



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 22nd June 2026

Term 2 Week 10

P.O. Box 2027
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Term 2 (10 weeks)

Mon 22nd – Wed 24th June

Golf Clinics for Yr 5/6

Wednesday 24th June

GWR Football @ C.E. Brown
Reserve Wendouree

Friday 26th June

Last day of term 2

2.20pm finish

Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations to support
Ballarat East Vinnies group

12.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 1EM

Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 13th Jul-Fri 18th Sep

Mon 13th-Wed 15th July

Year 6 Melbourne CYC
Camp

Friday 17th July

9.30am Start of Term 3

Mass in school gym

No Assembly today

Friday 24th July

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 4RR

Friday 31st July

Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 3ZP

Friday 7th August

Ballarat Catholic Primary
Schools Athletics @
Llanberris (selected Yr 3, 4,
5 & 6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by FBK

Friday 14th August

Pupil free day (to be
confirmed)

Division Basketball @
Selkirk Stadium (selected
Yr 5/6 students)

Friday 21st August

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

Welcome to the final week of Term 2 and the conclusion of Semester 1.

Over the past ten weeks, our students and staff have been incredibly busy engaging in the important work of learning and teaching. Together, they have celebrated achievements, embraced challenges, and continued to develop the skills, knowledge, and habits that support lifelong learning and active participation in society. It is a significant undertaking, and one of which they should be very proud.

As we prepare to enter the winter break, we can do so knowing that it has been a successful and rewarding term. I wish all families a happy and restful holiday period. May you have the opportunity to step away from the usual routines, enjoy quality time together, and perhaps even embark on a few exciting adventures along the way.

Thank you to our staff and students for your dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment throughout the term. I also extend my sincere thanks to all parents and carers for the support and encouragement you provide each day. Your partnership is greatly valued.

I wish everyone a safe, relaxing, and enjoyable winter break.

God bless,

Mark Hogbin



End of Term – Start of Term Classes cease for the winter break on Friday at 2.20pm. Classes resume for third term on Monday 13 July at 9.00am. Happy holidays!

Free Dress Day Our last free dress day for the semester will be held on Friday. You can show your support for the Saint Vincent de Paul winter appeal by sending along a gold coin donation or two which will be used to help those in need this winter. It's cold outside and many people in our wider Ballarat community could do with a helping hand. Let's dig deep!

Swimming Program Our swimming program drew to a close last Friday. Thank you to all parents who were able to assist with this, and to the staff who made sure that all children were able to enjoy this special time.

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 1GH

Friday 28th August
Casual Clothes Day - gold coin donations

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FLP

Friday 4th September
Interscholar Sport (Yr 5/6)
Fathers/Special Friends Liturgy (to be confirmed)
No Assembly today

Wednesday 9th September
Division Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from BCPS Aths – Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Friday 11th September
No Assembly today

Friday 18th September
Last day of Term 3

Footy Colours Day - gold coin donations to support Fight Cancer
No Assembly today

Term 4 (11 weeks)
Mon 5th Oct–Fri 18th Dec

Wednesday 7th October
Year 3 Day Camp

Friday 9th October
Start of T4/Mercy Day Mass
Regional Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from Division Aths-Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

No Assembly today

Friday 16th October
Division Tennis @ Ballarat Regional Tennis Centre (selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 5LD

Friday 23rd October
2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 1GT

Friday 30th October
Casual Clothes Day - gold coin donations to support MercyWorks

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FTW

Monday 2nd November
Assessment and Reporting
Pupil Free Day

Tuesday 3rd November
Public Holiday-Melbourne Cup Pupil Free Day

Interested in becoming Catholic?

The process for adults seeking to become Catholic will soon be commencing with the time of inquiry for our local church communities of Ballan, Ballarat East, Bungaree, Buninyong, Clarkes Hill, Dunnstown, Gordon and Springbank. If you're an adult who's either not been baptised or has been baptised in another Christian tradition and would like to inquire about becoming Catholic, we welcome you to 'come and see.'

Please contact us at our Parish Hub, 86 Victoria St Ballarat East or ballarateast@catholic.org.au or 0437 505 517



School Term Three Mass.

A warm invitation is extended to all families, friends and parishioners to join us as we celebrate the beginning of Term 3 and recognise NAIDOC Week through the celebration of the Eucharist.

