understand that families have many commitments after school.

Homework is seen as a valuable means of

- Providing time for reading
- Reinforcing class work
- Developing a regular habit of home study
- Strengthening the home / school partnership.

## Guidelines

- Reading is an essential part of homework
- Homework tasks will be consistent across the grade
- Homework tasks may need to be modified to meet the special needs of some children
- During the home preparation period for sacramental programs the amount of homework set will be given consideration.

## Kindergarten

Reading is a key part of homework for our kindergarten children. All children will receive a weekly communication sheet to bring home.

Other activities may include:

- Practising work on letters, sounds and sight words
- Development of gross motor skills eg throwing, catching, skipping.

## Years 1 and 2

Reading home readers and having parents read to them is an essential part of homework.

Other activities may include:

- Practising sight words and spelling words
- Activities related to what is taught
- Collecting resources for research projects, class displays.

## Years 3 to 6

A diary will be used for students to note homework tasks and school events. Reading is an essential part of homework.

Other activities may include:

- Engaging in English activities – reading, writing, spelling etc
- Activities related to what is being taught in class
- Collecting resources for research projects, class displays

Completing unfinished class work. There is no minimum or maximum time limit set on homework. Parents need to communicate with teachers if they believe that their child is spending too much time completing homework.

## **Student Management/Pastoral Care**

We aim to develop in each child a respect for each other. Each member of our school community is held in high esteem and our policy is seen as part of this broad dimension of pastoral care.

Our student management aims to be just, fair and to uphold the dignity of the person. Parents are informed about children's behaviour as we endeavour to develop children who are able to live with self-control and discipline in their lives.

Pastoral care envelops our community. We celebrate the good, welcome the new, sympathise with the sad, encourage the lonely, and interact regularly.

## **Technology**

Students in Years 5 and 6 bring their own device to school for class use and the school provides ipads and chrome books for Kindergarten to Year 4 students.

If a child brings a mobile phone to school it remains the responsibility of that child. The phone must remain switched off during school hours and kept in his or her bag. A student who uses a mobile phone during school time without permission will have the phone stored in the office until it can be collected by a parent.

The school is well equipped with a variety of technology. All classrooms have access to Chrome Books, MacBooks, iPads and Apple TV's. As well as a variety of applications and access to Google's online learning platforms.

We regularly utilise technology to assist quality teaching which fully engages students in their learning.

# Uniform And Grooming

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## Grooming Policy

At St Bernadette's we believe that:

- wearing the St Bernadette's school uniform is an important part of instilling pride in the children and maintaining our school identity and spirit.
- by adhering to a consistent uniform and grooming policy, equality and self-respect will be developed within the school community.

Aims

- To develop the consistent wearing of the St Bernadette's school uniform
- To promote unity and develop a sense of belonging at St Bernadette's
- To ensure that our school uniform is attractive, practical and accessible to all families
- To provide opportunities to review and evaluate our school uniform by the school community when necessary.

Expectations

- Children are to wear the correct school uniform neatly and with pride.
- Children are to follow the school's policy for grooming especially in relation to hair and jewellery.
- Parents are asked to ensure that their children wear the correct school uniform and follow the school's grooming policy at all times.
- Classroom teachers are responsible for maintaining and checking that the children are wearing the uniform correctly and adhering to the school's grooming requirements.
- All uniform items should be in good condition.
- All items of clothing are to be clearly marked with the child's full name.

General Requirements

- All students are to use the St Bernadette's school backpack. This is available from the uniform shop. Sporting bags and other fashion bags are not allowed.
- All students are to use the St Bernadette's excursion bag when they go on an excursion. Sports or fashion backpacks are not allowed. One excursion bag per family is advised.
- Protective wet weather clothing may be worn to and from school. It should not be worn during school. It is important that children have wet weather clothing in their bags at all times. For safety reasons, children are not allowed to bring umbrellas to school.
- Girls are permitted to wear one pair of sleepers or plain studs, a plain wristwatch. A chain with cross or religious medallion may be worn under the shirt line.
- Girls are not permitted to wear fashion jewellery of any kind, make up or nail varnish - nails should be kept cleaned and neatly trimmed.
- Boys are permitted to wear a plain wristwatch. A chain with cross or religious medallion may be worn under the shirt line.
- Boys are not permitted to wear fashion jewellery of any kind.
- Hair is to be kept neat, tidy and off the collar. For boys: a short neat hair cut and for girls: a neat hair cut with long hair to be tied back. In both cases, fringes need to be short and off the face (not falling across the face or in eyes). It is to be of consistent natural colour. Bleaching, colouring, streaking or tinting of any nature is not permitted.
- Hair styles are to be of a gradual even grade and all extremes of fashion are to be avoided.
- Examples of some styles that are not permitted are ridges, lines, undercuts, steps, bowl cuts, excessive shaping with gel and any shaving cuts (specifically No 1 and No 2.)

## Lost Property

If clothing is lost it will be placed in the lost property bin located outside the Year 5 learning space. If a child has mislaid an item, please ask them to look in the bin promptly as all unnamed clothing that is not claimed will be given to the uniform shop or the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Please ensure that all articles of clothing are clearly labelled with your child's name.

## Uniform Shop

The St Bernadette's Uniform Shop is a fundraising initiative of the P&F Association.

It is preferable that uniform Orders are made online by using the online app QuickCliq.

