



NEWSLETTER

Dear Families,

As we journey through the season of Lent, we are reminded that God calls us to offer others a second chance. Lent invites us to pause, reflect and consider how we can live this message in our daily actions. As a school community, one meaningful way we can do this is by supporting **Project Compassion**.

All families have received a Project Compassion money box to assist with fundraising at home. Throughout the term, we will also be hosting several school fundraising events:

- **Friday 27th February** – *Crazy Socks Day* (gold coin donation)
- **Friday 13th March** – *Casual Clothes Day* (gold coin donation)
- Zooper Doopers will be on sale for \$1 each **Friday** afternoon during Term 1.

All funds raised will be donated to Caritas Australia in support of Project Compassion. Thank you for your generosity and support as we work together to make a difference in the lives of others.



YEAR 5/6 CAMP – CAVE HILL CREEK

Over the past two days, our senior students have enjoyed an exciting overnight camp at Cave Hill Creek. Students participated in a variety of engaging outdoor education activities that challenged them, built resilience and strengthened friendships. A sincere thank you to the staff of St Thomas More and the team at Cave Hill Creek for their organisation and care in providing such a valuable experience for our students. By all reports, a fantastic time was had by everyone!



NAPLAN 2026

Students in Years 3 and 5 will participate in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) this term. Assessments are completed online (except for Year 3 Writing, which is paper based). The adaptive online format provides a more accurate measure of each student's progress.

Our STMCPs 2026 Assessment Schedule is as follows:

- Wednesday 11th March – Writing
- Thursday 12th March – Reading
- Friday 13th March – Catch-Up session for Writing and Reading
- Monday 16th March – Conventions of Language & Numeracy
- Tuesday 17th March – Catch-Up session For Conventions of Language and Numeracy



The online assessments will be completed on the student's Chromebook and all students require a set of headphones. Any students eligible for adjustments under NAPLAN guidelines will receive the same adjustments they normally access in the classroom. We encourage students to view NAPLAN as an opportunity to demonstrate their learning. It is just one snapshot of progress and should not cause stress or concern.

EUREKA PRIMARY SWIMMING DIVISION

Congratulations to the 14 students who represented our school at the Eureka Swimming event at the Ballarat Aquatic Centre last Thursday. All students demonstrated excellent sportsmanship and proudly represented St Thomas More. Well done to everyone involved!



INFORM & EMPOWER – CYBER SAFETY

We are pleased to continue our partnership with *Inform and Empower* - a Cyber Safety & Digital Wellbeing Program. All sessions are written and delivered by qualified teachers endorsed by the eSafety Commissioner as a Trusted eSafety Provider. Parent tip sheets, covering the topics for the Term 1 sessions, are included at the end of this newsletter to support conversations at home.

Term 1 Topics:

- **Foundation:** Smart screen choices, caring for devices, sharing devices
- **Year 1/2:** Understanding the internet, early warning signs, trusted adults
- **Year 3/4:** Digital footprints, online identity, passwords
- **Year 5/6:** Digital footprints, online identity, keeping devices and accounts secure



PARENTS & FRIENDS

Our Parents and Friends group plays a vital role in strengthening our school community. Several exciting events are planned for 2026. In Term 1, assistance is needed with the **Easter Raffle**, particularly with coordinating and wrapping prizes. If you can help, please contact Amy Donald (P&F President) at adonald1905@gmail.com. The first P&F meeting for the year will be held on **Friday 27th February at 9:00am** at school. All parents are warmly invited to attend.

BEFORE SCHOOL SAFETY

We have observed some unsafe behaviours prior to the school gates opening at 8:30am, particularly near the Cuthberts Road and Elaine Avenue entrances. For student safety, we ask that:

- students are not to be dropped off before 8:30am (staff supervision begins at this time).
- students wait patiently and sensibly for the gates to open.
- parents reinforce safe behaviour around roads and footpaths.

Thank you for your support in ensuring the safety of all students.

SCHOOL PHOTO DAY

Our annual school photos are scheduled for **Wednesday 25th March**. On this day all students are required to wear their full summer academic uniform (no sports uniforms please).

VISUAL ARTS – BEGONIA FESTIVAL ENTRIES

This year we are fortunate to be entering two art pieces into the Begonia Festival.

A select group of Year 6 students has completed work on our emu canvas. This has involved approximately 20 hours of collaborative work including design and painting. Several Years 2 and 3 students were chosen to decorate a giant snail sculpture. This involved planning, adding numerous layers of paint and creating mini beasts to attach to the snail's shell.

