



PARENT HANDBOOK

HOLY SPIRIT INFANTS, ABERMAIN

abermain.catholic.edu.au



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Message from the Principal

We warmly welcome your family to Holy Spirit Infants School Abermain. Holy Spirit Infants is a thriving learning community and our school is unique being the only K-2 school in the Maitland Newcastle Diocese. We strive to use the lens of the Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) across our Early Learners as it advocates for the importance of positive relationships for learning in the early years, within an environment that fosters “belonging, being and becoming” for the child. Our focus is on the Early Learner K-2 as we strive through our teaching to spark curiosity and wonder for learning; sociability skills; perseverance and resilience when things are tough and a strong sense of belonging to our Catholic School. As such we have the wellbeing and development of the “whole child” as the focus of all we do. We are advocates for play as a pedagogy and self directed play for our students. Enrolling your child with us is an opportunity to create new connections as a family and engage in the community life of our school and Parish.

With a rich history of proudly providing Catholic Education on this site since 1908, we have a close link to the Sisters of St Joseph who established the original school. The foundation of Holy Spirit School was one of service to education and care for all, through the example and life’s work of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenneson Woods. Our staff, inspired by their example, and those of the Sisters of St Joseph, are dedicated to providing a welcoming and friendly place where faith and learning meet in our contemporary context.

Our Diocesan motto “At the heart of everything, there is always Jesus Christ” permeates all we do in our school. On entering Holy Spirit Infants, you will feel and see that we are committed to inviting early learning and to fostering the positive relationships necessary for every child’s development and wellbeing within a Catholic context. Our school motto “Peace and Justice” is lived through our focus on the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. We aspire to excellence in education through exciting and innovative teaching and learning in contemporary spaces and through programs designed to meet the needs of each learner. We are future focused and forward thinking.

We thank you for choosing our school for your child’s educational journey and welcome you into our community.

Diane Murphy

Principal



Vision

Inspired by Jesus Christ our light, we ignite faith and empower ALL through the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Mission

Together at Holy Spirit Infants School we engage the head, heart and hands through formation experiences and quality education by:

Head

- Knowing God’s love for us through the scriptures
- Understanding our connectedness
- Developing the spiritual, academic, physical and creative gifts of ALL
- Engaging in quality learning for growth
- Promoting our core values of peace and justice

Heart

- Encountering the person of Jesus Christ
- Valuing inclusivity and celebrating diversity
- Nurturing each child’s unique spirituality
- Experiencing the love and presence of God

Hands

- Living out peace and justice in the spirit of St Mary of the Cross
- Demonstrating through our words and actions the Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- Fostering stewardship of creation
- Celebrating and expressing our love for God and one another in our faith community
- Serving others



Message from Fr James

Dear Parents and Families,

It is my pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Parish, to Holy Spirit Infants School, Abermain. I was delighted that Mrs Murphy asked me to write these few words of welcome. Holy Spirit Infants School is an important part of the Parish community. The care, safety and nurturing of children (and their families) is an important part of the life of any community.

I am especially grateful to the Teachers, Staff and Executive of Holy Spirit Infants for the important and valuable work that they do in educating your children. This education is not just intellectual, but will also encompass sporting activities, values education and emotional and spiritual growth. Your classroom teachers are the people who have day to day contact with your children and their work is of great importance. The connection of the Parish Priest is not an immediate day to day presence, but most often through Liturgies that might occur several times during a term. Also, the parish priest on occasions deals with remote administrative and policy matters.

Holy Spirit infants school is a Catholic primary school which seeks to witness to Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God. Matthew's Gospel will help you to understand what we mean by the "Kingdom of God". If you don't have a copy of the Gospels (they are a part of the Bible), this would be a very valuable addition to your home. If you wanted to read Matthew Chapters five, six and seven you would have a wonderful introduction to the values that Jesus taught.

Holy Spirit Infants School is "different" to your local state school and one of the reasons for this is that we have an expectation that our families will support the faith life of the school. This means that you will allow your children to receive the faith education that this school provides. As well we ask you to support the faith life of your children (according to the faith tradition that you observe). Also, the Parish asks parents to support the school in its care for your children. Our continuing partnership with your family is only possible with that gift of mutual respect and support.

May this be a time of blessing for your children and for your family.

Blessings and Peace,

Fr James Lunn

Your classroom teachers are the people who have day to day contact with your children and their work is of great importance.



At Holy Spirit we value:

A Catholic Faith Education

The Family's Role in the Education Process

Excellent Teaching and Learning for the Early Learner

The Whole Child

An Inclusive Environment

Openness to Change and Responsibility for the Future

Excellence in Learning and Teaching for the Early Learner

As a Catholic school we:

- Teach to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabus and mandatory outcomes.
- Provide authentic learning experiences that are targeted to the learners needs.
- Focus on inclusivity and meeting the diverse learning needs of all students.
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for staff.
- Provide quality teaching programs in all Key Learning Areas.
- Enhance learning through various incursion and excursion opportunities.
- Gather and analyse data to inform our teaching.

The Whole Child

As a Catholic school we:

- Provide programs and opportunities for children to reach their individual potential.
- Foster positive self-esteem for all students using a variety of personal development programs – including 'Positive Behaviour for Learning' and 'Bounce Back'.
- Encourage respect and acceptance of self, peers and community.
- Encourage a "Growth Mindset" based on the research of Carol Dweck that values hard work, independent working skills and self discipline.
- Foster the development of contemporary learning skills that encourage collaboration, effective interpersonal and communication skills.

At Holy Spirit, we grow and nurture each child.

A Catholic Faith Education

As a Catholic school we aspire to:

- Nurture and develop the student's personal relationship with God.
- Provide opportunities to pray, reflect and celebrate our faith through Liturgies and Masses.
- Teach the traditions and the beliefs of the Catholic Church.
- Implement a Religious Education program based on the Maitland/Newcastle Diocese K-6 Syllabus.
- Integrate Faith and Culture across school life.
- Be involved and connected with our Parish of St Francis Xavier Abermain.
- Offer pastoral care to families in need.
- Offer the 'Seasons for Growth' program to children suffering from grief and loss.

The Family's Role in the Education Process

As a Catholic school we:

- Acknowledge parents as the prime educators of their children.
- Work in respectful partnership with families.
- Encourage the involvement of parents in the life of our school.
- Involve families in the education of the child.
- Value the contribution of parents.
- Ensure that parents and grandparents feel welcome.
- Invite parents and the extended community to workshops and seminars on a variety of topics.
- Invite parents and carers to join in our faith celebrations.

An Inclusive Environment

As a Catholic school we:

- Provide a safe, secure and happy environment.
- Encourage peer support through school programs, such as the 'Buddy System'.
- Foster respect for all in the school and wider community, through Mini Vinnies.
- Cater for the special needs of all students in our care.
- Build positive relationships among parents, teachers, students and the wider community.
- Utilise specialised skills and talents of the community.
- Celebrate success and acknowledge persistence.

