



# St Francis Xavier Primary School

## Newsletter

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023  
Term 4 Week 1

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### Term 4 (12 weeks)

Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct - Wed 20<sup>th</sup> Dec

#### Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> – Fri 6<sup>th</sup> October

Years 2, 4 & 5 swimming

#### Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October

9.30am Mass (Mercy Day)  
at St Alipius

Regional Athletics at  
Llanberris

#### Monday 9<sup>th</sup> – Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Oct

Year 6 Urban Camp

#### Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October

12.40pm 6MM Assembly

2024 Foundation Transition

9.30-11am Group A

11.30am-1pm Group B

#### Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October

Division Golf at Mt Xavier  
Golf Club

#### Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October

Grandparents' and Special  
Friends' Day

2024 Foundation Transition

#### Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October

12.40pm 2CJ Assembly

Free Dress Day – raising  
money for Mercy Works

2024 Foundation Transition

#### Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November

Division Cricket

#### Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November

12.40pm 3NM Assembly

F-2 Junior Sports Day at  
Russell Square

#### Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November

Reporting & Assessment  
Day – Pupil Free Day

#### Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November

Melbourne Cup Public  
Holiday – Pupil Free Day

#### Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November

12.40pm 4CP Assembly

#### Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November

12.40pm F MM Assembly

Yr 3-6 Athletics Day  
at Llanberris

### In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

Welcome to the fourth and final term for the school year! It was great to welcome our students and families back to school this morning and to hear the buzz of excitement around the school. I am sure that we will hear many stories over the next few weeks as our children recount their holiday adventures. Let's look out for each other this term and enjoy learning and being together at St. Francis Xavier School!

God bless,

Mark Hogbin



### PRAYER FOR THE BEGINNING OF A NEW TERM

*Almighty God, We give you our school.*

*We give you all the teachers and staff who work here,*

*We give you all the children who learn here.*

*We pray our school will continue to be a place of great  
discovery, adventure and creativity.*

*May it be a place where we love to learn and where we  
learn to love,*

*A place where everyone is respected and all are deeply valued.*

*We ask all this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



### Term Dates

Our classes commenced for fourth term this morning and we will continue for the next eleven weeks. The last day of school for students will be Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December.

### Mercy Mass

We will be asking the Lord to bless our term this Friday with Mass at Saint Alipius Church at 9.30am. Please note that parents and friends of St. Francis Xavier are welcome to join us for this special celebration.

*St. Francis Xavier Primary School is a Child Safe School called to action through Gospel values and Mercy tradition.  
Through the mission of Jesus within the Mercy tradition, we are called to action in pursuing fullness of life for all.*

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November**

2024 Foundation  
Information Night

**Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> Nov**

Year 5 Kangaroo Camp

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November**

12.40pm F GJ Assembly

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November**

2024 Foundation Transition

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November**

6pm Community Christmas  
Gathering

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

12.40pm 2GH Assembly

St Francis Xavier Feast Day  
celebrations

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December**

Year 4 Camp

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December**

9.30am Mass in the Gym

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December**

6pm Year 6 Graduation  
In the Gym

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

Last 2023 student day  
Normal finish time.

**Foundation 2024 Transition Morning**

Our first Transition morning for 2024 Foundation students will occur on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October between 9.30 -11.00am (Group A) and between 11.30 – 1.00pm (Group B). This is an important and exciting time for our newest students and we look forward to meeting them for their sessions.

**Year 6 Camp**

Our Yr. 6 students will be heading off on camp next Monday. This is a very special time for our school leaders and one that they have been looking forward to for a long time. We can't wait to learn of their adventures!

**Summer School Uniform**

It's time to dig out the school sun hats as we prepare for summer uniform this term. Please be mindful that our uniform policy also asks that students observe safety regulations regarding jewelry at all times. Your help with this will be appreciated.

