



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



St. Damian's Newsletter

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Thursday November 14th 2024

A Note From the Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians & Carers

The Halloween Disco held last Friday 1st November was a great success. Many families joined in the spirit of the occasion and dressed up in many interesting costumes. The children obviously enjoyed themselves and overall, there was a real buzz as everyone joined in the singing and dancing. A huge thank you to our wonderful hardworking mums from the Parents Association for organising this family event for our school community. We are looking forward to the final school event, the School Christmas Carols night to be held on Wednesday the 4th December. Let's hope the weather is kind to us.

I hope all our families enjoyed the long weekend last week, and most especially, the beautiful weather we experienced. Hopefully many of you backed the right horse in the Melbourne Cup race.

P.A. Meeting

The P.A. Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 19th at 7.00pm. Everyone is welcome to come. It would be great to have some more members join this group. It is a great way to build connections and relationships within the community and support the school at the same time.

Foundation (Prep) Orientation Session

The final session was held yesterday for our incoming Preps for 2025. It was wonderful to see these little people come in very confidently and relaxed. It shows that our transitions sessions have been successful. We look forward to seeing them all again with their families next year.

School Closure Days

Please note that **Monday December 2nd** is a pupil free day to allow staff to plan for the 2025 school year. **Students are not required at school on this day.**

School Advisory Council

On Tuesday evening the SAC met for the last time for this year. Attached to this newsletter is the report tabled at the meeting, which summarises all that has been achieved this year. If there is anyone who would be interested in joining this group next year, please let me know. We can accommodate new members.

School Fees

Please note that as we are approaching the end of the school year, all outstanding school fees are due prior to the beginning of December. If any family is facing financial difficulties, please contact me to discuss. There are avenues we can explore.

Condolences

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Mulholland family on the recent passing of their grandmother and great-grandmother (Zac 3B) in Holland. We pray that God grant to her His peace and grace and reward her with eternal life.

Prayer

God, Our Father, loving and merciful, bring together and keep all families in perfect unity of love and mutual support.

Instill in each member the spirit of understanding and affection for each other.

May the mutual love and affection of parents set a good example.

Instill in children self-respect that they may respect others and grow in mature independence.

May the mutual affection and respect of families be a sign of Christian life here and hereafter,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

Have a great week

Rosanna

Faith News

Sacrament of Eucharist

Please continue to pray for our Year Four Students who will receive the Sacrament of Eucharist on **Saturday 23rd November at 2pm.**

St. Damian's Christmas Giving Tree

As is tradition at St. Damian's, we have been invited by St. Vincent De Paul to support those in need by providing gifts. We would be most appreciative if you could contribute to our collection. To enable enough time for the gifts to be distributed to those in need, we will begin collecting items on Monday 18th November. The closing date for donations is **Friday 6th December.**

Please support our 'Giving Tree' which will be placed in the School Foyer. Stars will indicate whether you wish to purchase a gift for a boy or a girl and will show an approximate age group. There are also stars to give gifts to a Mum, Dad or baby. Please take a star from the tree, purchase a gift, wrap the gift if you wish, then stick the star on to the package so the volunteers from St. Vinnies know who it is intended for. Please place the gift under the tree. These gifts will make Christmas a special time for families. Thank you in advance for your contributions towards this worthy cause. It is a privilege to witness our community take action for others

A Prayer to the Creator

Lord, Father of our human family, you created all human beings equal in dignity.

Pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter, dialogue, justice and peace.

Move us to create healthier societies and a more dignified world, a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.

May our hearts be open to all the peoples and nations of the earth.

May we recognise the goodness and beauty

that you have sown in each of us, and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects, and shared dreams. Amen.

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, Encyclical Letter, 3rd October 2020

Mary-Ann Wright

Religious Education Leader

Remembrance Day - Written by Ian Z—6S

Under darkened, distraught skies we meet today,
To pay respects to those now grey,
Who gave all that they had to give,
And whose names, in silence, we live.

The poppy fields, so red and bright,
Mirrored courage, displayed fight,
Of heroes who, through ordeals deep,
Kept vigil in lands distant, asleep.

With purpose they set out, their hearts afire,
Through eternal nights and darkest mire.
In cold trenches and the battle's din and roar,
They fought for peace, they fought for more.

Now, as the bugle's call rings out,
We stand with bowed hearts, hearts devout,
With hearts so wide and heads so low,
For those who could not stand or know.

We promise never to let it be,
That war's hard hand sets hearts to plea.
We pause to say on this disheartening day
We remember those lost on those fateful days.





