

St Patrick's School Lithgow

A Catholic School founded in 1880 by the
Sisters of St Joseph

Parent Handbook



“Never see a need without trying to do something about it.”

St Mary MacKillop

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1. Vision Statement

At St. Patrick's School we believe that all children in our school should be given the opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential in an atmosphere of love and concern.

The whole child will be developed spiritually, morally, socially, academically, physically and emotionally.

We believe that each child who is immersed in a faith-filled Christian community will develop as an integrated person, striving for excellence, growing in relationship with God and having respect for self and others.

2. Mission Statement

St. Patrick's School was founded in 1880 by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Following the Josephite tradition, the words of St Mary MacKillop are our mission statement.

“Never see a need without trying to do something about it.”

3. School Management

Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst (CEDB)

Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst (CEDB) was established by the Bishop to assist and advise him in educational matters pertaining to all systemic Catholic schools in the Diocese. The Bishop has delegated employer responsibilities to the Executive Director of Schools.

The Executive Director of Schools provides leadership for Catholic Education throughout the Diocese of Bathurst. The Director is charged with the determination and implementation of Diocesan educational policies and is also responsible for the management and supervision of the CEDB and its work.

Parish Priest

The Parish Priest is responsible to the Bishop for the religious instruction and spiritual formation of the children in the Parish. This responsibility includes:

- Meeting regularly with the Principal to be kept informed of the progress and running of the school.
- Involvement in staff selection.
- Visiting the school regularly.
- Attending staff and school functions.
- Active participation in the sacramental and liturgical programmes.

The Principal

The Principal is employed by the CEDB to ensure the efficient organisation of all aspects of the school. The Principal, Parish Priest and CEDB work as a team to provide a school environment which is safe and educationally sound. The Principal is assisted in his role by the Assistant Principal and the Religious Education Co-ordinator who form the School Executive.

4. Faith Development

Major importance is given to Religious Education (R.E.) at St. Patrick's School and it is taught every day. The programme used in the classroom is "To Know, Worship and Love" and is supplemented with other R.E. resources and liturgical celebrations.

There are many opportunities throughout the year for all students and their families to attend liturgical celebrations and students attend Mass on selected occasions.

The Sacramental Programme is run in association with St. Patrick's Parish. Catholic students receive Reconciliation in Year 2, First Eucharist in Year 3 and Confirmation in Year 6. Parental involvement and support for these programmes are expected and essential. Non-Catholic students participate in class lessons and support their classmates in the reception of these sacraments.

Mass times at St. Patrick's Church are:

Saturday 5:00 p.m. (Winter) 6:00 p.m. (Summer) and Sunday 10:00 a.m.

5. Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care may be defined as the expression of care in the school community, which brings together the diverse academic, social, physical and religious aspects of school life. It is love in action and invites all members of the school community to make choices based on the gospel values of love and acceptance and is inspired by Jesus the shepherd, a symbol of God's unconditional love.

St Patrick's Pastoral Care Policy is based on respect and responsibility. Affirmation and acknowledgement of positive choices and characteristics displayed by students are essential elements. By developing a sense of self worth students become more tolerant and accepting of others and the contribution everyone makes to our school. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and learn from their mistakes.

The school views pastoral care as underpinning the development of a school spirit which is welcoming and positive, creating a bond between students, staff and parents. It is an expression of the philosophy and vision of the school, reflected in the quality of daily relationships. It embraces all facets of the curriculum and is sustained by the values that respect the dignity of each person and the contribution they make to our school.

6. Awards

St Patrick's School strives to affirm and acknowledge the efforts of students. Rewards and recognition encourage students to make positive choices and help develop healthy self esteem.

Awards may be given for but not limited to:

- Application to school work
- Presentation of work
- Co-operation and volunteer work at school
- Involvement in school life

- Improvement and achievement
- Exceptional acts of kindness
- Effort and enthusiasm
- Extra-curricular activities

Students can be awarded a **Purple Slip** for good behavioural choices. Five purple slips result in a **Golden Award** which is presented weekly at Primary or Infants Assemblies. Five Golden Awards result in a **Green Merit Award**. Ten Golden Awards result in a **Principal's Award**.

Each week, two students are chosen by a staff member for outstanding behaviour, attitude, class work or extra-curricular achievement to receive the **Student of the Week Award** which is presented at the whole school assembly on Friday. Details of the students of the week appear in the weekly school newsletter.

Student birthdays are acknowledged each week at assemblies as well as in the classroom.

End of Year Awards.

At the end of each year a special Awards Presentation Ceremony is held in the Church. At this assembly the following awards are presented:

- St Mary MacKillop
- St Joseph the Worker
- Citizenship
- Sr Rosemary
- Representative Sport
- Library
- Music
- Year Six DUX
- Year Six All Rounder
- Brian Morris Sports Award
- Ellen McManus Award for Achievement in Mathematics
- Primary - Certificates of Excellence in each KLA

Infants children are presented with a Certificate of Excellence at a special class award ceremony that recognises and celebrates the uniqueness of each child.