Openness to Change and Responsibility for the Future

As a Catholic school we:

- Nurture an appreciation of the natural environment and encourage children to take responsibility for their role in using and maintaining the environment.
- Develop the necessary skills to enable the children to be open and responsive to change and evaluate the effectiveness of change.
- Provide our children with skills for life, such as developing courage, resilience, persistence and a positive attitude.



Acknowledgement of Country:

We play and learn on the lands of the Awabakal people who have lived on and cared for this country and its waterways for tens of thousands of years. We respect the Awabakal people and their Elders of long ago, today and tomorrow for their care of and connection to this land.

We extend that respect to the people of the Wonnarua and Worimi Nations who also have strong connections to this area.

Like them, may we walk with care and respect upon this land.

Our positive and strong reputation ensures our school continues to grow.

We are Proudly a Catholic school

Holy Spirit Infants is proudly a Catholic school in the Maitland Newcastle Diocese. Our school welcomes all and strives to create a sense of belonging; a sense of being in community with one another. Our own school vision statement says "Inspired by Jesus Christ our light, we ignite faith and empower ALL through the fruits of the Holy Spirit" and every day we celebrate our Catholic faith through prayer and worship; through our actions we mission to others and teach about the love of God and the light of the world, Jesus Christ. Our beliefs are based on scripture and the story of Jesus and ways

his teachings can help us live a life of love and service to others. We teach our community about the fruits of the Holy Spirit and how we are called to share these fruits of love, peace, patience, understanding, faithfulness, goodness, kindness and self control with everyone. Our school celebrations are joyful and inclusive where our students and families come together to experience the rich traditions, symbols and rituals of the Catholic faith through liturgy and eucharist. With our links to the Sisters of St Joseph and St Mary of the Cross Mackillop, we have a rich Catholic history at our school. We are part of the Vineyards Parish and encourage our families to become a part of this wider Catholic community.



School Prayer

Holy Spirit
 Help us to live to your name.
 Help us to be a loving, caring community,
 Where we make friends and enjoy our work and play.
 Help make our school a place where all feel welcome,
 And where we grow closer to God each day.
 Amen
 St Joseph. Pray for us.
 St Mary of the Cross Mackillop. Pray for us.

We are an inclusive school community and we welcome all. Our catholic tradition embraces all that is life giving. The children, families, staff and Parish are a community of faith inviting you to come to know the whisper of a gentle God speaking a word of love into our hearts and calling us to be all that we can be. This is through prayer, worship, song, actions, scripture, art, social justice and the Fruits of the Spirit.

Our Parish

Holy Spirit Infants School has a long history in the local Vineyards Pastoral Region, comprised of four parishes, Branxton, Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and Singleton. Our school is located beside St Francis Xavier Church in Church St Abermain. Our Parish Priest is Fr James Lunn.

Parish Contact Details

Parish Priest: **Fr James Lunn**
 Parish Office: **02 4937 1185**
 Email: assistant@vineyardcatholicparishes.net

Mass Times

Saturday Vigil 6pm St Joseph's, Cessnock

Sunday 8am St Joseph's, Cessnock

Sunday 9.30am Holy Spirit, Kurri Kurri

Sunday 4.30pm Winter; **6pm** Summer.
 St Francis Xavier, Abermain.

Our History

In 1903 the small township of Abermain began and in 1908 Fr McAuliff set up Catholic Schools at Abermain and Kurri. Sr Marcellus Treacey and Sr Rita Gallagher were the first staff. These two sisters travelled by horse drawn bus from Cessnock each day with an enrolment of 85. In 1940 the school name was recorded as St Francis Xavier Church School. 1966 saw a name change and the schools were to become known as St Joseph's Primary Kurri and St Joseph's Infants, Abermain.

In 1991 the schools changed names to Holy Spirit to be in line with the Parish.

Much work has been completed on the schools since then, with four beautiful classrooms, canteen, COLA, fencing and library being constructed between 2007-2010 being financed by the IOSF grant and the BER grant.

Holy Spirit Abermain has been well supported by the community and has had a consistent enrolment for many years. The expected enrolment for 2020 is 150 students – comprising of six classes.

Principal Ms Diane Murphy

Address Holy Spirit Infants School
 12 Church Street Abermain

02 4930 4361

Office hours
 8.30am – 3.30pm Monday to Friday.

Email admin@abermain.mn.catholic.edu.au

Website www.abermain.mn.catholic.edu.au

The School Day - Bell times

Playground supervision commences: 8.30am

Morning Assembly: 8.55am

Crunch and Sip: 10am (approx.)

Lunch: 11.10 – 11.50am

Recess: 1.25 – 2pm

Afternoon Dismissal /Assembly: 2.55pm



Early Learning

The Early Learner is the child in the age span from birth to eight years old, however for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle the focus of Early Learning is the child transitioning into Kindergarten and the child in the school years of Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2.

The spiritual, emotional, social, academic and physical development of young children has a direct effect on their overall development and on the adult they will become. That is why understanding the need to invest in very young children is so important, so as to maximise their future wellbeing.

The quality of a child's earliest environments and the availability of appropriate experiences at the right stages of development are crucial determinants of the way each child's brain architecture develops.

The research is conclusive that the Early Learning years of Early Childhood is a time of remarkable growth with brain development at its peak. During this stage, children are highly influenced by the environment and the people that surround them. Early Childhood is more than just a preparatory stage assisting the child's transition to formal schooling. It is a time of holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation of lifelong learning and wellbeing. (UNESCO, 2016).

We have a strong focus on early learning at our school. An emphasis on creativity, curiosity, positive relationships and play as pedagogy help build a curriculum shaped by the views of children, the roles of teachers and families and the interpersonal relationship between them. A positive transition to school helps to establish collaborative relationships between children, families, teachers and the community and build a successful foundation.

Each year our new Kindergarten students will transition to school by taking part in a diocesan initiative called Successful Foundations. An initiative based on play, engagement, curiosity and fun! Shops, vets, hairdressers and other examples of provocations are intentionally and

We have a strong focus on early learning at our school with an emphasis on creativity, curiosity, positive relationships and play.

purposefully set up to encourage play. These opportunities will help your child develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally.

Children are naturally motivated to play. We use a play-based curriculum built on this motivation and use play as a context for learning. In this context, children can explore experiment, discover and solve problems in imaginative and playful ways.

This play-based approach involves both child-initiated and teacher-supported learning. The teacher encourages children's learning and inquiry through interactions that aim to stretch their thinking to higher levels. The teacher can also bring the child's awareness towards mathematics, science and literacy concepts, allowing them to engage with such concepts through hands-on learning.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment at Holy Spirit includes diagnostic, summative and formative tools and strategies, which are transparent and provide valuable feedback about student progress and the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment and Reporting values teacher judgement as it is based on teachers' professional understandings of syllabus documents and standards of achievement.