We are delighted to welcome our Parish Priest, Father Justin Driscoll, who will celebrate the Mass with us. Together, we will give thanks for the rich culture, history and contributions of Australia's First Nations peoples, and reflect on our shared commitment to respect, reconciliation and community.

Time: 9.30am

Date: Friday 17 July 2026

Venue: St Francis Xavier School Gymnasium

We look forward to celebrating with you.

Friday 6th November

Eureka Division Cricket @ Alfredton Reserve (selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 6JS

Friday 13th November

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 2TS

Friday 20th November

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 4ZA

Wed 25th-Fri 27th Nov

Year 5 Kangaroo Camp

Friday 27th November

Casual Clothes Day - gold coin donations to support Ballarat East Vinnies group

No Assembly today

Friday 4th December

End of Year Mass

Thursday 17th December

Last 2026 day for students

Casual Clothes Day – Friday 29th June

This Friday, students are invited to wear casual clothes and bring along a gold coin donation (or more) to support the St Vincent de Paul Society Winter Appeal.

As the colder months set in, many individuals and families in our local community face challenges such as homelessness, financial hardship and social isolation. The St Vincent de Paul Society works tirelessly to provide practical support, including food, clothing, emergency assistance and a helping hand to those doing it tough.

All money raised will be donated directly to the Ballarat East St Vincent de Paul Conference, helping support people in our own local community.

At SFX, we are called to live out our faith through compassion, generosity and service to others. This Casual Clothes Day is a simple but meaningful way for us to make a difference and stand in solidarity with those who need our support.

Thank you for your generosity and support. Together, we can help bring warmth, hope and dignity to those who need it most this winter.

Vinnies WINTER APPEAL

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL HELPS PEOPLE

'I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Whatever you did for one of the least of mine, you did for me.' Mathew 25

Curriculum News

Keep an eye out for upcoming posts from our Specialist Teachers. These updates are usually shared towards the end of each term and showcase the wonderful learning, creativity, and experiences our students have enjoyed in their Specialist classes. Please visit and leave a comment.



Semester One reports:

Our end of Semester One reports will be made available via PAM this Thursday 25th June. I thank the teachers for the energy, thoroughness, sincerity, and professionalism that they bring to their report writing. St. Francis Xavier Primary School continues its firm commitment to working in partnership with parents/carers to enable our children to achieve their best. Happy reading!

Enjoy the holidays!



Jane Clark, Deputy Principal / Learning Enhancement

Year 6



The Year 6 novel study this term has been 'Us Mob Walawurru' by Carl Merrison & Hakea Hustler. This historical fiction novel has encouraged students to think of Australian history from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective. The Book Snapshot highlights information about the text to discuss with your child/ren.

Congratulations to Emily, who was selected this week to share her Information Report.

The Stolen Generations By Emily Bone

The Stolen Generations, a period from 1910 to 1970, was a devastating time when Indigenous children were forcefully removed from their homes by the government. They were then taken to non-Indigenous families to separate them from their culture and assimilate them into white Australian society. The Stolen Generations are a crucial part of Australia's history due to the severity and cruelty of the removal of Indigenous children from their homes. Children were taken from every state and territory in Australia, but the largest number of children were removed from Western Australia.

Prior to this, in 1788, the British colonies landed in Australia, leading to a major loss of culture and tradition for the Indigenous community, as well as many life-threatening diseases. During the 1800s, the government began to enforce 'Protection' laws aimed at Indigenous people to try and restrict their rights and make them more like white people, as in make them more Australian, which led to Indigenous people being told who they had to marry, where they had to work and what employment they could undertake.

These events then led to the start of what is now known as the Stolen Generations. The Stolen Generations is an extremely significant time in history when children were taken from their homes and put with non-Indigenous families to try and make them 'non-Indigenous'. Parents tried to take their kids and hide them so that they were not taken from them, which often ended in severe punishment from the government, such as imprisonment, forced relocation, loss of wages and rations, and loss of child custody. Most people involved now suffer from trauma, loss of culture and identity, and abuse due to the awful events they have suffered throughout their lives. They were treated awfully when they were taken and put with families who were cruel to them. Michael Welsh, a Stolen Generations survivor, said, "They tried to break my spirit and take my soul. They tried to take away my Aboriginality."