**Car Park – Traffic Movement**

I wish to remind everyone at the start of this new term that the management of traffic flow at the beginning and end of the day is always a concern. We are fortunate that there is very little non-school traffic in the mix at these times. If the road signage and markings are adhered to with a good level of patience a safe environment can be maintained. We remind drivers to pull off to the left around the trees where the buses travel and U-turn to return down Fortune Street rather than cross directly across the traffic. (This is illegal!). Our staff carpark is not to be used as a pathway to either drop your children at school or pick them up. Car spaces are limited and the onsite carpark is for **staff cars only**. Many thanks for your assistance with these matters.

**Class Groupings 2024**

This week teachers will be working on formulating class groupings for 2024. In doing this, academic, social and emotional considerations will be taken into account to inform decisions. We are fortunate at St. Francis Xavier to have our teachers plan learning activities that often allow our children to mix across the year group where they are working alongside. Next year all our classes will be straight classes again. Prior to teachers working on the construction of 2024 class groups, all children will be asked to nominate children who they know they can work well with and would like to be considered to be in a room with in 2024.

If you would like any requests to be considered, please contact Mark in writing or by email by Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October. While all correspondence will be considered, the final decision will be made by the classroom teachers.

**Class Structure for St. Francis Xavier Primary School 2024**

Foundation x 4    Year 1 x 3    Year 2 x 3    Year 3 x 3    Year 4 x 3    Year 5 x 3  
Year 6 x 3

**Please find at the end of this newsletter:** Parish Bulletin; 6 tips for parenting anxious kids.

**Mercy Mass Invitation :**

To begin Term 4 we will have a Whole School Mass on Friday October 6th at 9.30am at St Alipius Church. Some of the local Sisters will be in attendance to celebrate with us, highlighting our proud Mercy tradition. Parents, parishioners, friends and community members are more than welcome to join us in Eucharist.

**THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday October 1, 2023      Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)**

**Gospel:** Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus said, "Now, what do you think? There was once a man who had two sons. He went to the elder one and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' 'I don't want to,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. 'Yes, sir,' he answered, but he did not go. Which one of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The elder one," they answered.

So Jesus said to them, "I tell you: the tax collectors are going into the Kingdom of God ahead of you. For John the Baptist came to you showing you the right path to take, and you would not believe him; but the tax collectors believed him. Even when you saw this, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

*(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation)*

**Gospel reflection:**

Why do you think Jesus tells this story? What is he trying to teach us?

The story is about God and how we are all God's children. Jesus is trying to tell us that we should listen to what God asks of us and then go and do what is asked.

It is not enough just to say that we will follow God in our lives. We actually have to go and do what is asked, even when it is difficult. We are called to live our lives as God wants us to.

God asks us to take care of the world and the people in it and it is up to us how we answer. There are lots of different ways that we can answer God's call, help other people and care for our world.

**Our Challenge:** What will you do this week to help others at home? At school? In your local community? And around the world? *(Adapted from CAFOD website)*



Christine Meneely, **Religious Education Leader**

Wellbeing News

Many children feel a little worried returning to school after holidays and that is perfectly normal! Naturally parents also worry when their children worry! Carers ask how they can assist kids when they become worried about seemingly routine events such as attending school camps and excursions, tackling difficult subjects, or facing the prolonged absence of a favourite teacher. Typical responses such as ignoring their worries are unhelpful and allowing a child to avoid an activity that makes them anxious is another unhelpful option. Avoidance may make kids feel safe in the short term, but it risks the establishment of a long-term pattern that can be impossible to shift (like school refusal).

Anxious kids frequently look to parents and teachers for reassurance when they feel anxious. Adults don't have to fix kids' problems, but rather to validate and empower children in the worrying situation. The use of 'Ahhhh' statements to validate how a child is feeling, is a practical way to show that you are trying to understand them. 'Ahhhh, you're feeling anxious about going to school camp . . . 'Ahhhh, you're having one of those "I might mess it up" thoughts . . . '

Then remind them of times they've faced challenges and succeeded, even when it was difficult for them. Above all, show them you have confidence in them and know they can cope with the uncomfortable feelings anxiety brings.