7. Discipline

The school's Discipline Policy is based on Gospel values of respect and responsibility. It is closely linked to our Pastoral Care Policy and reflects CEDB guidelines and mandatory Child Protection Legislation.

"True development is aided by self-control, which is at the heart of all real discipline. The climate at the school should allow the child to grow in self-discipline rather than conform simply to imposed restraints." Education Manual, Bathurst Diocese.

The school's Discipline Code encourages:

- Recognition of God as Creator and Life Giver.
- Responsibility for own actions and their consequences.
- Christian concern for others.
- Respect for self.

- Respect for life.
- Respect for the property of others.
- Respect for lawful authority.
- The ability to accept correction.
- Honesty and truthfulness.
- Acceptance and Understanding.
- Respect for parental authority.
- Courtesy.
- Obedience to all lawful authority.

1. Behaviour towards each other

At St. Patrick's School we believe that;

- 1.1 All students have the right to an education.
- 1.2 All students should treat others with respect, friendliness and courtesy.

We expect that;

- 1.3 Students take care of and are fair to younger children and each other, especially senior students with younger children.
- 1.4 Students share school grounds and equipment fairly and equitably.
- 1.5 No child should attempt to bully another child either physically or verbally.
- 1.6 Disputes should be settled without fighting.
- 1.7 All students should respect the needs and rights of others and no one should disrupt the learning of others.
- 1.8 Students should not throw any object that could cause harm to others.
- 1.9 Students should never use undesirable or abusive language.
- 1.10 Students should remember that the spoken word can never be taken back. Therefore, deliberate nastiness, teasing, malicious and harmful gossip is never acceptable.
- 1.11 Students should be honest at all times.
- 1.12 Students must respect the property of others.

2. Behaviour towards teaching, ancillary staff, sports coaches and visitors

At St. Patrick's School we believe that;

- 2.1 Teachers, parents, students and visitors to our school deserve respect, friendliness and courtesy.

At St. Patrick's School we expect;

- 2.2 No child should ever use facial, verbal or physical disrespect towards teachers.
- 2.3 All students must follow the directions of teachers and teachers' aides.
- 2.4 Ancillary staff, such as secretaries, cleaners, ground persons and tuck shop helpers are to be treated with the same respect and friendliness as teachers.
- 2.5 Students should not answer back or show defiance towards any staff member.
- 2.6 When training or playing sport under the name of St. Patrick's School, students must always display exemplary sportsmanship and give due respect and obedience to coaches and parents who may assist with the training and management of teams.
- 2.7 Priests and religious are representative of Christ and should always receive respect and courtesy.

3. Behaviour at school

At St. Patrick's School we believe that;

3.1 Students develop a mature attitude towards responsibilities.

At St. Patrick's School we expect;

3.2 Students wear the correct uniform every day as it physically demonstrates pride, unity and school spirit.

3.3 Students not to leave the school grounds without special permission which will only be granted upon receipt of a written request from parents.

3.4 From time to time certain items will be banned from the school premises and students must not have these in their possession whilst at school.

3.5 The following items are banned; chewing or bubble gum, trading cards, questionable magazines, fireworks, cigarettes, knives.

3.6 Students keep the grounds tidy and place all litter in the bins provided. A whole school clean up will be conducted each Friday after lunch, weather permitting.

3.7 Balls not to be thrown near any breakable object e.g. a window.

3.8 Students move quietly inside the school building, including corridors.

3.9 School equipment and building to be treated with care.

3.10 Deliberate damage to be replaced, repaired or paid for by the person or persons responsible.

3.11 Students to restrict the wearing of jewellery. e.g. a signet ring, gold or silver bangle, a wrist watch, simple cross or holy medal on a chain, one pair of simple studs or sleepers. No earrings for boys. Dyed or streaked hair is not permitted. No make-up is to be worn.

3.12 Students to be punctual at all times.

3.13 Students attempt to develop a positive attitude towards school work and to take pride in work well done and to complete all set tasks.

3.14 Students and parents to be aware that all truancy will be reported to the appropriate Welfare Authorities.

3.15 Students can take part in as many extracurricular school functions as possible in an effort to foster school spirit.

3.16 Students who arrive before 8.30a.m. to sit in the assembly area and not play until the supervising teacher arrives.

3.17 Supervision to be provided from 8.30a.m. until 3.30pm.

4. Behaviour out of school and on special occasions

People in the community judge the school and its members on the behaviour shown out of school, therefore;

4.1 Students should remember this and behave appropriately when travelling to and from school, on excursions and in the church.

4.2 During class prayer and at all class and school liturgies all students will be expected to behave in a respectful, reverent manner.

5. Penalties which could be imposed upon students are as follows;

5.1 Reprimand

5.2 Time out (Walking with a teacher or sitting out of play)

- 5.3 School Community Service
- 5.4 Withdrawal from certain activities
- 5.5 Detention
- 5.6 Contact with parents
- 5.7 Interview with parents
- 5.8 In school suspension
- 5.9 Suspension from school
- 5.10 Expulsion from the school

Corporal Punishment Statement

St Patrick's School expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.

