



Christ beside me: Walking in the footsteps of St Patrick

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Mon 16 Feb School Photos
Wed 18 Feb Ash Wednesday
Thur 19 Feb 2.00pm Parent Helper Info Session
Mon 23 Feb Beginning of School Mass at 11.30am
Tues 24 Feb 9.00am Parent Helper Info Session
Wed 25 Feb 7.00pm PAB AGM
Mon 2 Mar 8.30am Smoking Ceremony
Wed 4 Mar 7.00pm Foundation Parent Learning Info Session
Mon 9 Mar Labour Day Public Holiday
Wed 18-Fri 20 Mar Yrs 5/6 Camp
Tues 24 Mar 6.30 Reconciliation Parent Night
Wed 25 Mar 5.00pm Foundation Family Picnic
Thur 2 Apr End of Term 1 at 1.00pm
Mon 20 Apr *Closure Day - Professional Development for Staff (Literacy). No School for the children*
Tues 21 Apr Start of Term 2

2026 Professional Development Days for staff

Term 2
Mon 20 April - Literacy Focus
Fri 5 June - Report Writing (Semester 1)
Term 4
Mon 2 November - Report Writing Semester 2
Friday 27 November - 2027 Planning

1:00pm finish days at the end of each term

Term 1 - Thur 2 April
Term 2 - Fri 26 June
Term 3 - Fri 18 September
Term 4 - Tues 15 December (last day of the 2026 school year for students).

Term 2 - Three Way Conversations (First Semester Reports)
Wed 24 and Thur 25 June

SACRAMENT DATES FOR 2026

Year 3 Reconciliation
Wednesday 29 April at 6.00pm
Year 4 Eucharist
Sunday 17 May at 10.30am
Year 6 Confirmation
Friday 31 July at 7.00pm

Dear Families,

Thank you for continuing to walk alongside us in faith, partnership and community. It has been so special to gather with many of you each Monday morning at our 'Community Connect' assembly, as we come together in prayer and share our weekly news. These moments of connection remind us that we are strongest when we stand united in faith and purpose for our children.

School Photos, Monday 16, February

As shared during *Community Connect*, school photos will take place this Monday 16, February. Students are required to wear their **full summer school uniform**. We appreciate your support in helping students present themselves with pride and care.



The Lenten Season

Next week we begin the sacred season of Lent as we prepare for the joy of Easter one of the most significant celebrations in our Liturgical calendar.

Some classes will acknowledge **Shrove Tuesday**, where students may share pancakes together. Traditionally, ingredients such as eggs, flour and milk are used before the beginning of the fasting season which starts on **Ash Wednesday**.

Our parish will celebrate Mass at 9:00am on Ash Wednesday 18 February. Students in Years 3 - 6 will attend the Mass with the parish community. Our junior students will gather as a cohort with their teachers for a reverent and age-appropriate celebration.

Lent is a time of reflection, prayer, sacrifice and renewal. We encourage families to find small ways to journey together during this meaningful season.



Ash Wednesday Prayer

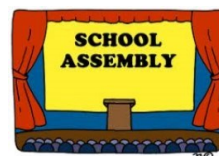


Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. We should pray to start the season right.
Jesus, as we are almost at the start of Lent we pray that we may walk with you in faith, hope and love through the weeks of Lent.
Help us grow in faith during this holy season and to be people of prayer always.
May we be aware of the needs of others so that we can reach out to them in your name.

Turn our hearts and our footsteps towards your kingdom of peace and justice.
We pray this through your Holy Spirit of love who shows us the way.

Whole School Assemblies

A reminder that there has been a change to our whole school assembly process. We gather as a whole school community each morning at the start of each week during Community Connect, with parents warmly invited to join us in prayer and to receive weekly updates. Year level dates have been provided for your convenience. Please refer to the timetable should you wish to attend afternoon assemblies. Your presence strengthens our sense of belonging and shared mission.