The attached article has some useful tips in parenting and supporting an anxious child.

Kind regards,

Christine Meneely, **Wellbeing Leader**

### **Regional Athletics:**

Good luck to the students that will be participating in this Friday's Regional Athletics at Llanberris. These students finished top two at the previous two lead up events and we wish them all the best in their individual events.

### **Swimming Program**

In week 1 of this term, our Years 2, 4 & 5 students will be participating in a one week Aquatic and Water Safety program at BALC. We wish them well and hope they learn a lot and have heaps of fun.

### **Golf Tournament**

Following golf clinics in Term 2, Tony Collier has selected a group of students for the Term 4 tournament: These students will be notified on PAM very shortly

The tournament will be held at Mt Xavier Golf Club on Wednesday October 18th. More details to follow.

### **Acknowledgements**

Congratulations to all of the students that played in football, netball and soccer Grand Finals at the beginning of the holidays.

Well done to Georgia Dundas and Charlotte Quarrell who competed at the recent Victorian State Calisthenics Championships over the holidays. Their team placed first in 8 out of their 10 items and were crowned winners in the Premier Division.

Recently, 4 SFX students (Jed Hynes, Nicholas Green, Bailey McCartin & Pippa Dalton) were selected to represent the Ballarat Futsal Club in the Gold Coast International Futsal Championships in January 2024. We wish you all the best in the lead up, and for the tournament.

### **2023 Sports Dates**

#### **Term 4:**

- Week 1 - Mon Oct 2nd - Fri Oct 6th - Swimming Yr 2, 4 & 5
- Week 1 - Friday Oct 6th - Regional Athletics @ Llanberris
- Week 3 - Wednesday October 18th - Division Golf @ Mt Xavier GC
- Week 5 - Wednesday Nov 1st - Division Cricket
- Week 5 - Friday Nov 3rd - F - 2 Junior Sports Day @ Russell Square
- Week 7 - Friday Nov 17th - SFX Yr 3 -6 Athletics Day @ Llanberris

If your child has achieved recent sporting success or a significant sporting achievement, please feel free to contact myself, Nev Down or your child's classroom teacher so that we can celebrate and commend their efforts.

### **SFX Football Jumpers, Singlets & Netball dresses/bibs**

If you have any SFX Football jumpers, singlets or netball dresses/bibs at home could you please return them to either Mr Down or Mr Carroll.

Have a marvellous week.



Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**





▶ **SS PETER & PAULS**  
701 FISKEN ST  
BUNINYONG 3357



▶ **ST ALIPIUS**  
82 VICTORIA ST  
BALLARAT EAST 3350



▶ **PARISH OFFICE**  
84 VICTORIA ST  
BALLARAT EAST 3350  
PH 5332 6611  
OPEN TUE – FRI  
10.00 AM – 1.00 PM

**1 October 2023**

**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*Remember your mercies, O Lord*

# St Alipius

## parish

[ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parish/ballar-at-east/](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parish/ballar-at-east/)

### MASS TIMES

#### St Alipius

Tue – 2:00 PM funeral mass  
Wed – Fri 9.30 AM back in the church  
Saturday 9.30 AM, 6.00 PM  
Sunday 9.00 AM (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> weeks)  
10.30 AM (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>)

#### Ss Peter and Paul's

Sunday 9:00 AM (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>)  
10:30 AM (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>)  
Rosary – Thursday 11:00 AM

#### Mass and prayer resources

[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au)

Counting team 2 this week – 9:30 AM

Our Parish is committed to the safety, well-being and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of this land and pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging.