8. Religious Education

While recognising that parents are the first educators of their children in faith, Religious Education in the Primary years enables young people to see and respond to God in their lives. Children are invited to reflect on Sacred Scripture, talk with God through prayer, discover the beauty of God's creation and explore the meaning of symbols and rituals. Above all other things, this is the time when students come to know how much God loves them, and when they are drawn into a love of God and others

9. Curriculum

At St Patrick's we provide quality education and sound academic knowledge by following the Board of Studies Guidelines in the following Key Learning Areas (KLAs).

English

Students develop their language skills through activities involving speaking and listening, reading and writing, and viewing and representing. They learn about language and literature through working with a wide range of print, spoken, visual, media, multimedia and digital texts. They interpret and express their views on what they hear, see and read. They create written and digital texts, and deliver formal and informal presentations. For the first time, there will be a requirement that students experience a range of texts including Australian works, multiculturalism, Aboriginality and Australian identity, and Asian perspectives. There is an increased emphasis on grammar and the teaching of quality literature.

Mathematics

Students develop their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding through a range of learning experiences across:

- number and algebra, eg whole numbers and fractions and decimals
- measurement and geometry, eg length, area and time
- statistics and probability, e.g. data and chance.

They develop their problem-solving skills, and mathematical reasoning and communication. Students in Stage 3 develop a deeper understanding in statistics and probability

History

Students investigate their personal, family and community history. They develop understanding of Australia's Indigenous and colonial history and how Australia became a nation. Students learn about:

- historical concepts such as viewing an historical event from a different point of view
- historical skills, such as using historical sources for an investigation.

Geography

Students investigate people, places and environments. They explore geographical concepts, such as place and sustainability, through real world examples and issues. Students learn how to acquire, process and communicate geographical information using geographical tools and inquiry.

Science and Technology

Students develop their skills in using processes of Working Scientifically and Working Technologically to answer interesting questions and develop creative solutions to important 21st century problems. They develop their curiosity and understanding about the Natural Environment and the Made Environment through learning about the Physical World, Earth and Space, the Living World, the Material World, Built Environments, Information and Products. Students learn about the influence and relevance of science and technology in their lives now and in the future.

Information and Computer Technology (ICT)

Students are expected to master the technology skills required in each of the curriculum areas. To assist each classroom each classroom has an Interactive Whiteboard, data projector and access to a range of computer devices such as iPads, ChromeBooks and laptops.

Creative and Practical Arts

Creative Arts enables students to gain increasing understanding and accomplishment in the visual arts, music, drama and dance domains and to appreciate the meanings and values that each of the art forms offers personally, culturally and as a form of communication. Creative and Practical Arts include, Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Drama.

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)

PDHPE develops the knowledge, skills, understandings, values and attitudes students need to lead healthy, active and fulfilling lives. PDHPE includes Fundamental Movement and Physical Activity, Healthy Choices, Self and Relationships.

10. Opportunities for Students- Extracurricular

Students are able to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities depending on age and interest. These can change regularly depending on teacher interest, access to specialist teachers and programmes and cost. Examples of opportunities currently offered include:

Music - as well as having choirs and bands, the school works closely with the Mitchell Conservatorium to offer tuition in a variety of instruments allied with the school band. Concerts, performances at events such as the Bathurst Eisteddfod are enjoyed by students

and parents.

Sport - students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports both individual and team based. Representative Sport at the Diocesan, Polding and State levels is open to all students aged from 8 years and above. Fun activities such as Jump Rope for Heart, tabloid sports and programmes run by Sport Development Officers in a range of sports supplement the programme.

Academic - students are able to prepare for and enter a wide range of competitions across the school year. These include participation in the University of NSW Competitions - English, Mathematics, Science and Computers, Chess Club and Chess competitions, Art competitions, School and Diocesan Spelling Competitions and the Life Education Program. Grades also organise excursions and have guest speakers related to particular topics being studied.

Social and Cultural - students enjoy having fun with their friends and peers. School Discos, Book Week activities, carnivals, fundraisers, assemblies, NAIDOC Week activities, Second Step to develop social skills, buddy programs, mini concerts, Feast Day celebrations and special guests ensure there is a mix of structured and unstructured activities for all grades and interests.

Spiritual - as a Catholic school we offer many opportunities for faith development and enrichment. These include daily prayers, daily Religion Lessons and regular participation in masses, liturgies and sacramental programmes.

Special Programs – students with intellectual, sensory, physical and emotional needs and/or specific learning needs are catered for within the Special Needs program. For many students this may require the creation of an Individual Plan (IP) which outlines specific learning needs, how the student is being catered for, what adjustments are being made for them in the classroom. Classroom Teachers, in consultation with Support Teachers, monitor and evaluate the individual progress of the student while catering for their personal needs. Programs are created in consultation with the school Support Team. This process may include the involvement of CEDB personnel and outside professionals. Students are supported within the classroom environment by the classroom teacher and, depending on the specific needs of the student, may include involvement from the Support Teachers and Teacher Assistants. Special literacy and numeracy programmes include Multilit, MiniLit, Corrective Reading and QuickSmart may be offered to students who meet the criteria for inclusion in these intervention programs.