Student work samples are an integral component of the process. The work samples are a representation of the development assessment carried out by teachers throughout each semester. Our teachers focus on providing students with descriptive feedback that is timely, purposeful and which clearly shows the student how they can further improve. At our school Learning Intentions and Success Criteria for learning are key components of lessons. Parents receive formal reports twice a year and



have the opportunity to have formal interviews as well.

Parents are also encouraged to communicate with teachers as the need arises.

The following timetable outlines the Reporting procedures planned for the year. Reports are based on cumulative evidence of children's progress, both formal and informal. The reporting procedures provide a close link between the student, teachers and parents.

Assessment and Reporting at Holy Spirit is considered critical in the educational process, as it provides relevant and useful data and information for teachers, students and parents about the teaching and learning that occurs over time. This belief is supported by the fact that assessment and reporting is a dynamic process that fosters the ongoing development of the whole child.

Semester 1

Term 1

Parent/teacher information evening.
Parent interviews if required by week 6.

Term 2

Semester One: Student Report available via Parent Compass App toward the end of term 2.

Parent interviews by the end of term 2.

Semester 2

Term 3

Parent/teacher interviews – if required by parents or teacher.

Term 4

Semester Two: Student Report available via the parent Compass app.

Parent/teacher interview opportunity.

Absences

Reporting of all absences whether partial or whole day is mandatory.

If a child has been absent from school, parents are required to provide the school with an appropriate reason for the absence. Parents are required to either phone the school or complete the absence on the Compass App.

If you are arriving to school late or being collected early from school then parents are required to sign in/out through the Kiosk in the front office.

The permission of the Principal must be sought for absences more than 10 days from school during term time. 'Request for Leave' forms are available from the office or from the school's website. Parents are encouraged to avoid holidays during school term as the children may miss important instruction.

Animals at School

Unless arrangements have been made according to the "Animals in School" CSO policy, all animals, including pets, are not to be brought onto school property. Thank you.

Appointments with Teachers

If at any time you wish to speak to your child's class teacher, he/she is usually available before and after school, but it is often easier, for all concerned, if you arrange a suitable time either by sending a note or by phoning for an appointment. Teachers are not free to talk to parents during lesson time.

Appointments with the Principal

If you have any concerns regarding your child's education, or if you need to discuss any matter with the Principal, please do not hesitate to phone the school office for an appointment. Ms Murphy is always willing to meet with you.

Award Assemblies and Class Sharing

Each Monday we gather to start the week with our Acknowledgement of Country for we learn and play on the land of the the Awabakal and Wonnarua first nations people. We raise the Australian Flag and sing the national anthem.

Birthday awards are shared at the Monday assembly and our PBL focus is shared as well.

On Tuesday our Merit Awards (Class awards); Fruit of the Spirit and Principal Awards are shared. We gather together and sing our school song.

Our Year 2 School Leaders conduct these assemblies as part of their leadership responsibilities.

Book Club

The Scholastic Book Club operates within our school. Order forms are sent home at regular intervals. This club provides an opportunity to buy books that are reasonably priced and suitable to the age and interest of the children in each class. Our School receives vouchers which we can utilise to grow our school library.

Books and Belongings

It is the school's hope that each child will develop pride in their books and the learning that is reflected in them. School bags, books and all belongings should be marked clearly with your child's name please.

Bus Transport

Children travelling by bus require an Opal Card. Our bus service is operated by Rover Motors and our students must wear a seat belt on the bus.

A bus service between Holy Spirit Primary School Kurri Kurri and Abermain operates each school day which stops at all the stops along the way. Children are to be courteous and behave responsibly while travelling on the bus.

We need your constant support to assist our endeavours to maintain consistent, acceptable and above all, safe travel. If at any time you have concerns about bus travel or behaviour, please contact the school and we will help in any way we can. Any unsafe behaviour on the bus or at bus stops results in the confiscation of bus passes (Opal Card) until the behaviour is corrected. Children are seated on the bus by the supervising teacher each afternoon and they must wear a seatbelt.

Code of Conduct on the Bus

To ensure their safety and the comfort of other passengers, students will:

- Always behave safely.
- Respect the needs and comfort of other passengers.
- Always behave appropriately (no offensive language, fighting, spitting, placing feet on seats or throwing things).
- Protect bus property and report vandalism.
- Show their OPAL travel passes to the driver on boarding or when requested.
- Only use the travel pass for its intended purpose.
- Always maintain possession of the travel pass.
- Follow the driver's instructions about safety on the bus.
- Only eat or drink (other than water) on the bus with the written permission of the bus operator.
- Keep arms, legs and other parts of their bodies inside the bus.
- Only attract the attention of the driver in the case of an emergency.

All children at our school and children who live outside the 1.6 km radial distance or 2.3 km or more by the most direct practicable walking route are eligible for free transport. Parents who have to transport their children more than 1.6

km to the nearest bus stop are also eligible to claim a conveyance subsidy. Please contact the office to collect the form to apply for this subsidy.

Transport NSW will be issuing School Opal cards to students eligible for travel. You will need to apply online at transportnsw.info/school-students.

Canteen

Our canteen is open Mondays and Fridays for lunch orders. The menu is reviewed often and available on QKR. We have moved to a cashless ordering system which is currently via the QKR app. Students may still purchase ice blocks at the lunch time break on canteen days. Students are encouraged to use their reusable lunch bag which has child's name and class on it. QKR provides stickers for each order.

Volunteers for the canteen are always welcome!

Catholic School's Office – Newcastle

Address

841 Hunter Street, Newcastle West NSW 2302
PO BOX 714, Newcastle NSW 2300

Phone 4979 1200

Bishop Rev. William Wright

Director Gerard Mowbray

Parent Liaison Cath Garret-Jones

Change of Details

Any change of address, phone number or other information parents feel the school should know must be forwarded as soon as possible to enable changes on school records. You can send an email to admin@abermain.edu.au informing of the changes. Updates can also be made via the Compass App.

Child Protection

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an absolute and abiding commitment to promote the safeguarding of children. In 2019, as a part of that commitment, our Bishop, Bill Wright, articulated his expectations of all those who work for the Diocese. "I expect you to place the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and vulnerable adult at the centre of everything you do in the name of our Church," he said.

Bishop Wright established the Office of Safeguarding, whose director answers to the Bishop's Office and is charged to oversee the whole of the Diocese's safeguarding of children, including the students in our system of schools.

As a parent sending your child to a diocesan school, you are expected to be an active participant in safeguarding your child's wellbeing. To do so, it's important that you have the best information available to you. The [Office of Safeguarding website](#) offers comprehensive details of the Diocese's approach to safeguarding children. You are also encouraged to be an active participant in the life of your school.

As a parent of a diocesan school student, if you are concerned for:

- the safety, welfare or wellbeing of one or more children in the school
 - the conduct of a member of staff, a volunteer, contractor or other adult associated with the school
- ... you are able to:
- discuss your concerns with a teacher, assistant principal or principal
 - talk to an investigator at the Office of Safeguarding (ph **4979 1390**, during office hours)
 - report your concerns to the Department of Communities and Justice's (DCJ) Child Protection Helpline (ph **132 111**, 24 hrs/7 days) if your concerns constitute a risk of significant harm
 - report to NSW Police if you believe a crime has been committed.