### WE PRAY FOR

Faithfully departed:  
Doreen Donne

Anniversaries: John Britt

Unwell: Peter McLachlan,  
Sarah McLachlan, Eleanor McMahon, Patricia Murry,  
Carole Simmons, Shelley Pawang, Brian (Jack) Patton

### PARISH TEAM

Parish Priest  
Fr Jorge Jr De Chavez, OSJ

Visiting Priest  
Fr Barry Ryan

Sacramental and Parish Coordinator  
Cathy Prunty

Administrative Assistant  
Natalie Shannon

Finance Officer  
Bernadette Prestwood

Child Safety Officer  
Emily Clarke

### PARISH VISION

The combined communities of St Alipius Parish reach out in the spirit of faith, hope, love, and acceptance, as God calls us to in the gospels.

### PARISH MISSION

Our mission in the Parish of St Alipius is to actively engage and serve our combined communities, embodying the teachings of the Gospel.

Strengthened in the spirit of faith, hope, love acceptance and Mercy, we strive to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment. Guided by God's call to service, we aim to build strong connections, provide spiritual nourishment, promote social justice, and offer support to individuals and families in their journey of faith.

Through our dedicated interactions, we seek to deepen our relationships with God, inspire transformation, and make a positive impact in the lives of those we encounter, spreading God's love and compassion to all.



## SEASON OF CREATION

## FR JORGE NEWS

Fr. Jorge is sad to announce that his time at St. Alipius Parish is coming to an end. As a member of the Oblates of St. Joseph, Fr. Jorge has been approached by his superior with the news that he is required to move to Western Australia to take up the role of Parish Priest in a community there. Members of the Oblate community are generally contracted to a parish for four years, so Fr. Jorge's time with us will conclude at the end of 2023.

## MELBOURNE CUP LUNCHEON

After the great success and fun that was had at last year's Melbourne Cup Luncheon, we have decided to hold the event again. You are invited to join us for a luncheon to celebrate the Melbourne Cup on Tuesday 7 November from 11 AM in St Alipius Hall. Tickets are \$20 per person. Lunch of chicken, salad and dessert will be supplied. BYO alcohol. Soft drinks will be supplied. Please confirm numbers with the parish office by 31 October. Prizes for the best male and female fascinators. Sweeps will be available. If anyone can bring a salad or a dessert, please let the office know.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Caring Group  
2 PM Friday 6 October, Parish Hall

Melbourne Cup Luncheon  
11:00 AM, Tuesday 7 November, Parish Hall

## STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Thank you to all parishioners who contribute to our stewardship program. Your generosity is appreciated.

Supporting our parish priests	\$977
Maintenance of parish buildings, office and administration expenses, grounds maintenance etc.	\$363.20

We invite anybody who would like to join the program to please contact the parish office.

## CARING GROUP

The Caring Group will be gathering on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October in the hall at 2pm. Anyone is welcome to join this gathering to enjoy a chat and a cuppa. Please bring a plate.

## LITURGY ROSTER

The new liturgy roster for the next two months has been emailed this week. There are paper copies in the church foyer. If you didn't receive the roster via email and would like to, please provide the office with your email address.

## MASS OF REMEMBRANCE

Please contact the office if you would like any family members or friends who passed away in the past twelve months to be remembered in the mass of remembrance in November.

Remembrance books will be placed in the foyers of both churches for parishioners to record the names of loved ones who have passed away.

## THANK YOU

David and his children, Dom, Erin, Luke, and Nick, along with their partners and children would like to thank the St Alipius Parish community for your support, love, and condolences on the passing of Maureen. Thank you to so many who came to her funeral to help us celebrate her life. It was wonderful to have your contribution through prayer, music, and participation in our Requiem Mass and then at our wake in the parish hall.

A tribute website for Maureen has been created and if anyone would like to share Maureen's stories, aspects from her funeral, or remember her in your prayers, please visit <https://mas-blogs.com/about-ma/> or scan or click this QR code.