The Stolen Generations was an extremely significant time in history due to the incredibly forceful manner in which the children were removed from their homes. It still affects Australia today because of the awful intergenerational trauma that affected families face today. Since the end of the time the children were being taken, there have been lots of changes for the better, such as the repeal of the 'Protection' Acts, the Apology and the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle. Lots of people have also changed their attitudes towards Indigenous culture in Australia by shifting from assimilation to reconciliation and beginning to recognise the true importance of Indigenous culture in Australia. During and after the Stolen Generations, many Indigenous people also faced poverty and disadvantage, and most people who survived were twice as likely to rely on government funding, which they weren't really getting.

The Stolen Generations has an extreme impact on today due to the severity of what was done to the Indigenous people at the time of these events. Many people who were involved in the Stolen Generations now face intergenerational trauma, depression, PTSD and many other mental health issues, which make it a lot harder to be a parent, as they are scared it will happen to their kids like it happened to them or their family members. The Stolen Generations is now recognised on many occasions, such as National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week, which both recognise the importance of how awful we were to Indigenous people and celebrate a time to apologise and reflect. Australia can now use the Stolen Generations as a time to reflect and remember that we did not do the right thing by Indigenous people, and that although the hurt remains, we can still try and make things better.

Overall, the Stolen Generations was an awful time in history when Indigenous children were forcefully removed from their homes and taken to non-Indigenous families to try and eliminate Indigenous culture from Australia and to try and eliminate Indigenous culture and assimilate Indigenous children into white Australian society. It was such a significant time in history because the removal of Indigenous children from their homes often resulted in loss of culture and belonging, as well as ongoing trauma and mental health issues. The Stolen Generations was an extremely awful time in history and will never be forgotten by Indigenous people, and it puts a black mark on Australia's history. What was done to the Indigenous children was wrong, and we can now reconcile together and try to make the future a different story.

Us Mob Walawurru

by Carl Merrison & Hakea Hustler



ST FRANCIS XAVIER
PRIMARY SCHOOL | BALLARAT EAST

Year 6

At St. Francis Xavier Primary School, we believe a love of reading grows when school and home work together. This book snapshot is designed to help you connect with your child's learning—through classroom experiences, conversations, and shared stories at home. By reading together, talking about books, and making time for reading each day, you play a vital role in building confident, capable readers.



STORY SNAPSHOT

Us Mob Walawurru is a historical fiction novel set in Central Australia that follows Ruby's life from childhood in the 1960s to adulthood. In Part One, Ruby travels with her family to Tulu for a sports carnival, where she reflects on life at Dry River Station and her strong connection to Country. In Part Two, Ruby leaves home to live at Big Sky Station with relatives, where she learns more about her family history and birth parents. As Ruby grows up, she meets Tyson, starts a family, and witnesses her Uncle's successful Native Title claim.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Ruby - The narrator and main character.
Aunty Alice - Ruby's aunt, who cares for and supports her when she moves to Big Sky Station.
Uncle Archie - A respected family member who helps guide Ruby.
Tyson - Ruby's husband, whom she meets as a young adult.
Mr Duncan - Ruby's teacher
Ruby's Uncle - A key figure in the Native Title process
Ruby's Mob - While not a single character, Ruby's extended family and community.

WRITING

In Writing, students researched and wrote information reports about significant events in Australian history from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective. Inspired by *Us Mob Walawurru*, students explored topics such as the Stolen Generations, Colonisation, National Sorry Day and the 1967 Referendum, while developing their research, note-taking and report writing skills.

THEMES

This text explores:

- identity and belonging
- family and community
- connection to Country
- the impact of Colonisation
- Native Title and Justice
- truth and voice
- strength through culture

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Questions to prompt discussion...

- What are some of the key places Ruby travels to or lives in?
- How does Ruby's life change from Part One or Part Two of the novel?
- What does "Country" mean to Ruby, and why is it important?
- What differences does Ruby notice between her mob's way of life and others she encounters?
- Why is learning about family history important for Ruby?

Explore what the 1960s was like in Australia:
https://myplace.edu.au/decades_timeline/decade/1960

Digital Classroom: The 1967 Referendum -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlPlvDZ5TJA>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBJqFjNdOu0>

IF THEY LOVED THIS, TRY...