The community will be able to vote for both art pieces at the forthcoming Begonia Festival, which runs from March 7-9, by scanning a QR code and following the link. The prize for the winning canvas is a gardening voucher and the prize for the winning snail sculpture is \$1000 towards the school's Visual Art program. Thank you to all the students who have represented St Thomas More in these endeavours.



SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCE AT STMCPs

At STMCPs, we acknowledge the importance of implementing a high quality Social and Emotional framework. This framework provides key teachings in wellbeing and includes several programs. Attached to this newsletter is a brief outline of what our school embeds in our teaching practices to support our student's mental health and resilience.

Furthermore, parents and educators may be interested in registering for the following free webinar:



Mental Health First Aid with Dr Billy Garvey:

FREE Webinar Tuesday 24th March 7:30pm

Dr Billy Garvey is an Australian developmental paediatrician and through Camp Australia is offering a free webinar, sharing his insights as to how adults can recognise and respond to early signs of mental health challenges in children and teens. Please register using the link below as we work together as a community to support children's health and wellbeing:

<https://campaustralia.com.au/mental-health-first-aid-with-dr-billy-garvey/>

FOUNDATION (PREP) 2027 ENROLMENTS

All Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools have commenced the 2027 Foundation (Prep) enrolment process. Please refer to the attached information for key dates and requirements. Please note, current families must complete an enrolment form for siblings, even if you already have children attending the school.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE & REBATES 2026

Families who hold a valid Health Care Card may be eligible for the following financial supports:

- Diocese of Ballarat Family Fee Assistance Scheme
- Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)
- School Saver Bonus

Eligible families are asked to complete the attached forms and provide a copy of their current Health Care Card to the school office before the end of Term 1. Forms are available from the office and attached to this newsletter and the *Camps, Sports and Excursions Funds (CSEF)* form can be accessed via this link:

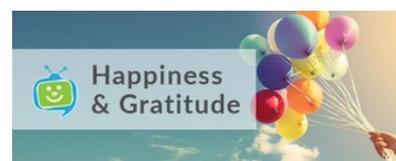
[CSEF Application Form](#)

SCHOOL TV – HAPPINESS & GRATITUDE

This week's School TV topic is: [Happiness & Gratitude](#)

Happiness encompasses a wide range of positive emotions including joy, optimism, love, pride and hope. Research in the field of positive psychology shows a strong link between practising gratitude and increased wellbeing.

Encouraging children to recognise and appreciate positive experiences helps reframe their thinking, strengthen resilience and enhance overall happiness. We encourage families to explore this resource together.



Thank you for your ongoing partnership and support. May this Lenten season be one of reflection, growth and compassion for us all.

Simon Duffy

Mr Simon Duffy,
Principal

Term 1 Calendar, 2026

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5 Feb	23 Year 5/6 Camp Cave Hill Creek	24 Year 5/6 Camp Cave Hill Creek	25 Foundation rest day	26 Assembly @ 2:55pm presented by 1/2 Stacey	27 Students wear 'Crazy Socks' as a Caritas fundraiser -gold coin donation
6 March	2	3	4 Foundation rest day	5 Whole School Prayer @ 2:55pm led by 3/4 Woodhart	6 School Closure Day - Staff Cultural Awareness Day
7 March	9 Public Holiday -Labour Day	10	11 NAPLAN testing	12 NAPLAN testing Assembly @ 2:55pm presented by 1/2 Allan	13 NAPLAN testing. K's for Caritas as a fundraiser - gold coin donation
8 March	16 NAPLAN testing	17 NAPLAN testing	18 Foundation 2027 Parent Information session 9.15am- 10.15am	19 Whole School Prayer @ 2:55pm led by 1/2 Edmonds Foundation 2027 Parent Information session 9.15am- 10.15am	20
9 March	23	24 Foundation 2027 Parent Information session 9.15am- 10.15am	25 School Photos Sacrament of Reconciliation 5.30pm at St Patrick's Cathedral	26 Assembly @ 2:55pm presented by 3/4 Hawkes/DeBono	27
10	30	31 Easter Raffle: drawn @ 2.50pm	1 Stations of the Cross: Whole School Prayer @ 2:30pm led by 5/6 Baker	2 Last day of Term 1 1.45pm finish	3 Good Friday -Public holiday

SAVE

**ST THOMAS MORE
CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL
CONCERT**

2026

THURSDAY 18TH

JUNE

THE

DATE

CIVIC HALL



Ballarat

**PROUDLY PRESENTED
BY PERFORMING
ARTS**



***MORE INFORMATION TO
FOLLOW INCLUDING...***

TICKETS, TIMES, COSTUMES,
PARENT INVOLVEMENT & MORE

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING @ STM

Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships (4Rs)

The 4Rs program is a social and emotional learning and respectful relationship program developed by the Department of Education (recently revised for 2026). There are 8 key topics which our school embeds over a 2 year cycle. These topics include: Emotional Literacy, Personal and Cultural Strengths, Positive Coping, Problem Solving, Stress Management, Help-seeking, Gender Norms and Stereotypes, Positive Gender Relationships.