## SEASON OF CREATION

Every year from 1 September to 4 October, Catholic Earthcare Australia (Caritas and the Australian Bishops Conference) joins with Christian communities globally to celebrate the Season of Creation, to celebrate the gift of our common home. The theme for 2023 is "Let Justice and Peace Flow", drawing on the river imagery in Amos 5:24. It challenges us to act for ecological justice, creating change and speaking out with communities most impacted by rising sea levels, biodiversity loss and other consequences of climate change. Resources for the Season of Creation are available from the diocesan website [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/catholic-earthcare-ballarat-diocese/season-of-creation-2023/](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/catholic-earthcare-ballarat-diocese/season-of-creation-2023/)



## WINTER APPEAL THANKS

The Ballarat East Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society is most grateful for the generosity shown by both parishioners and school communities to our recent winter appeal.

This year, in addition to the regular financial contributions via the envelopes, we have received a very large number of toiletry items. These donations have increased our capacity to help those most in need in our community in these particularly challenging economic times.

### BAPTISMS

**Hazel Elizabeth Peters**  
Child of Matthew Peters and Alicia O'Neill

**Maeve Pip and Ailbe Hugh Davison**  
Children of John and Alex Davison

*The church gives faith to your children through Baptism, and you have the task to make it grow.*  
Pope Francis

## SYNOD OF BISHOPS PRAYER

The Vatican is asking all baptised people, regardless of whether they will be in Rome, to participate in October's assembly of the Synod of Bishops with their prayers. More information is available from the diocesan website [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/for-a-synodal-church-communion-participation-and-mission/](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/for-a-synodal-church-communion-participation-and-mission/)

## PRAYING WITH THE POPE

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer) is an international movement that is more than 170 years old. Each month, the Pope puts forward a prayer intention and asks Catholics around the world to join him in prayer. These intentions cover all areas of life, encouraging faith, renewing hope, and calling us to loving service. 'The Pope Video' forms part of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network – [www.thepopevideo.org](http://www.thepopevideo.org).

Pope's intention for September – **For people living on the margins:** We pray for those persons living on the margins of society, in inhumane life conditions. May they not be overlooked by institutions and never considered of lesser importance. Lord, hear us.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission has released presentations for the diocesan launch of the Social Justice Statement 2023: **Listen Learn Love: A New Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**. This event is pre-recorded and in digital format so that parish and school communities along with individuals can access these resources at their convenience. Visit this link for more information: [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/social-justice/social-justice-statement/](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/social-justice/social-justice-statement/)

## DIOCESAN E-NEWS



The latest edition of e-News has been published. Scan or click the QR code to access. Subscribe to receive future e-News editions straight to your email via:

[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news-events/e-news/](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news-events/e-news/)

## SVDP NATIONAL CONGRESS

In late October, the St Vincent de Paul Society will hold a three-day National Congress in Sydney. As part of the preparations for this event, all conferences have been asked to share their stories and mission with their local community. Please check out the Ballarat East Conference display – "The Hands Behind the Help" in the St Alipius foyer.

## MOROCCO/LIBYA APPEAL

Caritas Australia needs your support to respond to the devastating earthquake in Morocco and floods in Libya. Thousands of people have died, and many others have



been injured. Communities need shelter, food, water, and medical assistance. Please support Caritas Australia's emergency appeals. To donate visit

[www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/morocco-earthquake/](http://www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/morocco-earthquake/) or use the QR code.

## AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

Aid to the Church in Need is running an emergency campaign for Pakistan where recently up to 24 churches, hundreds of Christian homes and a Christian cemetery were targeted in an attack which was sparked by reports of blasphemy allegations against two Christians accused of desecrating the Qur'an. ACN is working with project partners on the ground to aid the current needs of the Christian people. To learn more and to make an offering, scan or click on the QR code.





