



St. Damian's Newsletter

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No. 1 - 2024

The St Damian's School Community acknowledges that we come together on the ancestral lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation

Welcome back to 2024

We are very excited to inform our community that our school has partnered with Latrobe University to implement the Science of Reading. The ability to read proficiently is fundamental to a student's success at school and in later life. The Science of Reading provides the strongest evidence about how young children learn to read. Understanding the cognitive science behind how students learn to read and the research on effective instruction makes it easier for teachers to align classroom teaching with evidence. Cognitive science explains how the brain learns skills that are not innate or 'biologically primary'. Speaking is a biologically primary skill that humans 'pick up' naturally, whereas reading, while closely associated with speaking, is primarily a cultural invention of the last 6,000 years, which requires repetition and external motivation to be mastered. When a child is taught how to read, neural pathways that have evolved to specialise in language and visual recognition are re-purposed for the process of reading and writing. Reading must be explicitly and systematically taught in a structured way.

The Science of Reading refers to a body of evidence that includes multi-disciplinary knowledge from education, linguistics, cognitive psychology, special education and neuroscience. The Science of Reading looks at the essential cognitive processes for competent reading and describes how reading develops in readers. These studies have revealed a great deal about how we learn to read, what goes wrong when students don't learn, and the instructional strategies that are required for reading.

We will be offering some parent information sessions during this term so that everyone in our community has a better understanding of how we are teaching the students, especially in the area of English. MACS has also embarked on this research and schools are also beginning to use this methodology to teach Mathematics. Hence, the testing in English (EOI) and Maths (MOI) undertaken in the first two days of school this year. As both these assessments were very lengthy and involved, some of the students have needed to complete these over this week and possibly next week as well.

Opening of the Year Mass

Yesterday we gathered as a whole school to celebrate Mass to mark the beginning of the school year. It was wonderful to have our whole community together once again. Our teachers were commissioned at this Mass and all classroom prayer cloths blessed. We hope that everyone has a wonderful year in 2024.

School Assembly

School Assemblies this year will be held every alternate Monday, where practical. The next school assembly for the year will be held on Monday 12th February at 2.40pm in the hall. Year 2S is presenting and celebrating their learning. At each assembly a class presents some aspects of their learning. Student of the Week awards are presented to students who demonstrate one or more of our school expectations. Parents are warmly welcome to attend.

Learning Conversations

Our Learning Conversations will be held on Monday 19th February from 8.30am and conclude at 5.30pm. These conversations are a wonderful opportunity to support the children as they begin their new year of learning. Through establishing positive relationships between school and home the children feel supported and know that everyone understands their needs. Please ensure that you have booked a time to meet with your child(ren)'s teacher. There is opportunity for both online and face to face to accommodate all families. We expect that the children will be present during these meetings. **Please note, that due to the Learning Conversations, the children are not required at school.**

Booking a time for Learning Conversations

In response to the parent survey from last year, our school now has a new communication platform called COMPASS. Through this platform, parents will receive all communication as well as communicate with the school, book for various events including meetings and learning conversations, advice of student absences, fill permission and medical forms, etc. In essence, everything will happen through this APP so that it is streamlined. Parents are asked to please ensure you have downloaded the COMPASS APP. If unsure please contact the school office and you will be guided. The Learning Conversation times will be booked on COMPASS, so please book via the 'Conference' tab or icon. As we are all becoming used to using this new APP I'm sure there will be some teething problems. We will work together as we all learn how to use this new platform.

Ash Wednesday

The Liturgical Season of Lent this year begins with Ash Wednesday next Wednesday 14th February. Lent marks for us as Christians a time to prepare for Easter. On Ash Wednesday, we are marked with the cross to remind us that we are

embarking on the 40 days of prayer, repentance and alms giving. This ends on Holy Thursday when the Season of Easter begins. This Lenten period allows us a time for self-discipline as we prepare for Easter, which is considered the holiest day of the year commemorating Jesus' resurrection. Lent for us also replicates Jesus' sacrifice in the desert and his avoidance of temptation during those 40 days. Therefore in this period we try to abstain from luxuries and commit to fasting and prayer as a way to focus ourselves on the true importance of this time. As a whole school, we will be attending the Parish Mass at 9.15 am. Families are welcome to join with us.

School Photos

School Photos will be taken on March 6th. Further information regarding ordering will be sent home closer to the date.

School Closure Day

On Monday 11th March school will be closed for the Labour Day public holiday.

School Hats

St Damian's school is a Sunsmart school. This means that we expect all our students and staff to be wearing hats when outside during high UV periods, mainly in Term 1 and Term 4. Therefore, we ask all parents to ensure that your child(ren) have their **school hat** to wear when at school. *Australia* has one of the highest rates of *skin cancer* in the world. Anyone can be at risk of developing *skin cancer*. The majority of *skin cancers* in *Australia* are caused by exposure to UV radiation in sunlight. Hence our school policy: **NO HAT NO PLAY**

School Uniform

It is an expectation that students wear the correct school uniform at all times. This includes wearing school shoes, not black runners. School shoes should be **plain black leather**, which is much healthier for growing feet. Runners (whatever colour) should only be worn on sport days with school sport uniform. We also ask that students **do not** wear jewellery to school as this can easily be lost and can cause distress to both students and families. Only sleepers or stud earrings should be worn as a safety precaution. NO dangly earrings, nail polish or other accessories to be worn with the uniform, this includes hair accessories please. Also, please ensure that hair that is longer than shoulder length is tied back.