QuickCliq is a cashless online ordering system that helps you manage your children's uniform and canteen orders. QuickCliq is used by over 700 schools across Australia and enables you to place orders and make payments easily from the comfort of your home or office.

[Click Here to go to QuickCliq](#)

As part of the Kindergarten Orientation during November, the uniform shop will open for your initial uniform purchases. Dates and times will be available closer to the time.

Generally, the shop is open during the school term on Tuesdays between 8:00 and 10:00 am, except on days when there are special school activities, e.g. swimming or athletics carnivals.

## Uniforms

All items of the school uniform (excluding shoes) can be purchased from the school uniform shop located on the school premises. Any profit from the uniform shop is returned to the P&F for resources for the school.

The uniform includes a school hat which must be worn to and from school, during sport and outdoor lessons and at all times during play.

It is the responsibility of parents and children to ensure that the hat is worn to school each day. The purpose of the hat is for your child's sun protection. Children without a hat are asked to sit in the shaded areas.

	BOYS	GIRLS
<b>Summer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue short sleeved shirt (open neck)</li> <li>Navy shorts</li> <li>Black shoes (lace up/velcro)</li> <li>Navy socks (that cover ankle bone when folded over)</li> <li>School hat with crest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer tunic</li> <li>Black shoes (lace up/buckle/velcro)</li> <li>White anklet socks (that cover ankle bone when folded over)</li> <li>School hat with crest</li> <li>Hair ribbons/scrunchies in school material/navy blue</li> <li>Navy or black hair elastics</li> </ul>
<b>Winter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Navy trousers (winter weight)</li> <li>Blue long sleeved shirt</li> <li>Navy tie</li> <li>School sloppy joe/cardigan with crest</li> <li>Black shoes (lace up/velcro)</li> <li>Navy socks (that cover ankle bone when folded over)</li> <li>School hat with crest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Navy checked tunic</li> <li>Blue long sleeved blouse</li> <li>Navy checked tab tie</li> <li>School sloppy joe/cardigan with crest</li> <li>Black shoes (lace up/buckle/velcro)</li> <li>Navy anklet socks (that cover ankle bone when folded over) or knee length <b>or</b> navy tights (ribbed or opaque)</li> <li>School hat with crest</li> <li>Hair ribbons/scrunchies in school material/navy blue</li> <li>Navy or black hair elastics</li> </ul>
<b>Sport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue polo shirt with crest</li> <li>Navy blue sports shorts</li> <li>Plain white anklet socks (that cover ankle bone when folded over)</li> <li>Joggers - predominantly white with white laces</li> <li>navy blue school tracksuit with crest for winter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue polo shirt with cress</li> <li>Navy blue pleated skirt/navy blue sports shorts</li> <li>Plain white anklet socks (that cover ankle bone when folded over)</li> <li>Joggers - predominantly white with white laces</li> <li>navy blue school tracksuit with crest for winter</li> <li>Navy or black hair elastics</li> </ul>
<b>School bags</b>	<p>Medium-size backpacks (suitable for the Infant grades) and large size backpacks (suitable for Primary grades) are a compulsory part of the school uniform. Excursion bags (marked with the school crest) are also available for excursions. Library bags are also available from the uniform shop.</p>	

## Health And Safety

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### Accidents & Injuries

Children occasionally have minor injuries from their play.

They are usually treated on the playground or sent to the office for care and attention to their injuries. The staff are well prepared for first aid. Under certain circumstances, emergency numbers (please keep up-to-date) will be contacted and emergency measures taken by the Principal or Assistant Principal. Any serious accident/injury is immediately treated and parents are contacted.

### Anaphylaxis

If your child suffers from anaphylaxis, it is expected that you will provide the school with an action plan signed by your immunologist for the current school year, together with a current photo of your child. In the interest of providing a safe environment, this action plan will be photocopied and displayed in your child's classroom, sick bay and other rooms/indoor areas your child may enter, and also the school canteen.

A number of children in the school suffer from extreme nut allergies, therefore St Bernadette's aims to be a nut-free school. We ask for parents' support and co-operation in eliminating all nut based food products from your children's recess and lunch.

### Immunisation

On enrolment an Immunisation Certificate is to be provided to the school.

The certificate reminds and encourages parents to have their child immunised against diseases which can be prevented by immunisation. The certificate is available from your local family doctor.

Unimmunised children may be required to stay at home if there is an outbreak of any of the childhood diseases. This will prevent the spread of the disease to other children, families and the community.

### Medication

If your child requires medication during school hours then a doctor's note must be supplied. Prescribed medication should be in its original container (with the child's name on it). For other medications e.g. liquid Panadol, eye drops etc., these must be accompanied by a written doctor's note.

Medication needing to be given 3 times a day can be administered at home (before school, after school and bed time). This is in line with directions from the Catholic Education Commission. Most children are able to remind themselves and the teacher of times for taking medicines. See 'Food Allergies' regarding Anaphylaxis.

### Sickness

If children are ill during the day, parents are usually contacted to collect them. In case parents are unable to be contacted, the children will be cared for by the staff. Please keep children home if they are feeling ill, etc since they are not well enough to learn and may make others ill.

Please refer to the NSW Health website for further details: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/a-to-z-infectious-diseases.aspx>.

### Head Lice

These occur in all schools from time-to-time. Please address this issue as soon as possible if it applies to your child/children or your child's class. Please refer to the NSW Health website for further details:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/headlice/Pages/treatment.aspx>.