Assembly Timetable for Term 1

Friday 13 February	Yrs 3-6		
Friday 20 February	Yrs F-2	Friday 27 February	Yrs 3-6
Friday 6 March	Whole School	Friday 13 March	Yrs 3-6
Friday 20 March	Yrs F-2	Friday 27 March	Yrs 3-6
Thursday 2 April	Whole School		

Working With Children Checks & Child Safety

The safety and wellbeing of every child in our care remains our highest priority. If you wish to volunteer at school, assist with excursions or attend certain activities on site, a valid Working with Children Check is required. Our administration team will kindly ask for these details before you enter the school grounds.



We are currently reviewing procedures for attending whole school events and are seeking further clarification from Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) to ensure we are meeting all compliance and safety expectations moving forward. We appreciate your patience as we ensure our practices remain thorough and child-focused.

nForma for Parents App replacing Operoo

A message was sent on Seesaw inviting families to download the free **nForma for Parents** app. Please look for this and download as ALL excursion or event notes that need parent permission will be sent via this app.



Previous families would remember that we had used Operoo as a way of informing parents of excursions or special events and gaining permission for class events. Operoo also allowed parents to create a profile for each child and maintain and update all medical details.

Operoo ceased operations in Australia at the end of 2025. Luckily we have been able to find a replacement with **nForma for Parents** an app that will have all that Operoo had to offer as well as access to all your child's reports.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

We ask for your continued partnership in ensuring student safety at drop-off and pick-up times.

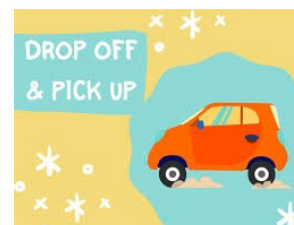
It is not safe for students to cross the road to meet parents who are double parked or waiting in running vehicles. Road works have certainly made access more challenging, and we sincerely thank you for your patience and understanding during this time.

We kindly ask that you:

- Allow sufficient time for drop-off and collection.
- Use designated parking areas.

Model safe road behaviours for our students.

Your cooperation allows our staff to focus on what matters most, keeping your children safe. Thank you in advance for supporting us in this shared responsibility.



Year 6 Leadership 2026

Please keep our Year 6 students in your prayers as they begin discerning whether they wish to nominate for leadership roles for 2026.

Leadership opportunities include:

- House Captains
- Faith Leaders
- School Captains
- DDT Leaders

All Year 6 students will also be encouraged to nominate themselves to assist with various whole school events throughout the year.

We remind our students that leadership in our community is grounded in service.



A Prayerful Reflection on Student Leadership

May our leaders walk with respect in every word and action,

May compassion guide the choices they make,

May they serve with humble hearts,

And lead in a way that lifts others toward kindness and hope.

Thank you for your continued trust, generosity and support. Together, we nurture not only strong learners, but faith-filled and compassionate young people.

With gratitude and blessings,

*Thanks to all the families that have joined us at our Monday morning
Community Connect*



Warm regards,

Caroline Madigan

Mrs Caroline Madigan

Principal

principal@olsunshine.catholic.edu.au

INTRODUCING CDFpay for our 2026 School Fees.

CDF is the Catholic Development Fund and the bank that Our Lady's has all its bank accounts with. Since 1956 the CDF's primary role is to support the work of Catholic organisations.



This year all families are asked to use our new online payment platform called CDFpay (this is replacing the school's previous Direct Debit options). This offers parents and guardians 24/7 secure, convenient online access to make or schedule a payment.

CDFpay offers:

- Viewing balances and setting up payment plans all in one place
- Flexible payment plan options including weekly, fortnightly or monthly schedules, or simply make a payment as you go
- Paying via **bank account** ([no surcharge](#)) or **credit/debit card** and managing all your fees.

Regular payments are required, a minimum of one payment per term.

Term Payments (4 equal instalments) due by 20 February, 8 May, 31 July and 23 October 2026.