Our commitment

As the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle I expect you to place the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and vulnerable adult at the centre of everything you do in the name of our church. Each one of us is responsible to ensure we are aware of the signs of abuse, that we know how to respond to a disclosure of abuse and we know how to report our concerns. Most importantly, I require every worker in the Diocese to be prepared, should the situation ever arise, to call out the unsafe or abusive behaviour of colleagues and workmates. The conduct we walk past is the conduct we have condoned.

+ Bill Wright

The Diocese is committed to:

- ▶ Fostering communities of safeguarding, including open and respectful communication about issues of safeguarding with individuals, families and groups
- ▶ Upholding the dignity and rights of all children and vulnerable adults and seeks to empower them to have their voices heard
- ▶ Training all relevant personnel in safeguarding knowledge and skills including indicators of abuse, supporting people to disclose abuse and reporting abuse
- ▶ Working closely with statutory authorities to report alleged abuse and support them to investigate those allegations
- ▶ Developing our risk assessment and management systems for all diocesan activities and personnel
- ▶ Developing the breadth and depth of our auditing and compliance regimes
- ▶ Implementing and maintaining compliance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

I call upon each one of you. Every parishioner in our faith communities, each worker in our CatholicCare and other community and family support services, every staff member in our schools and our St Nicholas centres, each cleric and religious conducting ministry amongst us. We must, each one of us, commit ourselves every day, individually and collectively, to safeguard each child and every vulnerable adult with whom we interact. BP BILL WRIGHT

 Vicar General Fr Andrew Doohan	 Chief Executive Officer Sean Scanlon	 Chancellor Fr Matthew Muller
 Director Pastoral Ministries Teresa Brierley	 Director Catholic Schools Office Gerard Mowbray	 Chief Operating Officer Graham Heath
 Director CatholicCare Gary Christensen	 Director Office of Safeguarding Sean Tynan	





Safety Welfare Wellbeing

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults – particularly those who participate in the life of the Diocese as part of our faith communities in parishes, in our diocesan systemic schools, early education centres and out-of-school hours care service, as part of our welfare and community services through CatholicCare and other diocesan ministries.

The office of the Director of Safeguarding has been established by decree, issued by the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle.

The Office of Safeguarding is an integral part of the Diocese, reporting directly to the Bishop's Office. The Office of Safeguarding is placed outside the Diocese's services, programmes and parishes, overseeing their safeguarding standards in operation.

The Office of Safeguarding works with NSW Police, the Office of the Children's Guardian, the Department of Community and Justice and other statutory authorities and specialist authorities within the Catholic Church in Australia to fulfil its responsibilities and maximise the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

The Office of Safeguarding supports the schools of the Diocese:

- ▶ in meeting compliance with statutory obligations and diocesan codes of conduct, policies, procedures and protocols relevant to safeguarding children
- ▶ with delivery of mandatory Safeguarding training to all school personnel
- ▶ with provision of a daily intake service that analyses concerns for children, provides advice and support to staff or parents, ensures statutory reporting obligations are met and ensures appropriate follow-up to complaints when warranted
- ▶ in conducting or overseeing investigations of diocesan personnel who are alleged to have committed criminal conduct, reportable conduct or a breach of professional standards against a child
- ▶ with provision of an alternative dispute resolution process for complaints between parents and staff that can't be resolved within the school
- ▶ in assisting in the management of individuals identified as posing an elevated risk.

3/10/25

Communication

Parents become more aware of and involved in the school by way of various methods of communication eg **Compass App**, **School Newsletters**, **Holy Spirit website**, **Parent Engagement Evenings** and special purpose notes.

School newsletters will be distributed via **Compass App and email every second Thursday**. Permission notes will also be added to the Compass App and if necessary, a paper copy will be sent home via the student note bag for your attention.

An 'open door' policy exists in the school whereby parents are welcome to talk with the principal or class teachers about matters of concern or clarification. The only request is that parents make an appointment as all staff members are classroom teachers and have commitments to their class. Email may be used as agreed upon by the classroom teacher.

A General Information Meeting for all parents will be arranged in Term One. Parent/Teacher interviews can be arranged in Term 2 and 4.

Compass is a comprehensive system that will enable the school to effectively manage all information relating to your child/children and their school journey. The system forms part of a broader implementation for the Diocese of Maitland - Newcastle. This solution will offer a secure, yet easy connection to essential information you need for your child.

A parent login will be issued to allow you easy secure access to Compass once the child is enrolled. This will become our primary source of information distribution.

The types of information you will find from this service are:

- Monitor your child's attendance, and enter in explanations for late arrivals or absences.
- View 'My News', a news feed of school announcements, alerts and updates.
- Communicate with their child's teachers and update their family details.

- Download and view their child's progress and semester reports.
- View their student's timetable and the school calendar.
- Book parent-teacher meetings.

Complaints and Grievances

Brochures are available in the school foyer and on the school and CSO website. Your feedback is important to us.

Crunch and Sip

Children are required to bring to school a water bottle and cut up fruit or raw vegetables to have during Crunch and Sip morning session daily. This is important as we encourage healthy eating habits at our school. This is also the time of the morning when the students will take a short outdoor break to exercise.

Curriculum

At Holy Spirit Infants School, the curriculum encompasses Religious Education and the Key Learning Areas as mandated by the NSW Board of Studies. Further information about the mandated syllabus materials can be found on the NESA website.

Information about the RE Syllabus materials may be found at:

www.mn.catholic.edu.au/teachers/religious-education/teaching-of-re

There are seven Key Learning Areas taught in K-2:

- Religious Education
- English
- Mathematics
- Creative and Practical Arts
- Science and Technology
- History/Geography
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

Curiosity

Curiosity is crucial to learning. At our school, curiosity in learning is promoted in many ways.

Inquiry-based learning is embedded into the curriculum and curiosity is rewarded and encouraged. We give students choice, voice, and the opportunities to explore and play. We teach students to ask questions and to recognise their learning as a journey.



Gifted Education

“Holy Spirit Infants caters for the diverse learning needs of all students and we are proudly a Gifted Education Lead School offering enrichment for high ability early learners.”

Our school has a Gifted Education Mentor who has the responsibility of supporting gifted students in our school. The Gifted Learner will be identified via various identification tools as per the Catholic School’s Office Diocesan Policy for Gifted Education. Parents may also nominate their child for further investigation. A child may be gifted in one or more areas and will be given opportunities for open ended and challenging learning opportunities. We are proudly supportive of all learners.

Documents Required for Enrolment

Birth Certificate or Identity Documents

Except in specifically defined circumstances, it is mandated that a student must be enrolled using the name that appears on his or her birth certificate.

Baptism Certificate

These are required for Catholic students to assist us with our records of sacramental and parish details.

Immunisation

All children must obtain an immunisation certificate for school entry. Please ensure your child’s immunisation certificate has been forwarded to school before commencement.