Fantastic 48 (F48)

Our students participate in our F48 program in the first week of Term 1. This program is all about relationship building, setting the scene for expectations and creating positive learning environments so that we all feel safe to live, learn and thrive.

Zones of Regulation (ZoR)

The ZoR help students to name emotions in order to navigate them. Our students are taught that all zones and emotions are OK, however we work together to respond to our emotions so as to make sure we can be safe, responsible and respectful.

BLUE	GREEN	YELLOW	RED
			
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Good to Go Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Anxious Excited	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Out of Control I Need Time and Space

PULSE Wellbeing

Students in Years 3-6 participate in a weekly wellbeing check through our online Pulse Wellbeing platform. The students are able to directly request help from an adult at school if needed. They are also asked 5 deidentified questions that help our Wellbeing and Teaching teams to identify areas of positive and adverse growth in order to target areas.

Term 1, 2026

Here's what we covered:

- When we're sharing a device with another person, it is helpful to have different roles, such as driver and navigator.



- There are things we can do to ensure our devices don't get damaged.



SONG: [The Silly Moose](#)



Some conversation starters:

- What do you think makes someone a good "hands-off helper" when sharing a device?
- Why is it important to be careful with devices, like carrying them with two hands or keeping food and drinks away?
- Can you tell me how you take care of devices at school or at home?



Listen to all of our songs by searching for "ScreenTime Superstars" on Spotify, Apple Music or YouTube.

Trusted eSafety Provider

Here's what we covered:

- The internet is a global network that connects people around the world. We can use it to do things such as online gaming, talking to Friends and learning new things!

SONG: [What Does the Internet Do?](#)

- We can sometimes get uncomfortable feelings. Our bodies give us early warning signs if something is making us feel uncomfortable.

SONG: [Listen to Your Body](#)

- We can always talk to a trusted adult if we notice our early warning signs.

SONG: [Trusted Adults](#)



Some conversation starters:

- What are some fun, awesome and safe things you like to do on the internet?
- What are some of our body's early warning signs? (heart beating quickly, butterflies in your tummy etc.)
- What are some steps you could take when you feel your early warning signs?
- Who are your five trusted adults? (These could be parents, carers, family, teachers etc.)



Listen to all of our songs by searching for "Ollie Online" on Spotify, Apple Music or YouTube.

Here's what we covered:

- Our actions online leave a digital footprint.
- Our online identity is the opinion people form about us based on our digital footprint.
- We can keep our online accounts safer by
 - having strong passwords
 - only sharing passwords with a trusted adult
 - sign out or lock your screen when you're finished



Some conversation starters:

- What is your #1 favourite thing to do online at the moment?
- Can you think of something you've done online recently that might leave a trace behind? (Posting, commenting, searching, gaming chats, liking, sharing)
- Do you have any accounts with passwords that you've shared with others? Change them together.
- What could you do if you needed help online? (Have a look at the Kids Helpline website together)

Further Support:

Trusted eSafety Provider

Here's what we covered:

- Our choices/actions online leave a digital footprint.

- Our online identity is the opinion people form about us based on our digital footprint.

- It is our responsibility to ensure we keep our online accounts safe. We can do this by
 - having strong passwords
 - only sharing passwords with a trusted adult
 - sign out or lock your screen when you're finished
 - enabling 2 Factor authentication (2FA)



Some conversation starters:

- If someone looked at your online activity from the past year, what do you think they'd learn about you?
- Have you or someone you know ever felt upset about something posted online? How could "thinking twice" have helped?
- Apart from me (parent/carer), who else could you talk to if you had concerns online? (Give them permission to talk to a network of trusted adults & Kids Helpline).

Further Support:

Trusted eSafety Provider

Enrolment Information for Prospective 2027 Foundation (Prep) Students at Catholic Primary Schools in the City of Ballarat

DIOCESE
OF
BALLARAT
CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
LIMITED



CATHOLIC EDUCATION BALLARAT

A single enrolment application process is in place for all families seeking Foundation (Prep) enrolment for the 2027 school year at a Catholic primary school within the City of Ballarat (see school list contained in this document). This process includes families with children already enrolled in one of the eleven schools.