# Waiting in Line

## Gospel reflection by Veronica Lawson RSM

26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: Matthew 21:28–32

Three milestones in our journey of faith coalesce on Wednesday of this week: the final day of the Season of Creation 2023 with its call to “let justice and peace flow”; the release of Pope Francis’ new exhortation on integral ecology; and the opening in Rome of the Synod on Synodality.

The plight of our planetary community impels us to ponder, in light of these separate but related events, the ways in which Earth cares for us.

Vineyards have provided nourishment in the ancient Mediterranean world since about 10,000 BCE. It is not surprising then that the biblical record frequently references vines and vineyards, and that the vineyard becomes a metaphor for God’s “workplace”.

In today’s gospel, Jesus tells the story of a father who sends his sons to work in the vineyard. One refuses and then reconsiders: he has the courage to change his mind. The second son agrees and then fails to do as his father requests: he is not prepared to make his contribution to family life and well-being.

These siblings find their counterparts in every age. There are those who make an art form of saying yes and failing to follow through with action: such people can seriously undermine the best of projects or plans. And then

there are the slow starters, those who take time but eventually come on board.

Jesus’ parable is a response to the Temple authorities who are angered by the “amazing things” he does and by the public recognition he receives.

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*Changing one’s mind or  
one’s course of action can be  
an act of great courage and  
humility*

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Like the second son, the chief priests and elders profess to do the will of God, but their actions belie their words. Jesus spells out the meaning of the parable as it relates to the disjunction between what they say and what they do. They have rejected the prophet John who came to them “in the way of righteousness”.

The tax collectors and prostitutes, “sinners” from the perspective of the authorities, accepted John’s message, albeit belatedly like the first son, and are making their way into God’s empire ahead of the guardians of the religious institutions.

Changing one’s mind is seen as a sign of weakness in our society. For evidence of this, one has only to listen



to the taunts when a political leader changes course.

Changing one’s mind or one’s course of action can be an act of great courage and humility, even heroism. This is particularly so if it involves abandoning a self-serving direction for the sake of justice or compassion for the common good.

Voluntary changes in behaviour come from a change of heart, from what the gospel calls “metanoia”.

There is always a cost in the pursuit of justice, including the cost to those who challenge the refusal to act on the climate crisis.

Today’s parable invites us to bring our actions into line with what we profess, no matter the cost. That is what it means to accept today’s invitation to work in the vineyard, God’s workplace.

THIS WEEK’S READINGS  
26<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
EZEKIEL 18:25–28  
PHILIPPIANS 2:1–11  
MATTHEW 21:28–32

NEXT WEEK’S READINGS  
27<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
ISAIAH 5:1–7  
PHILIPPIANS 4:6–9  
MATTHEW 21:33–43



## 6 tips for parenting anxious kids



If you're the parent of an anxious child you're most certainly not alone. The number of children experiencing an anxiety disorder is currently estimated at 117 million worldwide. Here in Australia, there's an average of 2 anxious kids in every classroom; and they're the ones with a diagnosis. Many more anxious kids are yet to have their anxiety identified and understood.

As much as we'd like to, we can't rid our kids of their anxiety, but we can help them to manage it in ways that enable them move it from centre stage and get on with living a vibrant, rich and meaningful life.

Here are 6 tips to support you to parent your anxious child:

### 1. Explain anxiety

Anxious kids can struggle to explain how they feel and can worry that no-one will understand what they're going through. That's why explaining anxiety is an important step in supporting an anxious child. The knowledge that anxiety is well understood, that other kids experience it and that it's manageable brings them immediate relief.

Teach your anxious child that the part of their brain that protects them from danger is always on high alert. Called the amygdala, it's meant to protect them from genuine danger but for anxious kids, it can be almost constantly activated.

Explain that when they feel anxious, their amygdala sends signals to their body to fight or flee from the threat, whether it's real or imagined.

Next, talk about the body changes such as increased heart rate, rapid breathing and an upset stomach that power them up to fight or flee. They might even feel dizzy, hot, sweaty and panicked. Anxiety affects thinking and behaviour too.