Interventions for Gifted and Talented students - Students who demonstrate particular gifts and talents in particular KLAs are catered for within all classrooms through quality differentiated instruction. A range of activities are offered across the KLAs to students with special interests and talents. These may include individualised or group based programmes for literacy, numeracy, as well as cultural activities.

11. Assessment and Reporting

Communication between teachers and parents is vital if students are to reach their full potential. Teachers use a variety of assessment strategies to monitor academic progress, which is reported to parents throughout the year. Parents are also encouraged to contact their child's teacher if they have any questions or concerns throughout the year.

Parent/Teacher Interviews

Interviews are held in week 4 of Term One and again in weeks 3 and 4 of Term Three. Parents are given the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher to discuss individual needs and give any information which will help teachers cater for the students in their class. Parents and teachers may request interviews at any time throughout the year at a mutually convenient time.

Written Reports

Written reports are sent home twice each year. Half Yearly Reports are sent home in week 10 of Term Two or early in Term Three. Yearly Reports are sent home in week 10 of Term Four. These reports inform parents as to how students are progressing noting areas of strength and areas for development. Students in Years 1-6 are given A-E grades as required by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Open Classrooms

Parents are invited to visit classrooms throughout the year and during Catholic Schools Week. This gives students the opportunity to show parents their books and gives parents another opportunity to see how their children are progressing.

External Testing

Students in Year 1 participate in Numeracy Testing from the CEDB.

Students in Years 3 and 5 sit the NAPLAN (National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy) in Term 2 each year.

Students in Year 6 sit a CEDB Religion assessment in Term 2.

Students in Years K-6 undergo DIBELS literacy skills assessment three times per year.

12. Student Leadership

At St Patrick's School all Year Six students are considered to be School Leaders, with eight students given specific leadership roles as School and House Captains.

School Captains

At the end of Term Four, Year Five students attend a Leadership Day during which they participate in activities designed to develop leadership skills and team work. Students and staff vote for School Captains - one boy and one girl - which is announced at the end of Year Graduation Mass. School Captains are presented with their badges and sign their contracts at the Opening School Mass.

House Captains

Students and staff also vote for one boy and one girl to lead each house - MacKillop (yellow), Tenison (green) and Joseph (red). House Captains are responsible for team spirit at the Swimming and Athletics Carnivals and for supervising the equipment in the Sport's room. House Captains are announced at the end of year Prize Giving and receive their badges and sign their contracts at the Opening School Mass.

Library Monitors

Year Six students may volunteer to work in the library at lunchtime under the direction of the Librarian. Students must commit to this role and be prepared to come regularly on the days assigned to them. They are given a special badge at the Assembly.

13. School Routine/Supervision

- Start - 8.55 am
- Recess - 11:00 - 11:30 am
- Lunch - 1:00 - 1:40 pm
- Finish - 3:05 pm

Supervision of Students

Supervision is intended to safeguard the welfare of the students through the promotion of a caring and ordered environment. Students are supervised from 8:30 a.m. and should not arrive at school before this time. They are supervised before school, at recess, lunch, during detention, wet weather and at bus lines. School finishes at 3:05 p.m. All students who catch buses or ride /walk home are marked off a roll and supervised by a teacher until they leave the school grounds. Supervision of students concludes at 3.30pm. The school cannot accept any responsibility for the safety of students outside these hours.

In the area of supervision, teachers, children and parents are expected to act responsibly to ensure the safe welfare of the children.

Attendance

By law, students must attend school every day. If a student is absent for a whole or part of a day, a note explaining the absence must be sent to the class teacher on the student's return. If the student is to be away for an extended period of time parents should notify the school office and teacher. Please note that if parents decide to take their children on holidays or away from school for more than five days written permission from the Principal must be obtained prior to the absence. The official form can be obtained from the school office.

Parents are requested, wherever possible, not to make appointments for their children during school hours as this disrupts their learning activities. However, where this is not possible parents are asked to notify the child's teacher in writing of the appointment/departure time. If no written notification is supplied, parents are required to come to the school office before collecting their child and complete a permission form. This form must be handed to the teacher when the child is collected.

Parents are notified of Staff Development Days, also called Pupil Free Days, well in advance. These days are sanctioned by the CEDB and are not marked as student absences.

Recess and Lunch

St Patrick's School is endeavouring to be nut free because of the risk of extreme anaphylactic reactions by several students. We ask that parents support this. Parents are also asked to support the health component of the PDHPE Syllabus by packing healthy lunches and snacks.

Students eat recess on the playground and must remain seated until the teacher dismisses

them. Teachers supervise the eating of lunch for the first ten minutes. Students without lunch are given the choice of a cheese or vegemite sandwich. Late lunch orders will only be accepted at the canteen before 11 a.m.

Emergency Procedure – Extreme weather events/emergencies

St Patrick's has in place a procedure in the event of extreme weather events, such as snow, or emergencies such as bush fires. An Emergency Procedure form is to be completed for each student and is held by the student's class teacher. In the event of an emergency that requires buses to collect children early or affects supervision at school, the information on this form will be used to determine whether a student is to remain at school, be collected by a parent/guardian or catch a bus home.