Note that information collected through the enrolment process is collated on a common database shared by the eleven schools.

Families seeking enrolment should follow the steps below to express their interest in enrolment by **Thursday 14 May 2026**.

Expression of Interest Process

1. Contact/visit the website of the school/s you are interested in enrolling your child at – see school list.
2. Engage with the school's process for conducting information sessions or school tours
3. Complete the online Expression of Interest form by 4.00pm on Thursday 14 May 2026 by visiting the [DOBCEL website](#) (click link). Note that this link will not be live until Monday 9 February 2026 at 9.00am.

Important:

- You will be asked to indicate your first, second and third preference schools.
- You will be required to upload your child's Birth Certificate and Baptism Certificate (if applicable).
- If you are unable to access the online form, contact Danielle at enrollments@dobcel.catholic.edu.au for assistance. Your query will be attended to as soon as possible.

Key 2026 Dates

Foundation (Prep) enrolment applications open	Monday 9 February at 9.00am
Expression of interest period closes	Thursday 14 May at 4.00pm
School principals meet to determine allocation of placements	Wednesday 3 June
Invitations to apply sent	Friday 12 June at 12.00pm
List of schools with vacancies published	Friday 12 June at 12.00pm
Placement acceptance closes	Friday 19 June at 4.00pm

Important:

- Completing this expression of interest process does not guarantee an offer of enrolment in a City of Ballarat Catholic primary school.
- You may be required to attend an interview at your school of preference prior to receiving an invitation to apply for enrolment.
- Once completed application forms are received, along with signed Parent Code of Conduct and Enrolment Agreement, a letter of offer will be sent to successful applicants.
- Each Catholic Primary School will make offers of enrolment in line with the [Diocese of Ballarat Enrolment Policy](#) which takes into consideration a variety of factors.

Catholic Primary Schools

St Thomas More Primary School

Location: 100 Cuthberts Road, Alfredton
Website: www.stmalfredton.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5334 2244

St Patrick's Parish Primary School

Location: 119 Drummond St South, Ballarat
Website: www.spballarat.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5332 7680

St Alipius Parish Primary School

Location: 106-108 Victoria St, Ballarat East
Website: www.saballarat.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5331 1816

St Francis Xavier Primary School

Location: 100 Fortune Street, Ballarat East
Website: www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5331 6311

St Columba's Primary School

Location: 306 Howard Street, Ballarat North
Website: www.scballarat.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5332 4894

Lumen Christi Primary School

Location: 111 Whitelaw Avenue, Delacombe
Website: www.lcdelacombe.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5336 2015

Siena Catholic Primary School

Location: 150 Eleanor Drive, Lucas
Website: www.slucas.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5334 3906

Emmaus Catholic Primary School

Location: 1503 Geelong Road, Mt Clear
Website: www.emtclear.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5330 2266

St Aloysius Primary School

Location: 800 Ripon Street South, Redan
Website: www.saredan.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5335 8177

St James' Primary School

Location: 260 Albert Street, Sebastopol
Website: www.sjsebastopol.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5335 8750

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Location: 480A Gillies Street, Wendouree
Website: www.olhcwendouree.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5339 4726

Please apply to these schools directly - expressions of interest process does not apply

St Mary's Primary School

Location: 131 Powells Road, Clarkes Hill
Website: www.smclarkeshill.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5334 5280

St Patrick's Primary School

Location: 1564 Old Melbourne Road, Gordon
Website: www.spgordon.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5368 9495

St Michael's Primary School

Location: 29 Smith Street, Daylesford
Website: www.smdaylesford.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5348 1261

St Brigid's Primary School

Location: 98 Inglis Street, Ballan
Website: www.sballan.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5368 1015

St Augustine's Primary School

Location: 125 Napier Street, Creswick
Website: www.sacreswick.catholic.edu.au
Phone: 5345 2106

COMMUNITY NOTICE

Ballarat High School will be hosting a 2026 Open Morning and welcome any Grade 5 and 6 families who may be considering Ballarat High School for their child's secondary education. Please note: Bookings are essential as there are limited spots. Please see the link below.



Open Morning Details



Thursday, 19 March 2026



9:30am – 11:00am



Welcome presentation in the Robinson Centre BHS, followed by guided school tours

The morning will provide prospective students and their families with the opportunity to experience Ballarat High School firsthand, meet members of our leadership team (both staff and student leaders), and explore the facilities and programs that support our students' learning and wellbeing.

Please book here:

<https://www.ballaraths.vic.edu.au/events/bhs-open-morning-2026/>