Total fees are to be finalised by 31 October 2026.

Payments can also be made in person at the School Office using cash or EFT.



Get started: What you need to do

Please follow these instructions to **register for a CDFpay account**:

1. Search '**CDFpay**' on the App Store (Apple) or Google Play store, download the app, then click '**Sign up now**'. Alternatively, scan the QR code or enter the following link in your web browser: <https://user.cdfpay.flexischools.com.au/register>
2. Enter and confirm your email address, then click '**Sign up**'.
3. **Tip:** CDFpay **automatically links** your school fees when your CDFpay email matches the primary email address (**first parent listed on School Fee Statement**) on file at your school. If the emails don't match, you can **manually link** your school fees by selecting the 'School fees' tile on the home page and following the on-screen instructions. Check your email inbox and follow the prompts to complete your account registration (check junk/spam if lost).

Note: Only one parent or guardian per account code will be able to **link and manage school fees in CDFpay**. Both parents can download the app, but will need to login with the details of the **first parent listed on School Fee Statement**.

CDFpay support

Have questions? Visit <https://flexischools.zendesk.com/hc/en-au/> for detailed FAQs or chat to the Flexischools Digital Assistant. If you cannot find what you are looking for, please complete the online Contact Form and Flexischools will get back to you directly.



For more information on how to set up the payment of your school fees using the CDFpay App please take some time to watch these instructional videos.

CDFpay for Schools - Fee Payment Overview Demo

Type this link into your browser: <https://youtu.be/PTFjWZdNW0k>

CDFpay for Schools - Fee Payment - View statement history

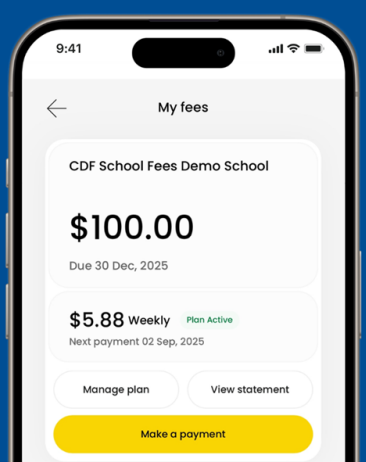
Type this link into your browser: <https://youtu.be/b79BQQVZpyA>




Pay your school fees easily with CDFpay

Get started today


- 1 Register for CDFpay
- 2 Link your school fees
- 3 Make a payment or set up a flexible plan





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Issued by InLoop Pty Ltd ABN 27 114 508 771 (trading as Flexischools) AFSL 471558. Read PDS and TMD at <https://flexischools.com.au/cdfpay>. Advice is general and does not consider your needs.

SCHOOL ZONES



Following the rules together and keeping our children safe

School Zones operate between 8:00am - 9:30am and 2:30pm - 4:00pm during school terms. A speed limit of 40km/h must be followed. Council Officers can issue fines when they are on patrol.

Working together to keep our children safe

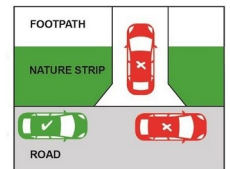
DROP OFF & PICK UP ZONE

- This area is a drop off and pick up children only.
- Drivers need to stay in their car and not leave vehicles unattended.
- It is a 2 minute parking zone during pick up and drop off times.
- By everyone following the 2-minute time span, it allows a lot of parents to pick up their child and ease traffic congestion.



DRIVEWAYS & FOOTPATHS

- It is illegal to park on or across a driveway, footpath or any other vehicle access.



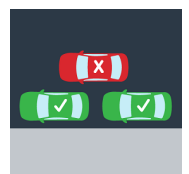
PEDESTRIANS FIRST!

- Please watch for children and adults crossing the road. Hold hands when crossing.
- Drive slowly on the roads around Our Lady's School.