Extra-curricular activities

- Choir
- Reading groups/Intervention Groups
- Excursions/incursions
- Sport in schools’ program
- Season for growth
- Social training groups
- Maths Competitions
- Sporting competitions for 8 year olds
- Mini Vinnies
- Cultural Showcase
- Coding and robotics.

As a member of the All Saints Cluster of schools, Holy Spirit Infants children may be involved in:

- Cultural activities
- Public speaking
- Enrichment activities
- Spelling Bee
- Art Competitions
- Sport events.

Getting Ready for School

It is a very big change for a five-year-old to pass from the intimacy of the family circle to school. Here are some practical ways in which you can help this transition:

1. Buy clothing that is easy to fasten.
2. See that all articles brought to school (shoes, hats, jackets, jumpers, bags, books, lunch boxes, etc.) are marked clearly in a prominent place with the child’s name.
3. Teach your child:
 - to tie shoelaces, do up buttons, put on and take off outer clothing.
 - to know his/her full name and address.
 - to recognise his/her name among other names.
 - to use his/her handkerchief/tissue and to put it away when not in use.
 - to put away toys, books, etc after use.
 - to wash his/her hands and flush the toilet unassisted.
4. Some weeks in advance rehearse with your child (in a spirit of play) the different situations to be met within school life:
 - Opening and closing of their backpack.
 - Unpacking and eating the school lunch. Identifying recess and lunch.
 - Dressing for school and making the journey to and from school.
 - Being away from home and parents for short periods.
 - Give your child many opportunities to use pencils, crayons, scissors, etc.
 - Encourage your child to enjoy books by providing those which are bright, attractive and have only a little reading content. Read stories daily.
 - Listen to stories, look at pictures and talk about them.
 - Encourage your child to talk; answer questions and encourage interest in their daily environment and activities.
 - The best preparation for reading and writing is good language development. If your child writes his/her name, please do not use capital letters, eg. It should be John not JOHN.
 - Greeting friends by name.
 - Encourage correct letter formation using Foundation Handwriting using the correct pencil grip.

Grooming

- Hair should always be tidy. Hair to be kept in natural colours only.
- Haircuts are to be conservative in nature.
- Extreme haircuts and hair dye are not acceptable. Designs cut into short hair are not appropriate for school.
- Long hair should be worn securely tied back to avoid falling into eyes.
- Hair accessories are to be in school colours only (blue or white).
- Make-up, body glitter or any other cosmetic accessories are not to be worn.
- Coloured nail polish is not to be worn.

Our school has a smart uniform which we encourage all children to wear with pride.

Jewellery

For safety purposes no jewellery should be worn. Studs or sleepers only can be worn in pierced ears and a watch. Please keep bangles, rings and necklaces for wear at home.

Medication

If your child needs to be on long term medication then it is your responsibility to complete the appropriate forms, please see the secretary or principal for details. This type of medication will be administered only if specific written instructions are supplied.

If your child is on short term medication such as antibiotics, parents are requested to complete a note outlining the dosage and time to be given.

Medication such as aspirin, panadol etc will not be administered to any child. Parents are requested not to give such medication to the children to bring to school as it can be misused.

Students who suffer from asthma require an Asthma Action Plan to be completed by the GP for school. This plan needs to be updated annually. Each child with Asthma MUST have an action plan in place. The school has an asthma Ventolin puffer and spacer at school for emergencies. For any serious illnesses a medical action plan is required.

Due to the risk of anaphylactic reactions in students, parents are required to ensure that no foods containing traces of peanuts or raw egg be sent to school.

The 'Administering of Medicines' Policy is available for parents' attention. At the beginning of every school year, all students will need to have a medical form completed for them.

All medications must be sent to the office for administering.

Illness

It sometimes happens that children are sent to school sick. Unfortunately, school facilities are unable to cope with the supervision of these children. If your child is ill at home, they should not be sent to school. If a child becomes ill at school, contact will be made with the parents or the emergency contact person named on the child's enrolment form, and arrangements made for the child to be collected. If your child has been vomiting, they must stay home for 24 hours after they stop.

As a result of the Covid19 Pandemic, all students will have their temperature checked if they become unwell and parent/carer will be called to collect your child. Please do not send a sick child to school – we need to keep everyone well and healthy. Thank you.



Infectious Diseases

If your child is suffering from an infectious disease, the following table should help you in knowing how long your child should be excluded from school:

Chicken Pox Exclude till fully recovered or at least 5 days after first spots appear.

German Measles Exclude till fully recovered or at least 4 days after the onset of rash.

Infectious Hepatitis Re-admit on receipt of a medical certificate of recovery.

Measles Exclude for at least 4 days from the appearance of rash.

Mumps Exclude for at least 9 days after onset of symptoms.

Conjunctivitis Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased.

Impetigo Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced and sores on exposed surfaces are covered with a dressing.

Head Lice Exclude until hair is completely cleaned, neither nits or lice being present.

Money Sent to School

At various times children will need to bring money to school for certain activities, eg Mission Days, raffle tickets etc. We ask that this money be placed in an envelope or wallet and clearly marked with the family name, child's class and what the money is for.

OOSH Before and After School Care

St Nicholas OOSH
Before and after school care and vacation care.

Session Times (Monday to Friday)
Before school: 6.30 – 8.30am
After school: 3.00 – 6.30pm

For further information please email
abermain@stnicholasoosh.org.au or
call 0409 390 627.



Parent Engagement at Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit Infants acknowledges and deeply supports the role of parent and carers as first educators and seek to partner with families to ensure each child is nurtured to their potential. Parent and carer groups established within our school offer an opportunity for families and school staff to gather, explore, discuss, imagine, implement, support, encourage and journey together as we work in community for the benefit of the children enrolled in our school.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT GROUP (PEG) The PEG is a new option for schools where the P&F Association model is not regarded by the school community as a viable option. Holy Spirit Infants and Primary schools have chosen to adopt the Parent Engagement Group model (PEG) rather than have a constituted P&F Association. This model focuses on supporting authentic family engagement in student learning to strengthen the partnership that exists between home and school.

The purposes of the PEG are: a) promoting the interest of the school and Catholic education generally by bringing together parents, students, clergy and teaching staff, both religious and lay, in a spirit of collaboration and close cooperation; b) providing a forum for members to raise and discuss issues related to the spiritual, social and academic development of their children at school and supporting parents in their involvement in their children's learning at home and school.

The focus of the meeting group is to be on authentic community engagement and include an educative component that builds capacity amongst parents and carers.

See newsletter and Compass alerts for the next PEG meeting. All welcome!

Student Wellbeing

Pastoral Care involves all members of the School Community. It values the uniqueness of each person, recognising and respecting their rights. Behaviour Management is most effective in a calm atmosphere. Discipline implies having structures and strategies in place to guide children in accepting responsibility for their own actions. Children at Holy Spirit Infants are entitled to a happy and safe and supportive learning space inclusive of the playground and classroom to learn, play and socialise. Behaviour Management and associated discipline practices evolve from a Pastoral Care perspective as it attempts to promote a respectful, secure and healthy environment in which students grow to be discerning, self-disciplined and contributing members of society. Pastoral Care is understood to be an attitude of mutual respect, care and understanding between staff and students.