Nawimana by David Spillman
Our Dreaming by Kirli Saunders
Catch Me if I Fall by Barry Jonsberg
Welcome to Country by Aunty Joy Murphy and Lisa Kennedy



Lindy Harty, Literacy Leader

Wellbeing News

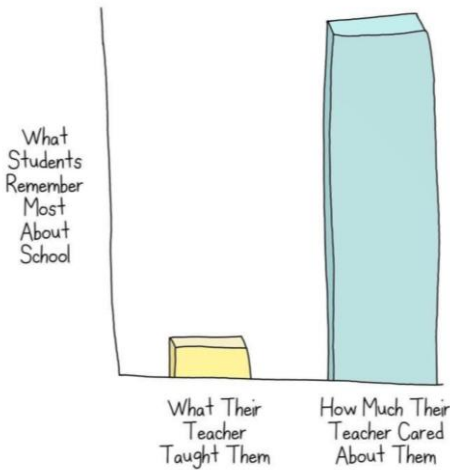
I'm in a very privileged position at St Francis Xavier, as I get to watch children interact with their teachers, school staff and friends every day. What I notice is the sense of belonging and connectedness most children feel at school and the efforts their teachers make to strengthen this connection.

I hear good morning welcomes ("it's so great to see you!" "I'm glad you are back- the class wasn't the same without you!"), lovely shared stories (new shoes, lost teeth and Pokemon/footy cards) and tales of woe (fighting with brothers and sisters, death of a loved pet, AFL team loss). Find out who is your child's champion at school- it may be a past or present teacher, a specialist teacher, a member of the Leadership team, a Learning Support Officer, library staff who keep them a special book or just a friendly face in the office or first aid area. Although you might think these interactions have nothing to do with learning, they have everything to do with relationships. We know children learn best when they feel valued, loved and respected.

Parents can help the student-teacher relationship by keeping communication channels open, attending school events that allow opportunities to meet teachers and encouraging their children to ask their teachers for help when needed. Parents could reflect on their own school experiences, share stories about their favourite teachers when at school and help their children identify a teacher's positive aspects, especially for those teachers their child is struggling to build rapport with.

Attached is an interesting article focusing on how children build and strengthen their feeling of belonging at school. [Belonging- When School Feels Like Home](#)

Happy holidays and we look forward to seeing you all again in Term Three!



Christine Meneely (School Counsellor and Wellbeing/ MHiPS Leader)

Contact me on :

cmeneely@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au



Greater Western Region Netball

Well done to our Girls A netball team who represented our school at last week's Greater Western Region Netball finals at Selkirk Stadium. The girls played superbly well throughout all of their matches against some strong opposition and gave it everything they had, showing resilience and teamwork until the final whistle. A big thankyou to the coaches, staff and families that supported the girls.



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.

Greater Western Region AFL

Good luck to our Girls AFL 9's football team that will be playing in the Regional finals at Wendouree Reserve this Wednesday. The team is very excited and looking forward to playing against other talented teams from areas such as Warrnambool, Horsham and Colac. We know that they will give their best and we look forward to seeing how they go. We wish them all the best for the day.

Golf Clinics

Something that our Year 5 and 6 students always look forward to happens this week and that is the Golf clinics with Tony. Students will be given tips and coaching on how to correctly hold and swing the golf club and from this Tony will select our team for the golf tournament later in the year.

Congratulations Mr Down and Cooper

Congratulations to Mr Down who recently received the exciting news that an athlete he coaches has been selected to represent Australia at the 2026 Commonwealth Games. Cooper Sherman, who Mr Down has coached for over 5 years, will run in the Mixed 4 x 400m relay at Glasgow.

Many students will remember Cooper as he came and spoke to our students last year.

We are very fortunate to have a highly qualified and respected coach as our Physical Education teacher here at our school. The level of knowledge and expertise Mr Down brings is world class.

With the Commonwealth Games starting on the 23rd July, we look forward to watching Cooper run. Well done to both Cooper and Mr Down.