### 2. Respond with empathy

In the midst of an anxious moment it's natural to want to reassure anxious kids they've got nothing to worry about. Reassurance works in the short term but it soon wears off and they come back for more, which becomes an unhelpful pattern.

Instead, respond with empathy and validation. Use ahhh statements such as:

- "Ahhh, I see you're feeling really anxious right now, I know how hard this is for you"
- "Ahhh, I know you're feeling really worried right now, it's not much fun feeling like that is it?"

Anxious kids need to know you understand what they're going through.

### 3. Show the amygdala they're safe

Once the amygdala senses danger, the cascade of events that follow can't be stopped. The body and brain will respond as if the danger is immediate. The best way to help an anxious child calm their anxious brain is to teach them to *show* their amygdala they're safe. Deep and intentional breathing helps an anxious child to calm their amygdala and will begin to reduce their anxious symptoms. Practise intentional breathing regularly between anxious times before applying this technique in the midst of an anxious moment.

#### 4. Practise mindfulness -the antidote to worrying

Anxiety is distress now about a possible future event, which is why worrying is common for anxious kids. When an anxious child's mind fast-forwards to an upcoming event or expectation, their amygdala can respond as if the 'threat' to their safety is immediate. The antidote to worrying is mindfulness. Put simply, mindfulness is paying attention to what's happening in the present moment. It may take time to learn, but is a powerful anxiety management strategy once it's mastered.

#### 5. Practice defusing sticky thoughts

Anxious thoughts can get stuck, refusing to budge no matter how much attention is paid to them. Defusion is a strategy that helps anxious kids look *at* their thoughts rather than *from* them.

Imagine your anxious child is worried about an upcoming test. They're thinking "I'm going to fail the test". The thought makes them feel awful. Defusion helps kids (all of us) to look *at their* thoughts by reminding them that the words in their heads are indeed just words, not reality.

Your anxious child can defuse his unhelpful thoughts by putting a statement in front of the thought such as: "I notice I'm having the thought that I'm going to fail the test." Alternatively, he can say the thought in a character voice like Darth Vader or Peppa Pig, or sing it to the tune of happy birthday or a nursery rhyme. Defusion puts distance between anxious kids and their thoughts and is a wonderful skill to learn.

#### 6. Get the fundamentals right

Ample sleep, good nutrition and exercise are essential for anxious kids. Support your child to adhere to their optimal bedtime so they wake naturally around the time of their alarm, reduce their sugar intake to support their gut health and to exercise regularly for optimal mental health.

These are some of the many strategies that you can share with your child to support them to recognise and manage their anxiety so they can live life in full colour.



#### Dr Jodi Richardson

Dr Jodi Richardson helps people to reduce their anxiety, strengthen their wellbeing, live by their personal values and achieve resilience and lasting happiness. Her research-based advice is grounded in a career of extensive university studies, clinical practice, education and endless compassion. Jodi is the co-author of the highly acclaimed book *Anxious Kids*. Her latest release is *Anxious Mums: How mums can turn their anxiety into strength*. For further details visit [www.drjodirichardson.com.au](http://www.drjodirichardson.com.au)



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The Ballarat Foundation is pleased to bring Run for a Cause to a new, exciting location for 2023. This year, our Event Village will be based in Lucas Town Centre, with our courses utilising the beautiful streets and paths of Lucas as well as giving participants the opportunity to run down the centre of Sturt Street and through the Arch!

JOIN YOUR SCHOOL TEAM WHEN YOU SIGN UP FOR THE  
12KM, 6KM EVENT, OR AS PART OF THE Y KIDS' DASH.



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*St. Francis Xavier Primary School is a Child Safe School called to action through Gospel values and Mercy tradition.  
Through the mission of Jesus within the Mercy tradition, we are called to action in pursuing fullness of life for all.*