Holy Spirit Infants aims to develop self discipline and responsible behaviour in each child. We hope the discipline fostered at this school will be building upon what begun in the home and will be supported by parents.

Parental support in dealing with discipline issues is of utmost importance. Parents own experiences of school reflect significantly upon the child's perception of school. We ask for your support in dealing with matters of misbehaviour. By showing consistency the child will be clear in what is expected both at school and at home. Often if a parent is called to school it is to work through a problem and discuss the best way of together dealing with the issue at hand. Counselling services are also available. "1 2 3 Magic" and Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) support whole school behaviour management strategies at our school.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS NOT USED AT HOLY SPIRIT INFANTS SCHOOL.

Through Holy Spirit Student Wellbeing Policy and Procedure we aim to:

- Guide the children towards the development of self-discipline and acceptance of responsibility for his/her actions.

- Develop the self-concept of each child and therefore growth in positive, acceptable behaviours.
- Grow in awareness and respect for others.

Good discipline is innate in most children however; there are times when the school needs to intervene in order to keep children safe. The approach taken is based on the principles of restorative justice. These principles are based on recognising the impact of poor behaviour choices, identifying replacement behaviours and restoring relationships that may have been harmed.

It is important that the children are made aware of their Rights and Responsibilities and of the sanctions to be imposed for inappropriate behaviour and a positive partnership be developed between parents and teachers in implementing the Pastoral Care and Discipline Policy.

Positive Behaviour for Learning

At Holy Spirit Infants' school, we use a Positive Behaviour for Learning, or PBL, approach to teach children positive behaviours that will assist them in becoming more successful academically and socially. After all, if a child does not know how to swim or read, we teach them. However, if a child does not know how to behave, should we first teach them or punish them?

Below is our PBL Framework. The statement "At the heart of everything, there is Jesus Christ" underpins our framework and all that we do at Holy Spirit. Our relationship with God, ourselves, other people and the environment is modelled on the example of Jesus Christ. The PBL Framework has four main areas:

- I am Safe!
- I am Respectful!
- I am Responsible!
- I am a Learner!

Under each of these headings are positive behaviour statements.



HOLY SPIRIT INFANTS, ABERMAIN

Positive Behaviour for Learning Matrix

At the heart of everything, there is Jesus Christ.

I am Safe!	I am Respectful!	I am Responsible!	I am a Learner!
I walk on tar, concrete and around buildings.	I am honest.	I am in the right place at the right time.	I listen carefully.
I have safe hands, safe feet and safe words.	I am kind.	I care for the school environment.	I participate in lessons.
I use the play equipment safely.	I include and don't exclude.	I care for my belongings.	I follow instructions.
I am Sun Smart.	I wait my turn.	I wear our uniform with pride.	I do my best.
I use my ABC!	I say "please" and "thank you".		
(Avoid the situation. Be assertive. Call for help.)	I respond to teachers and adults positively.		

Punctuality

It is important that parents ensure their children arrive at school prior to the commencement of the first bell each day. Children who arrive late on a regular basis are missing valuable lessons and this will be detrimental to the child's learning. Morning assembly is at 8.55 am. A text message is generated to parents at 9.30am if students are not at school and if school has not been notified of the absence.

Professional Learning Community

The school embraces a culture that has a focus on learning, collaboration and data informed planning, all of which are characteristics of a professional learning community (PLC). Teachers meet weekly in stage teams to engage in Professional Learning Team meetings with a focus on improving teaching practice, collaboration and improving student outcomes. We are working to create a culture of learning at

Holy Spirit School and will provide opportunities for parents to engage with us as together, in partnership, we educate your child.

Professional Learning for Staff

Holy Spirit Infants School will have three pupil free days across the school year for the purpose of the professional development of teachers with a focus on School Improvement, Professional Practice and Development and improving student outcomes. These days are pupil free and four weeks notice will be given to parents of the date for these days. The last two days of the school year are designated pupil free days for all schools in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese.

Release From Face-to-Face (RFF)

This is an entitlement to all teachers in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. A full-time primary teacher receives 2 hours of relief from face-to-face teaching which can be taken in small blocks or full days. The professional practice of a teacher requires that a teacher is released



from face-to-face teaching in order to "plan for and implement effective teaching and learning" (Australian Teacher Standards, Standard 3).

This requires that a teacher, among other things:

- establish challenging learning goals
- plan, structure and sequence learning programs
- evaluate and improve teaching programs
- engage parents in the educative process.

In addition, the work of the teacher requires that they assess student learning, and provide feedback to students on their learning (Australian Teacher Standards, Standard 5).

The classroom teacher provides a schedule for the relieving teacher to minimise disruption to the teaching of curriculum.

The last two days of each school year are taken as pupil free days. The Staff are required to complete paper work for the year and organise classrooms for the following year and attend professional development on these 2 days.

School Fees

The Catholic Schools Office in consultation with Catholic Schools Council, the Federation of Parents and Friends Association and the Diocesan Finance Council sets the amount

of parental contribution towards the running of the Catholic system of Education. School fees are an integral part of our Catholic School System. The funding of our schools is a shared responsibility between Commonwealth and State Governments, parents and parishes. The commitment and continuing financial contribution of parents is essential to help fill the gap between the amount of government funding received and the cost of running our schools. Schools depend upon the continued reliability of parents in the matter of prompt payment of fees for their ongoing viability.

School Fees can be paid weekly, fortnightly, monthly, termly or annually. The school also offers 5 methods of payment for school fees; BPAY, EFTPOS, direct debit, cash or cheque. Direct debit forms are available from the school office.

You are reminded that fee arrangements and concessions must be renegotiated annually and parents must contact the Principal so that agreements can be finalised. Parents who find themselves in difficulties with the payment of fees are asked to make an appointment with the Principal for a confidential discussion on the matter. A Health Care Card entitles parents to a tuition fee concession.

Please note that if you are transferring from another Catholic School in the Diocese, a fee clearance must be obtained before the enrolment will be considered.



Settling into School

The change from being at home or pre-school for short periods to a full day, five days a week, brings many pressures to bear on a small child. Some may find it difficult to cope, especially in Term One. You can help your child settle into school by observing some of the following suggestions:

Diet/nutrition

Crunch and Sip, Lunch and Recess. Many children find lunchtime with a large group of children quite disconcerting and eat poorly at the beginning of the year. It is best to give them smaller quantities of known favourites and “top them up” when they arrive home. We prefer that the children take home what they don’t eat – this prevents waste and allows you to adjust lunches accordingly. Consider the logistics of eating on a picnic table and pack foods which are less likely to fall apart easily or spill. Please pack healthy choices- fruit/raw vegetables, sandwiches/wraps etc.