2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 2:

- Week 10 - Monday June 22nd - Wednesday June 24th - Golf Clinics - students in Yr 5 & 6
- Week 10 - Wednesday June 24th - GWR Football (Girls) @ C.E. Brown Res, Wendouree

Term 3:

- Week 4 - Friday Aug 7th - Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Athletics @ Llanberris (selected students from Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 5 - Friday Aug 14th - Division Basketball @ Selkirk Stadium (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 8 - Friday Sep 4th - Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Wednesday Sep 9th - Division Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from BCPS Aths - Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

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 Mr Down or Mr Carroll or drop them into the office.

Have a brilliant week.

Shaun Carroll, SFX Sport Coordinator



- **Hot Lunch Reminder** – Hot lunches every Friday, place your child’s order on Flexi Schools before 10am Thursday – no late orders will be taken – Volunteers needed to help pack – [sign up available in your class chat group](#)
- **Milkshake Mondays continue Monday at first break**
\$1.50 for a milkshake & freckle/or marshmallow
The P&F are looking for anyone who would like to learn how to run Milkshake Mondays – they will then be put on a rotating roster to co-ordinate Milkshakes a few times each term so that we are not reliant on the same 1 or 2 people running this each week – if this is something you would like to do please contact Lisa on 0412 647 737. *Please don't think that someone else will sign up so I don't need to – if we cannot get the volunteers to co-ordinate this each week we will not be able to run this and then the Children miss out.* We will also require 5 additional volunteers to assist each week via sign up in your class chat.
- **Uniform Shop** Did you know our Second Hand Uniform shop is always open? Please see the ladies in the office if you wish to look at any items in our Second Hand Uniform shop, or reach out to a member of the P&F to help you with any of your Uniform needs.
All items in the Second Hand Uniform shop are between \$5 and \$10.
- **RYANS IGA COMMUNITY REWARDS Program** For June 2026 – St Francis Xavier Primary School has been selected to participate in the **Ryan’s IGA Community Rewards program** at the **Mount Clear store**.
If you are in the area, pop in and collect your groceries and put you tokens in our token box



Attachments

ASSEMBLY AWARDS 19th June 2026 Hosted by 5CC Theme: Respect

Respect means considering the feelings and wishes of others, respecting myself and caring for all of creation.
We show respect because Jesus shows us that everyone is important and because our world needs our care.

FLP	Peyton Cheeseman and Henry Sordello	4RR	Banjo Nicholson and Arlo Troon
FJS	Lacey Newton & Aniela Hallowell	4ZA	Winter James, Devon McCartin & Bryn Glab
FBO	Noah Kielty and Maddison Daly	4KB	Louie Evans & Jimmy Faull
FTW	Harriett Curtain and Ivy Grigsby	5CC	Charlize Simpson and Percy Veal
1GH	Archie Geaghan and Arthur Latchford	5LD	Malo Hansen and Maeve Tongs
1EM	Elijah Harwood and Luciana Schweida	5ML	Edie Brennan and Byron Toohey
1GT	Spencer Belsar and Hudson Worn	6PB	Lucy Elliot and Sadie Ruxton
2GJ	Jasper Govan & Mille Ryan	6JS	Jet Rivett and Bridie Millington
2MH	William Nicholls and Poppy Thomas	6MM	Sophie McNeill and Paddy Dwyer
2TS	Lucinda Bartlett & Leo Answer	EE/Sci	Willow Begbie and Arthur Madigan
3LL	Mia Cadogan and Emme Cavanagh	PA	Tom Maher and Lachlan Purtell
3JT	Billy Toohey & Noa Cavanagh	VA	Percy Veal, Lyla Nestor, Jett Raine (5CC)
3ZP	Zaeli Page & Tom Stanley	PE	Lenny Rumble (FBOK), Essie Thomas (FLP)
		Tch	Lula Blomeley (1EM) & Billy Toohey (3JT)

Principal's Award: Noah Stewart and Riley Smith for keeping our school yard tidy and caring for the environment.
Yael Vasserman for caring for other people by sharing her umbrella in the rain.

Wellbeing attachment:

When School Feels Like Home - How young children know they belong. Kelly-Ann Allen Ph.D.

Key points

- Children view belonging as feeling happy, having friends, feeling safe, and helping others.
- Younger children link belonging to fun activities. Older children link belonging to relationships.
- Teachers can create belonging through caring relationships, not just teaching.