Prep C	Chris Zheng	For always having a positive attitude and trying your best.
Prep M	Anastasia Grandikis	For your fantastic improvement in your reading and writing.
Prep W	Jordan Tiong	For using all his reading strategies and answering literal questions correctly.
1M	Jasper Gao	For always looking after our classroom.
1S	Aaron Batal	For consistently trying his best to apply his learnt strategies.
2AB	Eric Yuan	For participating in our excursion to Bundoora Homestead with great enthusiasm.
2C	Nathan Nguyen	For working hard to improve his handwriting.
2Y	Brittany Wu	For being a good friend and helping others succeed.
3B	Charli Nguyen	For consistently following all school expectations and being a kind member of 3B.
3M	Mahalia Bhatt	For consistently giving her best efforts across all areas of the curriculum.
3SR	Milan Maroge	For consistently demonstrating the school values of always doing his best.
4B	Spencer McDonnell	For his outstanding contributions to class discussions.
4C	Yiota Evangelakos	For being persistent with her learning and trying her best in all areas.
5AT	Chloe Liang	For her great commitment and effort to produce work to a good standard.
5M	Jacob Akom	For consistently giving your best efforts and embracing constructive feedback.
5R	Pengsheng Feng	For demonstrating exemplary maths skills and consistently excelling in problem solving.
6GC	Jonathan Mandarano	For showing a consistent improvement in being a focused and independent learner.
6S	Charlie Wang	For your hardworking efforts in our class debate.

2025 SCHOOL FEES

Family Fees

School Fees	\$2,030
Capital Fees	\$575

	\$2,605

Student Fees

Curriculum Levy—includes excursions, student resources, art and library resources)

Year Prep	\$40
Years 1 to 3	\$470
Years 4 to 6	\$500

\$130.00 discount for fees paid in full by the 31st March 2025

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.

FOR ALL NEW STUDENTS
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LOYOLA COLLEGE

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS MARKET & CAROLS NIGHT

**MARKET STALLS
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
CHRISTMAS CAROLS
FOOD TRUCKS**

GOLD COIN ENTRY

**ENJOY AN EVENING OF FAMILY
CELEBRATION WITH A VISIT FROM
SANTA FOR THE CHILDREN**

FRIDAY

29

NOVEMBER

5.00PM - 9.00PM



LOYOLA COLLEGE



**325 GRIMSHAW STREET
WATSONIA**

St Damian's Catholic Primary School
School Advisory Council
Principal's Report
November 13th 2024

Dear Members of the School Advisory Council and the St Damian School Community,

It is with pleasure that I present this final report for the 2024 school year. This report provides a summary of the year's activities, achievements and future plans as a school community.

Our School Community's highlights for 2024 were focused on some key areas. By the end of November, in **Education in Faith** we will have celebrated all three Sacraments this year, including Reconciliation with the Year 2 students, Confirmation with the Year 6 students and First Eucharist with the Year 4 students. Our parents and families were invited to participate in the Sacramental workshops run by the Presentation Sisters. These sessions unpack the Sacraments for both the children and their families and gives them an opportunity to further their understanding. Our hopes and dreams for the students is that this journey of faith which they are travelling will help to sustain them when they come to the crossroads of life. As the children experience different circumstances throughout their lives we hope they will always feel connected to their faith, their faith community and come to know and love a merciful and loving God who will guide them throughout their lives. We also thank Fr Dong for his continued support of our school and for his ministry and guidance which allows us to feel connected to the Parish community.

In the **Learning and Teaching** space we have much to celebrate. Once again the NAPLAN results for Year 3 and Year 5, show that the majority of our students are achieving above the State and National benchmarks, with many of our students excelling in English and Mathematics. We have continued the Literacy Enhancement Program which mirrors the programs implemented in the classrooms. This program allows for more students to be identified and supported with their English skills acquisition by targetting students in the early years of learning, namely Year 1 and 2. As a Leadership team, we have continued to build our understanding of the Vision for Instruction that MACS is implementing.

Many of our students have experienced a variety of extra-curricular achievements, some in Mathematics through various competitions, others in P.E. activities such as athletics or sport. As usual, the students were offered a comprehensive curriculum with many opportunities for incursions/excursions to experience hands on learning.

In **Leadership** this year we celebrated the completion of our building project. We marked this event with a formal blessing by Archbishop Comensoli and official opening by Mr Colin Brooks, State Member for Bundoora and the Executive Director of Catholic Schools, Dr Edward Simons on Friday 20th September. The event went off smoothly and to plan. We were fortunate to have some parishioners also attend as well as some of our current families, members of the Eastern Region Catholic Education Office, including the Regional Manager Mrs Marwin Austerberry and members of the SAC and P.A. We offered tours to showcase the new facility and we concluded the celebration with morning tea. Overall, everyone admired our new facilities and congratulated us on the improvements made to the school. Our School Leadership has worked tirelessly this year to support our teachers with the Vision for Instruction initiative introduced by MACS. The Leadership Team attended a number of Professional Learning sessions provided by the Eastern Regional Office to better understand how to implement this successfully in schools. We welcomed Mrs Julie Cannatelli this year to our Leadership Team as one of our Literacy Leaders. Both Literacy Leaders have worked very hard alongside our Coach provided by Latrobe University. This has supported our teachers to implement the new Literacy program across the school, with Little Learners Love Literacy in Prep to Year 2 and Ochre Reading in Years 3-6. We have already seen improvements in the students' learning. Carmen Bruce, our Math Leader has worked tirelessly with our teachers to implement the new Ochre Math program. Our teachers have worked very hard this year to implement many changes to their pedagogical practices. We congratulate them and our school leaders for their work and commitment to ensuring that great learning continues at St Damian's.