Sleep

It is essential for your child to go to bed early and get a good night’s sleep every night. A tired child cannot benefit from a full day at school. Kindergarten children often get very tired and feel the strain of being part of a large group - you will notice this particularly towards the end of the week for the first few months. All our early learners require regular sleep.

Exercise

Although children have many opportunities throughout the day to move around at school, play a game and have lesson breaks it is important that children engage in regular physical activity for a healthy body and mind. Family bike rides, a game of cricket or a nice walk together will help to achieve this.

Wellbeing

Should your child be unhappy at school for any reason, please let us know. We cannot help with a problem unless we know it exists. It would be appreciated if parents could use the time before and after school for interviews and not class time. Kindergarten classes are full of constant activity and any interruptions can cause considerable disruption.

Let your child talk to you about his/her experiences. It is important that you share in his/her new life.

Consistency

Develop the same routine for drop-offs in the morning. Always tell your child when you are leaving, reassure them if they are anxious, that you will return. Alert the teacher if it becomes apparent your child is becoming upset and leave quickly. The school will ring you to confirm that your child has settled. If you give into your child the first time, it will quickly develop into a habitual pattern which will make the start of the day traumatic for all concerned.

Please send your child on time each day and every day, since regular attendance at school is essential for progress.

Special Events/Incursions

During the school year there are special events that take place. These may include:

- Easter Hat Parade
- Athletics Carnival
- Swimming Carnival combined with Holy Spirit Primary School (Yr 2, 8 yr olds only)
- Grandparent’s Day
- School Concert/Dance/Art Show
- School Photos
- Mother’s Day – Celebration and gift stall
- Father’s Day – Celebration and gift stall
- Special Liturgies and Masses
- Catholic Schools Week
- Science Week
- Reconciliation Week
- NAIDOC Week
- Leadership Opportunities for our year 2 buddies and the leadership team
- Class Assemblies – twice a year
- Book Week – Activities and book fair

- Literacy and Numeracy Week
- Fruit and Vegetable Week
- Public Speaking Competition
- Abermain Eisteddfod/choir
- P&F Fundraising activities
- Spelling Bee
- Santa Visit
- Special Services.

Support services

Support services for students and families regarding children with special needs are offered by the Catholic Schools Office:

- School Psychologist available on site each Monday
- Learning Support teacher available five days a fortnight
- EALD teacher available two days per week.

These allocations are variable year to year. For further information please contact the school as we can assist you in connecting with other external agencies inclusive of CatholicCare.

Lunchbox ideas for school

Lunchboxes should include an esky brick.

We are a NUT FREE zone!

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three
Crunch and Sip break	Strawberries or grapes, water	Fresh fruit chopped apple, water	Cherry tomatoes, Carrot sticks, water
Recess	Crackers, vegetable sticks and cheese cubes, water	Fruit scone or raisin bread, water	Pikelets, yoghurt tub, water
Lunch	Egg and lettuce roll, water	Chicken and salad sandwich, popper juice	Ham and salad wrap, fresh fruit, water

‘Sometimes foods’- chips, chocolates and other treats are allowed occasionally. We encourage a healthy lunch box each day.

Sport

Each year we are able to offer a variety of sporting skills eg cricket, hockey, gymnastics and dance through Sporting Schools grants.

Children are provided with the opportunity to learn several sports skills. In today's world of increasing leisure time and the need for exercise, it is important to the child's total development to participate as fully as possible in the opportunities provided.

A note must be given to the class teacher if a child is not able to participate and a reason stated. Such non-participation should be kept to a minimum for the sake of the child's health and well-being. Wednesday is the official sport day. Children are required to wear their sport uniform on this day as we begin with "Workout Wednesday" a series of fitness and fun activities in our Colour Houses.

Sport Teams are:
Green, Blue, Purple and Yellow.

Library

The children visit the library on a regular basis for reading, research and borrowing. ALL students are expected to have a cloth library bag to carry books to and from the library. Books are very costly and we ask that care be taken to see that they are returned in the same condition as when borrowed. Should a book be several weeks overdue or be returned damaged a letter will be sent to you. Your co-operation in responding promptly is appreciated.

A Teacher Librarian is appointed to the school one day a week and each class has a formal library lesson weekly. A Library Assistant is also appointed to the school to assist with resource management, borrowing and reading support.

Lost Property

Items of clothing found in the school grounds can be returned immediately if labelled. Unlabelled items are kept for a reasonable period of time and are then sent to the clothing pool. Please, CLEARLY LABEL all items of clothing.

Student Information Cards

A Student Information Update Form is sent home annually, usually in the first or second week of Term 1. It asks for details including: home address, home, work and mobile phone numbers, family composition, family doctor and emergency contact(s). It is the responsibility of the family to notify the school of any change of information during the year to assist us in utilising correct information as quickly as possible in the event of an emergency or your child requiring first aid.

Student leadership

At Holy Spirit Infants School we foster and nurture responsibility and leadership skills in each child. We have a Student Leadership Team comprising of elected students in leadership roles where they undertake various responsibilities within our school community.

We also have a Buddy Program as a support role for our Kindergarten students. Each child in kindergarten is allocated a "Buddy" from Year 2, a special friend whom they can connect with, play with and learn from when they come to school.

Technology as a Tool for Learning

The classrooms, library and administration area have been networked (cabled and wireless) and are connected to the internet. The school believes that the benefits to students from being able to access and interact with new technologies and the opportunities these provide for collaboration is an essential part of the learning process. The use of technology is curriculum driven and is embedded into classroom teaching programs. Access is a privilege not a right and entails responsibility. The use of school technology is subject to a signed agreement by parents and students to ensure that resources are used appropriately. Our classrooms have ipads; laptops; robots; smartboards and interactive televisions however, given technology is constantly changing our teachers have a focus to embed technology and develop students' digital capabilities.



Uniform

All children are expected to wear school uniform. Parents are asked to assist with ensuring the student always wears the correct uniform.

School Uniform	
Girls	Boys
Summer	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dark Blue Check Dress White Socks Royal Blue Bucket Hat with school logo Black polishable leather shoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grey drill shorts (no corduroy or cargo shorts) Short sleeves Blue shirt with school logo Grey socks Royal Blue Bucket Hat with school logo Black polishable leather shoes (not jogger style)
Winter	Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dark Blue Check Tunic Pale Blue long sleeve blouse- Peter pan collar Sports Jacket or Woollen School Jumper Girls tie Dark Blue Stockings Navy slacks- optional Black polishable leather shoes Royal Blue Bucket Hat with school logo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long grey trousers (no jeans, corduroy or cargo pants). Midford or Scaggs brand. Long sleeve Blue shirt with school logo patch Sports Jacket or Woollen School Jumper School tie- royal/white Grey socks Black polishable leather shoes (not jogger style) Royal Blue Bucket Hat with school logo
Sports Uniform	Sports Uniform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powder blue polo shirt with school logo Royal Blue skort School Sports Jacket School Sports Track pants White socks Joggers Royal Blue Bucket Hat with school logo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powder blue polo shirt with school logo Royal blue shorts with white stripes School Sports Jacket School Sports Track pants White socks Joggers Royal Blue Bucket Hat with school logo

Most uniform items can be purchased from Flanagan's Menswear, Vincent Street, Cessnock. Bucket hats, school bags, library bags and sunglasses are available from the school office.