Who remembers seeing a teacher for the first time at a local supermarket? There might be some initial disorientation, but what usually follows is a rush of excitement. Like you've just seen a celebrity. Or is that just me? Well, our latest research helps explain this occurrence — to some degree.

For young children aged 3 to 8, relationships with others — especially with educators — are a big deal. In our exploration of what belonging means to them, we found it has little to do with buildings or locations. Instead, it's about relationships, emotions, and shared experiences in those spaces.

Our study, published in the *Australian Journal of Psychology*, looked at how children in this age group understand and experience belonging in educational settings. With the help of their parents, children shared drawings and stories about their experiences of belonging.

One takeaway finding was that belonging wasn't just about the physical space — it's about how you feel in that space. As one 8-year-old captured it perfectly: "When you feel happy at school it makes you feel you are at home."

Young children's sense of belonging has a powerful impact. It shapes their current educational journey and contributes to long-term well-being. We know from existing research that feeling a sense of belonging at school is linked to outcomes that stretch well into adulthood — from mental health to workforce participation.

What stood out in our study was just how much belonging came from everyday moments. A 7-year-old participant said, in relation to his sense of belonging: "When I'm outside — my friends help me build homes for tigers." This kind of unstructured, natural interaction creates belonging for children. It's social, imaginative, and deeply relational.

Children also felt a strong sense of connection to particular places — not because of the buildings themselves, but because of how those places made them feel. One shared, "The library is my safe space."

What surprised us most was how aware children were of their role in helping others belong. "Everyone has to look after each other," said a 4-year-old. And from an 8-year-old: "It means that we're all part of the school, and we all follow the rules, be safe, respectful and being a learner." Even at this young age, children saw belonging as something shared — something they helped create, not just something they received.

The presence of animals — class pets and school dogs — also featured in children's stories. One child explained, "There's a dog because dogs kinda help you feel like you belong." Another said, "When I help the class pet called Lucie." These interactions gave children a chance to show care, take responsibility, and feel connected — a different but powerful expression of belonging.

We also noticed age differences in how children described belonging. Younger children (ages three to five) focused on the here and now — "Have fun," "Doing activities," "Playing." Older children (six to eight) talked more about responsibilities, inclusion, and helping others.

So, what does this mean for those leading and shaping early education?

It suggests the need to:

- Create flexible spaces that children can personalise and feel ownership over.
- Make time for unstructured, imaginative, and peer-led interaction.
- Appreciate the importance of children feeling safe, comfortable, and emotionally secure.
- Acknowledge the central role of relationships — with peers, educators, and others in the environment.
- Recognise that children are active contributors to their own and others' sense of belonging.

Most of all, our research challenges the idea that belonging needs to be delivered through formal programs.

One 6-year-old said it simply: “When people help you, that means you belong.” That’s not something you can script — it comes from real, lived experience.

These big ideas from little voices don’t just apply to early learning. When we take children’s perspectives seriously, we gain a richer understanding of how belonging actually works. And when we see belonging through their eyes, we’re better placed to create spaces where every child feels like they truly belong.

Acknowledgments: Thank you to the authors of the study — Emily Berger, Louise McLean, Erin Leif, William Warton, and David Tuck. I am also grateful to the parents who generously made time to support their children’s participation. And to the children — thank you. Your drawings, words, and stories gave this research its heart.

References

Allen, K. A., Berger, E., McLean, L., Leif, E., Warton, W., Tuck, D., ... Fler, M. (2025). Belonging in their words: exploring early childhood perspectives using the draw, write, tell method. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 77(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2025.2463949>

Allen, KA., Greenwood, C.J., Berger, E. *et al.* Adolescent School Belonging and Mental Health Outcomes in Young Adulthood: Findings from a Multi-wave Prospective Cohort Study. *School Mental Health* 16, 149–160 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-023-09626-6>

Parker, P., Allen, K.-A., Parker, R., Guo, J., Marsh, H. W., Basarkod, G., & Dicke, T. (2022). School belonging predicts whether an emerging adult will be not in education, employment, or training (NEET) after school. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 114(8), 1881–1894. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000733>

Ministry District Newsletter

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A – June 21st, 2026

Incorporating the faith communities of Ballan, Ballarat East, Bungaree, Buninyong, Clarke's Hill, Dunnstown, Gordon & Springbank