Car parking

Just a reminder that the front carpark is not a drop off zone. Please note that the carpark gates close between 8.30am and 8.45am and again between 3.15pm and 3.30pm. to allow a buffer period of safety whilst the students are entering or leaving the school premises. Parents are not allowed to open or close gates, this is the responsibility of the staff on duty. Working together in this ensures that everyone is kept safe at all times. Thank you for understanding.

Kiss & Drop & Parking

Thank you to all our parents for using the Kiss and Drop safely. Just to refresh procedures. This area is a drop off area only, drivers do not get out of the car for any purpose. Students alight from cars on the opposite side to the driver and walk quickly to the footpath. Staff are on duty to supervise the students to ensure everyone's safety. Parents cannot park in the school, the side area near the playground is for staff parking only.

School Advisory Council

I wish to advise that the first School Advisory Council meeting for 2024 will be held on Tuesday 12th March at 7.30pm. The role of the SAC is to provide advice and guidance to the school and support the school's initiatives and directions. School Advisory Council is not a representative body, its role is purely advisory. We are able to accommodate an extra member if a parent is keen to join. Membership is not onerous as we meet six (6) times a year, usually in the evening, for around 1.5 hours. The previous members of the SAC are continuing in their roles for 2024.

Picnic on Oval

Save the date of **Friday February 23rd between 5.00pm and 7.00pm** to come and have a picnic on our oval. I would like to invite all in our community to come and join together in an informal way and meet one another. Bring your picnic baskets, your picnic blankets your drinks (preferably non-alcoholic) and just relax on the oval. The children are welcome to bring their balls, etc and join with others in some fun games. This is not a school event, so teachers will not be required to be in attendance. Parents will be supervising their own children, especially if you allow them on the playground. We hope many of our families will come and enjoy a little community time.



Prayer for the Week:

Dear Lord, as we begin this new school year, we gather as a community of believers, a family of your children. We thank you for the renewal of the past months and our safe return to this place. We thank you for the promise of the days ahead and for the blessing of your accompaniment. Be with us this year. Amen

Have a great week,

Rosanna

Faith News

Ash Wednesday Mass

We will celebrate Ash Wednesday Mass next **Wednesday 14th February at 9:15am** with the Parish Community. You are most welcome to join us in our celebration as we continue to ensure our Catholic Faith and Traditions are nurtured across the generations.

Season of Lent

Next Wednesday 14th February, we commence our Lenten Journey - a journey in which we seek reconciliation with God, with our families, within our nation and with all people throughout the world. Throughout our journey, may we be reminded of our role as "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor 5:20). We are called to spread peace and the message of reconciliation to others. As we imitate Jesus' forty days in the wilderness, may we experience a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and pray that we grow in faith, hope and love. As we prepare for the Church's central feast of Easter, may our hearts and minds encounter a conversion through reconciliation and Social Justice.

Social Justice - Project Compassion

Throughout the Lenten Season, our School and Parish Community is reminded to pay attention to the care of others. We are invited to support a Caritas initiative, Project Compassion, to help others and ensure that we consider their wellbeing. Catholic Social Teaching directs our attention to the most vulnerable members of our society. Christ's presence in today's world is made known when we reach out in love to those in need. Each class has a Project Compassion collection box and we are encouraging students to make donations, no matter how small, throughout Lent. A donation box is also located at the Main Office. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible and Project Compassion will issue you with a receipt on completion of a donation form. Donation forms are available on each Project Compassion Box, many of which are located near the Office. Thank you for your ongoing support of this worthy cause.

Daily Christian Meditation

Each morning, our School Community begins the day with Christian Meditation. Meditation **begins at 8:45am and concludes at 8:50am.**

Christian Meditation:

Engages the mind in Prayer;

Provides an opportunity for Students to experience the real presence of God within their lives;

Provides an opportunity for Students to hear the Word of God speaking to them through the Scriptures;

Assists Students to discover the presence of God within them, thus, enabling them to meet God deep within their hearts.

Lenten Prayer

***May the Spirit lead us to renew our lives and
our relationships as we reflect on
our own human frailty as Jesus aspired to do.
Through Prayer and Fasting,
may we too gain strength of Spirit and
love to empower us to change our hearts and
to overcome our own imperfections
and broken relationships.
Let us constantly pray the Our Father
and may we become instruments filled with
God's Spirit of Peace (John 14:25) and
forgiveness so that what Jesus taught will
become a lived reality of spiritual renewal for
our whole world. May God's will be done,
"on earth as it is in heaven." Amen.***

Mary-Ann Wright

Religious Education Leader

St Damian's Parent Association

There will be a Parents Association meeting on Tuesday 13th February at 6.00pm at Phoenix and Co. All parents interested in joining can attend. Please email your interest to sdpabundoora@gmail.com

2024 SCHOOL FEES

FAMILY FEES

School Fees	\$ 1,970
Capital Fees	\$ 575

	\$ 2,545

STUDENT FEES

Curriculum Levy

(includes excursions, student resources, art and library resources)

Year Prep	\$ 395
Years 1 to 3	\$ 460
Years 4 to 6	\$ 490

\$130.00 discount for fees paid in full by the 30th March 2024

Camp Fees

Year 3 Camp Experience	\$ TBA
Year 4 Camp Experience	\$ TBA
Year 5/6 Camp Experience	\$ TBA

School Camp fees must be paid prior to the Camp commencement date.

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