Most items have the school logo printed on them.

Second -Hand Uniforms

If you would like to enquire about second-hand uniforms available, please contact the school and we will assist you with this.

Rules for Wearing School Uniform

- The appropriate school uniform must be correctly worn to and from school each day. (This includes all accessories such as ties.)
- Sports uniform may only be worn on Wednesday or as otherwise directed by the teachers.
- Blouses and shirts must be tucked in (common sense will apply when students are playing active games at lunch and recess).
- School hat to be worn outside at all times. A "no hat – play in the shade" policy applies.
- Earrings – to be studs or sleepers only.
- Watches – permitted.
- Parents must provide a note explaining any variation to uniform.

Valuables

Personal belongings and valuables are to be kept at home as we cannot take any responsibility for lost or damaged property. Mobile phones are strongly discouraged, however if you believe your child needs to be in possession of a mobile phone please contact the Principal.

Visitors

All visitors including reading helpers, contactors and external health providers, library helpers and canteen workers need to sign in and out via the Compass Kiosk in the school foyer, and wear a visitors lanyard whilst on site.

Volunteers

We welcome Parents and Carers as volunteers in our school. If you are interested in being a volunteer please contact our school office to discuss.

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an absolute and abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children. As a volunteer working in a diocesan school, you should be aware of your obligations and responsibilities in protecting students from abuse or neglect.

Becoming a volunteer

To be able to volunteer within a diocesan school you are required to read the [Volunteer Induction Handbook](#) and complete all necessary checks, inductions and safeguarding training relevant to your volunteer role. This may mean you will be required to obtain a Working with Children Check and/or National Police Check. All paperwork and checks are to be completed and verified before you can commence in your role. Safeguarding training must occur within six months of your commencement as a volunteer.

The Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection) Act 1998

As a volunteer in the state of NSW you can report certain information to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). You should discuss your concerns with a teacher, assistant principal or principal. You can report your concerns to the DCJ Child Protection Helpline (Ph **132 111**, 24 hrs/7 days) if you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and your concerns are current. Risk of significant

harm may occur from a single act or omission or to a series of acts or omissions.

It is better to be safe than sorry, so if you are uncertain, talk to a staff member at the school.

Part 4 of the Children's Guardian Act

Part 4 of the Children's Guardian Act defines diocesan schools as a "schedule 1 entity" and as such we must have systems for preventing, reporting (to the Children's Guardian) and investigating reportable conduct.

All volunteers who hold a Working with Children Check for the purpose of their role within a diocesan school fall within the scope of Part 4 and may be investigated for alleged "reportable conduct", which includes sexual offences, misconduct, assault, ill-treatment, neglect, and behaviour that causes psychological harm to children.

As a volunteer "working" at a diocesan school, any alleged reportable conduct will be investigated. It does not matter if the conduct is alleged to have happened outside school and in your private lives.

The [Office of Safeguarding](#) is the Diocese's specialist safeguarding and child protection service that works with the Children's Guardian to ensure the Diocese meets its obligations under Part 4. As volunteers you should co-operate with any investigation conducted by the Office of Safeguarding.

The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

Under this legislation, people who undertake a role in child-related work in a paid or volunteer capacity in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are required by law to have a Working with Children Check Clearance. This "clearance" can be obtained by applying online at www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check

Volunteers receive a clearance for free, and it lasts up to five years.

Exemptions apply for volunteers who are a close relative of a student enrolled at the school. See "Statutory Screening Selection Tool" on page 26 of the Volunteer Induction Handbook.

Website

The School Website is available for parents to, among other things, access the Parent Handbook, Term Planner and Newsletter. The web address is:
www.abermain.catholic.edu.au

To gain access to the newsletter you will require a password.

Workplace Health & Safety (WHS)

The School WHS Team meets regularly throughout the year to manage the safety and welfare of students, staff, parents and visitors. WHS is a weekly Staff Meeting agenda item, inspections of equipment and playground areas are carried out and evacuation and lock down drills are held.



How Parents Can Make a Good School Better

- Make an effort to understand what the school is trying to do. If you can, express your support for its aim and the values it expresses.
- If at all possible, participate on committees and in discussion groups that consider educational issues and give opinions to the staff.
- See the school as 'your' school. Encourage your children to see it in the same way.
- By all means offer constructive criticism and suggestions, but direct your comments to the right people.
- Please don't 'bad mouth' the school in the general community.
- Come along to school activities – Liturgies and Mass celebrations; Open classrooms; special event days; sporting functions. You are always welcome.
- Join the P&F Association and look after the school's interests.
- Welcome new parents. Help them feel that they belong. Build their confidence in the school.
- Support a broad and balanced curriculum. Resist attempts by any pressure groups to narrow the curriculum to things that are purely functional and measurable.
- Encourage your children to co-operate fully, to join in all school activities and to take pride in the buildings, the grounds and the school community as a whole.
- Together, working in partnership, we make sure our school is great!



Notes:

Parent/Teacher Information & Communication

It is important that parents understand that they should always make an effort to reach out to clarify matters. Parents are encouraged to do so regularly.

However, please do not approach teachers during class teaching time and while they are on playground duty. Each teacher has a duty of care for all the students in their class and need to attend to the children.

If you would like to contact a teacher during the day, call or visit the school office and the clerical staff will let the teacher know you would like an appointment. It is more preferable to contact your child's teacher by email or note and arrange a time that is suitable to both parties. Teachers check their emails each afternoon before leaving school. They will respond in a timely manner. If the matter needs attending to before this time (change of pick up time for example), ring the school or send a note addressed to your child's teacher.

The first point of call with any class related issue is the classroom teacher. Your child's teacher knows your child best.

For other matters contact a member of the School Leadership Team who each have specific roles and responsibilities. The school's Learning Support Teacher is also available

and is a valuable resource for supporting you, your child and the classroom teacher in addressing matters impacting on the teaching and learning process and behavioural and socialisation issues.

A school psychologist is available to provide a range of consultation, assessment, intervention and counselling services to support students to achieve academic success, psychological health and social and emotional well-being and respond to the educational and welfare needs of the students. Student access requires a Referral Form, which is available from the school's Learning Support Teacher.

Parents are invited to contact their child's teacher to arrange a formal interview to discuss their child's progress. Naturally, if at any time, you have a concern about your child's/ children's progress, learning or happiness, please do not hesitate to make an appointment to speak with your child's class teacher.

The staff at Holy Spirit Infants School look forward to welcoming your family to our school community.

Thank you for making Holy Spirit Infants your school of choice.





12 Church Street, ABERMAIN NSW 2326

PO Box 11, WESTON NSW 2326

02 4930 4361

admin@abermain.catholic.edu.au

www.abermain.catholic.edu.au