Canteen

The school canteen is open every day except Monday and Tuesday and is run by the Canteen Manager and volunteer parents. Recess and lunch must be pre-ordered by placing the order in the bags found in each classroom. Orders should be written on a paper bag with the money placed inside. Students may purchase items over the counter at lunchtime between 1:00 and 1:30 p.m. The P&F have special lunch bags for purchase.

14. Homework

The aim of the giving of homework is to encourage responsibility within the child; to fulfil both parent and student's expectations; to extend the children's study life into the home thereby enabling parents to be aware of and involved in the children's work; to reinforce work done during the day and in areas the children are familiar with; to encourage and develop consistent study habits and independent study skills and to encourage another form of communication between teacher and parents. Homework is given from Monday to Thursday.

Home work is selected from the following:

- Reading – should be done by all children each night
- Research
- Tables
- Spelling
- Language
- Numbers

The time given to written homework should take no longer than:

Kindergarten -	10 minutes
Year 1 -	10 minutes
Year 2 -	10-20 minutes
Year 3 -	30 minutes
Year 4 -	30-40 minutes
Year 5 and 6 -	30-60 minutes

Parents should notify the teacher if the homework could not be completed. Parents are invited to liaise and comment through the homework book. Homework is to be signed by a parent.

15. Uniform

Students of St. Patrick's are expected to wear full school uniform. This encourages students to take pride in their appearance, demonstrating unity and school spirit. If at any time the correct uniform cannot be worn, a note explaining the reason should be given to the class teacher. Uniform items can be purchased from the school uniform shop on Mondays 2.30-3.05 p.m, Tuesdays 8.40-9.30 a.m. and Fridays 2.30-3.05 p.m.

School Uniforms – Girls

Summer - pink check uniform, fawn socks, black school shoes, pink or maroon hair ribbons, maroon school hat, maroon sloppy joe with school emblem or maroon wool blend jumper with school emblem.

Sport - white polo shirt with school emblem (long sleeved available for Winter), maroon pleated skirt or shorts, white socks, white joggers, maroon school tracksuit, maroon school hat or maroon beanie.

Winter - maroon A-line pinafore or maroon slacks, fawn shirt, school tie, maroon jumper/sloppy joe, fawn socks or tights, black shoes, maroon sloppy joe with school emblem or maroon wool blend jumper with school emblem, maroon parka or maroon and gold school jacket, maroon school hat or maroon beanie, maroon scarf.

School Uniforms - Boys

Summer - grey shorts, green shirt, grey socks, black school shoes, maroon school hat, maroon sloppy joe with school emblem or maroon wool blend jumper with school emblem.

Sport - gold polo shirt with school emblem (long sleeved available for Winter), maroon shorts, maroon school tracksuit, white socks, white joggers, maroon school hat or maroon beanie.

Winter - long grey serge trousers, green shirt, grey socks, black school shoes, maroon sloppy joe with school emblem or maroon wool blend jumper with school emblem, maroon parka or maroon & gold school jacket, maroon school hat or beanie.

Please note that jeans, cargo pants/shorts are not permitted.

No School Hat No Play - St Patrick's School adopts this policy in keeping with the SunSmart Skin Cancer Policy.

Nail polish is not permitted. Hair, if longer than the shirt collar, must be tied back neatly. Jewellery, other than a wrist watch, signet ring, studs or sleepers (one in each ear for girls only), may not be worn. Dyed, streaked or tinted hair is not permitted.

16. School Fees

Fee invoices are issued during Terms 1, 2 and 3. Please see the schedule for current fees and charges. Direct debit forms for payment of school fees can be obtained from the office.

Families experiencing any difficulties with the payment of school fees are asked to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss payment options.

17. Sporting Opportunities

At St Patrick's we encourage participation in sport and believe that the enjoyment, competition, fair play and opportunity it brings for friendship is of great value for our children.

Students are given the opportunity to participate in school carnivals, which may lead to representation at Diocesan level in Athletics, Swimming and Cross Country. Students can also participate in trials for boys/girls soccer, basketball, hockey, netball, cricket, tennis, rugby league, rugby union and touch football with the opportunity to qualify for Diocesan teams. If successful at Diocesan level, students are selected into Polding teams and have the opportunity to compete against students from Catholic Schools across all of NSW. From the Polding Level there may be opportunities for students to represent Polding at PSSA State Level.

Students at St Patrick's are divided into three sporting houses:

- MacKillop (yellow) named after our founder St Mary MacKillop.
- Tenison (green) named after Father Tenison Woods, a priest who with St Mary MacKillop founded the Josephite order.
- Joseph (red) named after the foster father of Jesus and Patron Saint of the Josephite Congregation.

18. Parent Involvement and Participation

St Patrick's School has many opportunities for parent involvement and participation and we encourage parents to do so.

Classroom Helpers

Teachers welcome parent helpers either on a regular or occasional basis. Please speak to your child's teacher if you are interested in helping with art/craft, reading groups, other class activities or excursions. All parent volunteers are required to complete the appropriate Child Protection paperwork.