One of the most critical areas in schools is **Student Wellbeing/Pastoral Care**. We continued with the roles of Student Wellbeing Leader and Learning Diversity Leader who have worked to support students and families across the school with various needs. We also expanded the number of Learning Support Officers to ensure that students with additional needs received the support required to help them manage their learning. The school Psychologist worked one day per week. Her role was mainly to give assistance to students experiencing mental health issues and also social and emotional issues. The School Psychologist had a full case load for the year squeezing in as many students as possible. We had funding for one year from the Health in Schools program, unfortunately this does not continue into 2025.

For next year, we will utilize some of the NCCD funding to provide this service as many of the students the Psychologist saw where recipients of NCCD. The Respectful Relationships initiative continues in the school with the Student Wellbeing Leader driving this work with the teachers. Students undertake units of work focused on developing positive and respectful relationships with one another. One of the areas of concern for us this year has been around the use of social media. We invited the Police into the school to speak to our senior students about the safe and responsible use of social media. The police also spoke to them about the appropriateness of them accessing this medium and the dangers that can lurk there. This year we expanded our external Camp Program and for the first time, the Year 3 students joined the Year 4 students for a 2 day one night adventure camp experience. The students thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity. Child Safety continues to be an area of priority with all staff cognizant of their responsibilities in keeping children safe at all times. Finally, the Prep Orientations will concluded in mid-November thereby allowing for a smooth and positive transition into Primary School for all the incoming Preps.

We value **Community engagement** and encourage a variety of ways for parent involvement. We implemented the new communication platform Compass to better manage and streamline all communication. This has been very successful and well received by the community. This year we celebrated the children's learning with the Arts Show /Math night. It was an amazing community event with all families attending throughout the evening. The P.A. also had a sausage sizzle with many parents and teachers cooking on the night. We received much positive feedback and everyone could find something to enjoy, whether it was face painting, musical recitals, the choir singing, enjoying the children's art work or having fun playing maths games. There was certainly something for everyone. It was a very successful event. The five parents who are part of the School Advisory Council have continued to support the school by providing guidance and support throughout the year. The tireless work done by the P.A. Committee has ensured that the new Literacy program was adequately resourced. Much of the funds raised over the past twelve months have been expended on the purchase of Literacy resources to complement our new SOR program to ensure that this curriculum area could be taught well. Our Volunteer program supported many classes with parents volunteering to attend Camp experiences, excursions, classroom helper programs, supporting the various school events held during the year as well as sporting events and activities. Without the generous support of our community, many of the things we currently do would not be possible. We are most grateful to our families for their support and generosity.

Speaking of generosity, our wonderful students, with the support of their teachers and peers have held some fundraising events this year. The Year 4 students organized a fund raiser to aid cancer research. They made loom bands and sold these to the students in the school. They raised over \$500. The Year 6 students will hold their market stalls later in November. This initiative is part of their Math program where they study economics and business. All money raised from this initiative will be donated to various charities as chosen by the students. We congratulate the students on their initiative and also their care and concern for others. Over the year the school community has supported St Vincent de Paul society through the winter appeal and Christmas giving tree; Caritas through the term one bring a gold coin casual dress day and Project Compassion. These very worthy charities work tirelessly to help those in need in our community. We are very proud of the efforts of this community who strive to be the Hands, Heart and Voice of Christ in so many ways.

In looking ahead to **Future Directions**, our school community is committed to expanding academic programs to meet the evolving needs of our students. In 2025 we will be strengthening the delivery of the reading program to embed it in our pedagogical practices with the aim of continually improving student outcomes and teacher knowledge.

We aim to continue to provide our students with quality facilities and resources to enable them to learn in an environment that meets their needs. With this in mind we will strive to continue to renew resources to support the students' learning.

In ending, I look forward to the continued collaboration between the school community and the School Advisory Council to achieve our goals and provide the best possible education for our students. I am most grateful for the support of our school community. We value your support and participation in our school's progress. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of the members of the SAC, for their advice and contribution made to the school. We look forward to meeting again in 2025 and continuing to work in partnership. My heartfelt thanks are extended to the staff, parents and students for all that has been achieved this year. A special thank you to the P.A Committee for all their hard work and the support given to ensure we can provide appropriate resources to support student learning. I wish all of our parent community a very joyous Christmas Season. May the blessings of this special time of the year be with you all.

Rosanna Piccolo.
Principal.