PARK SAFELY. PLEASE DO NOT BLOCK THE ROAD OR DOUBLE PARK

- Park safely near the Church on Ryder Pl, or opposite the Pick up/Drop off zone or park near the surrounding streets and walk to the school.
- Please DO NOT stop in the middle of the street to let your child get in or out of the car.
- Stopping next to legally parked cars is not permitted.
- Dropping off or picking up passengers is not permitted.



OUR LADY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL, SUNSHINE

SchoolPix is coming to photograph on:

Monday, 16 February 2026

SIBLING ORDERS

must be placed prior to 8am on
Monday, 16 February 2026



Order at **order.schoolpix.com.au**

Orders with **FREE delivery**

to your school **CLOSE 5 WORKING
DAYS** after your last photography
session. A postage fee will apply for
orders placed after this date.

Misplaced your order flyer?

Please visit **www.schoolpix.com.au** and use
the student search to find your child's unique
ID or contact our **Customer Care team** on
1300 766 055 or **help@schoolpix.com.au**.

Would you like to be a classroom helper at OLPS?

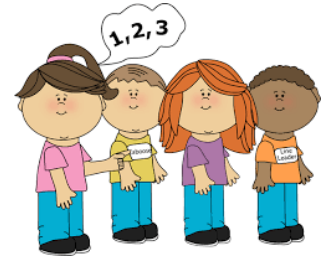
You are invited to attend ONE Classroom Helper's Information Session focusing on Literacy & Numeracy.



Thursday 19th February 2026 @ 2:00p.m.

OR

Tuesday 24th February 2026 @ 9:00a.m.



Where: Mary MacKillop Library

It is a great opportunity to be involved in your child's learning and support your child's teacher in the classroom with a small group focus. You will also learn strategies that you can use at home to support your child in their learning.

Classroom helpers are always needed, especially in the junior classes. In order to be a classroom helper you **must** attend one of these sessions in 2026.

The Classroom Helper session will focus on Literacy and Numeracy.

The sessions will be led by our Deputy Principal and our Learning & Teaching Leader.

We look forward to seeing you at one of the sessions.





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IN 2026



Fees

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U12-U16 \$600

Learn more



Castley Reserve, Glengala Rd
Sunshine West



www.sunshineheightsjsc.com.au



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- Parental, children and family tax benefit
- Childcare subsidy enquiries

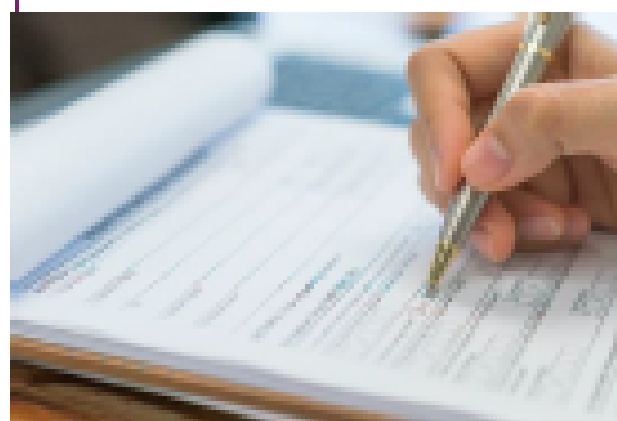
4 & 18 February

4 & 18 March

1 April

10am to 11.30pm

25 Kermeen St, West
Sunshine



For further information

info@brimbank.vic.gov.au

9249 4000 brimbank.vic.gov.au



131 450

Local call costs apply

When Should Kids Get a Smartphone? The Research, the Risks, & a Better Way Forward

By Dr Justin Coulson

As a new school year begins, many parents find themselves facing a familiar dilemma: **“Is it time to give my child a phone?”**

The pressure can feel enormous — socially, logistically, and emotionally. Children insist that “everyone has one,” other parents reassure us “it’s what happens in Year (X)”, and we wonder whether refusing is unreasonable or outdated.