Parents and Friends (P & F)

Our P & F is an active and involved group who work with parents and staff to support the school. They are involved in social and community fundraising activities and welcome and encourage participation from all parents and staff. Meetings are held once a month. Confirmation of the date is displayed in the School newsletter.

Parents and friends are warmly invited to attend these meetings as all input and ideas are valued. New members are always welcome.

Fete

The school fete is an annual event and is a major fundraiser. The Fete Committee is formed at the end of each year and has various jobs to offer parents either beforehand or on the day.

Canteen

Volunteer helpers are always welcome in the canteen.

19. General Information

After School Travel

Students are supervised on bus lines after school each day. Free bus passes are available for all children Kinder to Year 2 irrespective of distance travelled. For children in Years 3-6 who live 2.3 kilometres or more from the school, application forms can be obtained from the school office. Bus passes are automatically renewed each year by the bus company, so only one form is necessary unless you move or change schools. Lost or destroyed bus passes need to be reported directly to the bus company, Lithgow Buslines. Children are required to show their bus pass whenever travelling on the bus.

Students who walk or ride bikes (only primary students are permitted to ride bikes to and from school) are also placed on 'Walkers Lines' and are supervised crossing the street.

Books and Class Supplies

At the end of each year a Book List with the supplies needed for the following year is sent home with reports. The annual book fee covers the cost of textbooks, art supplies and paper for the classroom.

Enrolment

St. Patrick's advocates inclusive education for all children. Interested parents can make an appointment for an interview with the Principal by contacting the school office. Enrolments are accepted throughout the year depending on class numbers. Priority is given to Catholic children, siblings of students already enrolled and then non-Catholic students. Appropriate documentation for students with special needs should also be provided.

Our Pre-Kinder Program runs every Friday and is open to students who are preparing to start school the following year. The program is free and there is no obligation to enrol until Term 4, when the school requires enrolment paperwork in order for the student to continue with the program in Term 4.

Excursions

Excursions are an important part of the learning process and therefore each child is encouraged to participate. Parents are notified in advance with all details including cost. Parents are required to give their written permission for their child to attend. This does not usually apply for local excursions such as walking to the town library or local park. All parent helpers must complete the necessary Child Protection paperwork.

Family Matters

It is crucial that parents inform the school of any changes regarding custody or care arrangements and provide the necessary court papers should there be any. If no paperwork

exists then the school regards both parents as having equal rights. It is also important to keep the office informed of current contact details.

First Aid

When children are sick, the best place for them to be is at home, to minimise the health risk to themselves and others. The First Aid room is situated near the main office. Any student who is sick or injured may be sent to the office for First Aid. Most students can be treated and sent back to class or the playground. In the event of more serious cases, parents will be called to come and collect their child. As a precaution, parents are always notified of any head injury no matter how minor. In the event of a serious injury an ambulance will be called and parents notified immediately.

Information Computer Technology

A code of conduct and acceptable use guidelines are sent home at the beginning of each year. Parents are asked to read the documents carefully and read it with their child, sign it and return it to school.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones brought to school. If students need to have their phone with them for after school use a written request from parents must be given to the Principal for approval. If the Principal approves the request the student is to bring the phone to the Front Office for safe storage and then collect the phone at the end of the day. The Office Staff will keep a sign in sheet for the device and keep it secure for the day.

Name tags

All clothing, lunch boxes, drink bottles or any items brought to school should be clearly labelled. Lost items will be placed in a lost property box and cleared out at the end of each term.

Notes and/or Payments sent to the school

All notes sent home that require a reply should be done so promptly and returned to the student's teacher. Any money sent should be in a sealed envelope with the appropriate details written on the front and returned to the student's teacher.

Nut Free Policy

There are children in our school who have a condition known as anaphylaxis. Having this condition means that the children will have an extremely severe reaction when exposed to a certain allergen.

The severe reaction will occur if the child eats/drinks products containing the allergen. It is also important to realise that a severe reaction can also occur when the allergen comes into contact with the skin.

Anaphylaxis is life threatening - breathing and heart function can be impaired immediately upon contact with the allergen. It should be stressed that deaths in schools have occurred as a result of anaphylactic reactions.

In this case the allergens are peanuts and other nut products. Even the smallest traces of peanut/nut products – in foods, on hands, on utensils, etc – will trigger the anaphylaxis.

As you can appreciate it is vital that our school is nut free. Our school canteen does not sell peanut butter, Nutella or any other products that contain nuts and we request that all students do not bring any food containing nuts/nut products to school.

In addition, if your child has any kind of nut product for breakfast it is important that they wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before coming to school. Even traces of nut products consumed earlier by other children can be potentially life threatening if their hands come into contact with the anaphylactic child's skin. Similarly, if your child is staying with another family member: e.g. grandparent or friend before coming to school it is crucial that you inform these caregivers about our total nut free policy.

Policy for Dispensing Medication

Arising from the duty of care that schools owe to their students, there will be occasions when the administration of medication is necessary to support students during the course of a normal school day or in school activities outside of normal school hours. Medication may be necessary for reasons of health or to assist learning or to modify behaviour.

Policy guidelines apply only to oral medication. No medication will be given without the written permission of a parent/guardian.

Teachers, while not legally obliged to administer medication during school hours, have agreed to assist with a parents/guardians request in this matter.

Medication must be supplied by parents in the original container clearly labeled, or in a weekly medication dosage box, available from your chemist with:

- The students name
- The name of the medication
- The recommended dosage
- The frequency of the administration and
- The prescribing doctor's name.

Teachers will only administer the medication according to the instructions stated. Medication will be kept in a locked cupboard. Teachers will ensure that medication is taken correctly by supervising the taking of the medication in their presence. Parents, not teachers, are responsible for having adequate medication supplied.

Alcohol, Drug and Smoking Policy

Alcohol is prohibited and must not be consumed or brought to school premises during school hours. This includes employees, students and visitors and other people who use school premises.

The consumption of alcohol is not permitted at any school function (including those conducted outside school premises) at any time when school students, from any school, are present. A school function is any function organised by the school and/or in the name of the school and applies to all types of functions including dances, farewells, sporting fixtures and barbecues.

Smoking on school premises is prohibited, including school buildings, gardens, sports fields and car parks is prohibited. This includes students, employees, visitors and other people who use school premises, including community groups.

Parents/Carers who smoke outside the premises should not do so near public entrances and should ensure that they dispose of cigarette butts and other litter carefully and with consideration for other people and property.

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

Illegal drugs are prohibited, St Patrick's School must be a place that is free of illegal drugs .

Principals must manage disciplinary matters involving suspected illegal substances or supply of restricted substances consistent with the Suspension and Expulsion of School Students - Procedures.

Employees are also bound by requirements in the Code of Conduct relating to drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

20. Child Protection

We take our responsibility to protect children seriously. All staff are expected to promote child safety by having a clear understanding of their legal child protection responsibilities and act in accordance with those responsibilities.

In particular, the school will:

1. Maintain professionalism in our interactions with children at all times by exercising appropriate duty of care and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
2. Follow an established process to address allegations of inappropriate behaviour by staff towards children.
3. Ensure all people working in our school who are required to undertake a Working With Children Check have a valid clearance.
4. Respond appropriately when we suspect a child is at risk of significant harm due to possible abuse or neglect by a parent/carer or other adult.

Maintaining Professionalism

All staff/volunteers/parents are expected to act professionally and in accordance with the school's expectations regarding staff conduct toward children. Members of staff receive guidance and professional development in relation to appropriate interactions with students, how to exercise duty of care and how to maintain professional boundaries.

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We understand that staff have a duty of care to:

- Ensure no child is exposed to foreseeable risk of harm
- Take action to minimise risk
- Supervise actively and
- If we see others acting inappropriately with children, report concerns to the Principal or seek further advice

School staff also understand that they are in a position of trust, authority and influence in relation to children and that it is important that we do not take advantage of that position to

mistreat or misguide students either intentionally or inadvertently.

Staff strive to:

- Demonstrate appropriate relationships with children that cannot be misinterpreted as overly personal or intimate;
- Remain within the responsibilities of their roles and allow those appropriately trained to deal with student welfare concerns;
- Minimise physical contact with children unless it is necessary to exercise appropriate duty of care;
- Follow the school's policies and procedures relating to pastoral care and wellbeing including serious incidents and reporting risk of harm.

Addressing complaints of inappropriate behaviour by staff

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for both students and staff. This includes addressing complaints of inappropriate behaviour by staff towards any child or young person.

Such complaints are handled differently to other types of complaints which may arise in the school because of legal obligations established by the NSW Ombudsman Act 1974. The NSW Ombudsman is a government agency which requires schools and other organisations working with children to ensure systems are in place for recording and responding to all allegations of a child protection nature against staff. You should be aware that 'staff' includes volunteer helpers as well as paid staff

If you have concerns about alleged inappropriate behaviour by a staff member towards any child or young person it is important that you discuss your concerns with the Principal who in turn will consult with the CEDB Education Officer: Wellbeing and Safeguarding or Leader HR.

All complaints are investigated and resolved through a fair and confidential process which involves listening to 'both sides of the story' and giving all involved an opportunity to be heard. If the concerns involve alleged criminal behaviour they will be reported to the Police and CEDB will wait for the outcome of the Police investigation before continuing its own investigation.

At the end of an investigation a finding will be made and appropriate follow up determined. In relation to the staff member this may include no action, increased support, professional development, increased supervision/monitoring or disciplinary action, removal from duties or termination of employment.

If harm has occurred to a child, counselling or other support will be offered to the child.

Screening of those working in schools

Working With Children Checks are undertaken by staff working in our school. External tutors and coaches working with students in dance, music, sport, art etc are also expected to obtain a check which is verified prior to engagement.

The purpose of the check is to exclude people from working with children who are not suitable. A person who has been convicted or found guilty of a listed serious offence against children (whether in NSW or elsewhere) is prohibited from working in a child-related role.