But before making the jump; pause. While smartphones are part of modern childhood, **the age a child receives one matters — a lot.**

The Stats That Make You Shudder

A recent peer-reviewed study in [Pediatrics](#) followed more than 10,000 children aged 10–12. They found that:

Earlier acquisition of a smartphone is associated with significantly worse outcomes.

Children who received a smartphone during their 12th year had:

- **57% higher odds** of clinical-level mental health difficulties by age 13
- **62% higher odds** of insufficient sleep
- **40% higher odds** of obesity
- **31% higher odds** of depression

The tween and teen brain — particularly the prefrontal cortex responsible for impulse control, planning, and decision-making — isn’t mature right now. The never-ending whirlwind of apps, games, notifications, and distraction (plus time on social platforms that isn’t technically allowed anymore) can be overwhelming for a brain still under construction.

Research internationally suggests a similar theme: **Every year we delay smartphone access tends to reduce risk.**

Why Parents Usually Say Yes — And Where It Goes Wrong

Parents give me four reasons for handing over a smartphone to their child:

1. Safety (“What if they need help?”)

Response: **Smartphones are not required for safety.** A basic ‘dumb phone’, watch-phone, or even a household landline solves the safety problem without handing over social media, messaging apps, games, or endless internet access.

2. Logistics (“I need to coordinate pickups and plans.”)

Children survived without phones for generations. Clear communication ahead of time works better than constant messaging, and it builds resilience and independence. Set a pickup time and place. Teach children how to ask an adult for help. Make a simple backup plan ("If I'm late, you start walking..."). Or buy a dumb phone.

3. Social Connection ("They'll be left out without one.")

Group chats and digital friend circles *feel* social, but they often *increase* comparison and competition, exclusion, anxiety, cyberbullying, and sleep disruption. In-person friendships are better developmentally.

4. "They Need to Learn Eventually"

Giving a 12-year-old a smartphone to "learn to manage it" is like giving that same 12-year-old a bottle of vodka to "learn to drink responsibly." Children **aren't developmentally ready** for that level of access.

A Framework that Actually Works

The standard in our family is simple: **"When you can afford it and pay for it yourself — it's yours."**

That includes: ✓ the device ✓ the monthly plan ✓ repairs ✓ replacements if lost or broken

This framework works because it:

- **Delays acquisition naturally**
- **Builds financial responsibility**
- **Shifts entitlement to initiative**
- **Reduces peer pressure**
- **Introduces natural consequences**

Most children don't have \$800–\$1500 for a device plus monthly fees until somewhere between **15–17** — which aligns with many child psychologists' recommendations.

"But My Child Already Has a Smartphone..."

If the horse has already bolted — please don't panic. You haven't "ruined" anything.

Instead, create **clear, developmentally appropriate boundaries**. If possible, consider stepping back from smartphones to simpler options — plenty of families do this successfully.

The Real Question

Smartphones aren't evil, and technology isn't the enemy. But early access creates problems that are harder to undo than they are to prevent. Delaying smartphone access — even by one year — can make a meaningful difference to mental health, sleep, and learning.

If you'd like more info about setting screen boundaries, check out [The Screen Smart Series](#).



Dr Justin Coulson is a dad to 6 daughters and grandfather to 1 granddaughter. Justin travels all around the country, speaking at schools to students, educators and parents about wellbeing and relationships. He is also the parenting expert and co-host of Channel Nine's Parental Guidance, and he and his wife host Australia's #1 podcast for parents and family: The Happy Families Podcast. Justin has written 10 books about families and parenting - with the latest about raising boys out this year! For further details visit happyfamilies.com.au.



Be reconciled before you offer your gift to God



6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Gospel

Matthew 5:23-24

Go and make peace with your neighbour first, then come and offer your gift.

Jesus said to his disciples: If you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering.

Jesus wants us to make peace with those who we have wronged

When someone does wrong things against me, I can make peace with them by....

When I do wrong things against someone, I can make peace with them by....

Find your way through the maze