The participation of parents and close relatives of students at the school as volunteers is welcome and appreciated for various activities both in school and on excursions. It is important that all volunteers are aware that they are subject to child protection legislation. This means all volunteers must:

- sign on at the front office, be inducted and get a visitor's badge from the office as per school procedure.
- check with the school what the current legal requirements are for working with children.
- not engage in any inappropriate behaviour towards any children. In particular, although volunteers are technically not employed by the school, they are considered to be 'staff' for legal purposes and need to be aware that complaints about inappropriate behaviour towards any child or young person must be investigated.

Volunteers who are not the parent or a close relative of a child at the school will be expected to undertake a Working With Children Check.

- A 'parent of a child' includes a carer or person who has legal responsibility for a child.
- A 'close relative' includes a spouse or de facto partner, child, step-child, parent, stepparent, sibling, step-sibling, grandparent, step-grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew. In the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, a close relative includes people who are part of the extended family or kin of the child according to the indigenous kinship system.

In a recent change to the legislation any parent attending an overnight excursion is required to have a WWCC.

Further information on the Working With Children Check can be found on the website for the Office of the Children's Guardian at <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/>.

If you would like further information regarding any of the above please speak to your Principal first or feel free to contact the CEDB Child Protection Officer on: Phone: 63383000

Responding to risk of harm

All school staff are mandatory reporters. This means that if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of 'significant harm' from abuse or neglect, then a report must be made to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline (CP Helpline).

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School staff are expected to inform the Principal if they are concerned that a child may be at risk. It is the role of the Principal (or delegate) to make the report to the CP Helpline.

In making a report the Principal will consider all of the information and seek appropriate advice from the CEDB Education Officer: Wellbeing and Safeguarding. Any information about a child at risk is kept confidentially by the Principal.

In situations where a child is considered to be at risk the school will work with the child and family to assist them as much as possible.

If you have concerns about a child who you consider may be at risk, please discuss your concerns with the Principal as soon as possible and maintain confidentiality.

21. Complaints

We take complaints seriously and try to resolve them in the most appropriate, efficient and confidential manner possible:

- If you or your child has a complaint about a student other than your own child you should raise it with your child's class teacher.
- If you or your child has a complaint about a staff member relating to teaching and learning, the issue should first be discussed with the relevant teacher or the principal.
- If you or your child has a complaint about the inappropriate behaviour of a staff member towards any child or young person, your concern should be directed to the Principal and confidentiality must be maintained (see Child Protection).

See "Child Protection: Schools, families and community working together." Brochure

22. Parent Helpers/Volunteers

The participation, involvement and help of parents, close relatives and other volunteers are welcome and appreciated for various activities both in school and on excursions.

It is important that all volunteers are aware that they are subject to child protection legislation. This means all volunteers must:

- sign on at the front office, be inducted and get a visitor's badge from the office as per school procedure.
- check with the school what the current requirements are for the Working with Children Check (WWCC). Parents are usually exempt from needing a WWCC however any **parents attending overnight excursions are required to hold a valid Working With Children Check.**
- not engage in any inappropriate behaviour towards any children. Although volunteers are technically not employed by the school, they are considered to be 'staff' for legal purposes and need to be aware that complaints about inappropriate behaviour towards any child or young person must be investigated (see Child Protection).

23. Communication

The school encourages open communication between staff, students and parents. If at any time you have a question or a concern regarding your child's education, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or Principal. To make an appointment please contact the teacher directly or the school office.

Newsletter

The school newsletter, The Patrol, is sent home weekly on Friday. It is vital that parents read this newsletter carefully so that they are informed of school events and important dates. The Patrol is also updated to the website and the Skoolbag Mobile Phone App which is available to download.

With Jesus as our guide to 'Love One Another', gossip and negative conversations outside of the school community are unhelpful and damaging.

To ensure that these are addressed with dignity, procedural fairness and reflective of Gospel values, policies exist to guide protocols and processes.

Student Mobile Phones

We do not encourage students to bring mobile phones to school. Students who need to bring a mobile phone to school for a specific purpose, however, must seek permission from the Principal (parents are to seek permission from the Principal in writing). Once permission is granted, the students should bring the phone to the Office upon arrival at school and sign the phone in. The phone will be kept secure during the day and can be signed out by the student at the end of the day.

Contact Information

School Principal:	Ms Renae Dunleavy
Assistant Principal:	Mrs Lyndal Marshall
Religious Education Coordinator:	Miss Cassandra Toole
Parish Priest:	Fr Garry McKeown
Pastoral Care:	Sr Anne Houston
Support Teachers:	Mrs Nicola Collins and Ms Renae Dunleavy
Office Manager:	Mrs Colleen McMahon
Office Assistants:	Mrs Lynne Roberts and Mrs Nicole Goldspink
Phone:	(02) 6351 3719
FAX:	(02) 6353 1731
Email:	stpatslithgow@bth.catholic.edu.au
Website:	www.stpatslithgow.catholic.edu.au
School Hours:	8:55 am - 3:05 pm
Office Hours:	8:30 am – 3.30 pm