Priests: Frs. Justin Driscoll & Shaiju Mathew

Staff: Cathy Prunty (Parish Co-ordinator)
Natalie Gleeson (Admin Assistant)

Finance: Jackie Wrigglesworth

Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Email: jackie.wrigglesworth@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Phone: 0437 505 517

Phone: 5337 7128

Our parishes are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
Safeguarding Officers: Ballarat East Parish – Emily Clarke 5331 1816; Bungaree & Gordon Parishes – Cathy Prunty 0437 505 517

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES

Weekday Masses

Tuesday June 23 rd	11.00 am	Mercy Place Ballarat East
Wednesday June 24 th	9.30 am 10.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East Ss. Peter & Paul's - Funeral Mass – Jean Cusak
Thursday June 25 th	10.30 am 11.00 am	St Brigid's Ballan Estia Mt. Clear
Friday June 26 th	9.30 am	St Alipius' Ballarat East
Saturday June 27 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East

Weekend Masses – 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday June 27 th		Sunday June 28 th	
5.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am	Buninyong Gordon
6.30 pm	Clarke's Hill	10.30 am	Ballarat East Ballan

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Jean Cusack, Thomas (Tom) Kennedy, Pat Ronan

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Peter Cochrane, Kathleen Davies, Taylor De Spirt, Brian Gleeson, Vera McGuigan, Brian Murphy, Sophie Papworth, Joseph Paarhammer, Bernie Ratcliffe, Margaret Ronan, Aileen Simpson, Maureen Wheelahan

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Owen Widdison, Richard Wade

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Romans 5:12-15

Matthew 10:26-33

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Kings 4:8-12, 14-16

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

Matthew 10:37-42

UPCOMING DATES

June 24th
Formation for Communion Ministers
Ss. Peter & Paul's Buninyong
7pm

June 26th
Damascus @ St. Brendan's
Celebration Mass
10.30 am

June 27th & 28th
Bishop Mark's Pastoral Visit
Lunch at Wallace Hotel (Sun) from 12.30 pm

CONFIRMATION PROGRAM – BALLARAT EAST PARISH

Confirmation Preparation will begin on July 22nd with compulsory parent meetings at St. Alipius church hall. People wishing to enrol their child in the program can choose between a meeting at 10.30 am or 6pm. Children who wish to receive this sacrament must have been baptised and need to be in Year 3 or higher. If you know someone who is ready to be confirmed this year, please refer them to our parish office or ask them to enrol in the program using this QR code.



FORMATION FOR COMMUNION MINISTERS

Thank you to all parishioners across the Ministry District who have indicated an interest in formation for Communion Ministers. This formation will be held on June 24th at 7pm at Ss. Peter & Pauls' Church in Buninyong. Please call the office to register your name if you will be in attendance on the night so that we have sufficient materials.

BISHOP MARK'S PASTORAL VISIT

Bishop Mark Freeman will celebrate Masses with us on the weekend of June 27th – 28th with the 5.00pm Vigil Mass at Ballarat East, 9.00am Sunday at Gordon and 10.30am Sunday at Ballan. This will be our first opportunity to formally welcome Bishop Mark to our parishes since his ordination and installation a Bishop of Ballarat on March 19th 2026. Parishioners and friends from each of the church communities across our Ministry District are invited to gather with Bishop Mark at the Wallace Hotel for Sunday lunch, on Sunday June 28th from 12.30pm. So that a booking can be made, please register your attendance with either the parish hub 0437 505 517 or put your name on the list provided at the back of each of our churches.

BAPTISMS

Ss. Peter & Paul Buninyong
Zaeli & Hudson Page

LITURGY ROSTERS – ST. ALIPIUS' CHURCH

Copies of liturgy rosters can be found on the sound desk in the church. Please feel free to take one. Just a reminder to sign in each time you are involved in a ministry at Mass so that we have our records up to date. Initials are preferable to a tick. Ministers of the Word and Eucharist at St. Alipius' are reminded that they are asked to welcome people as they wait for the priest prior to Mass starting. We would be grateful if you could hand out newsletters as well.

INVITATION TO ST. BRENDAN'S PROGRAM CELEBRATION MASS

Parishioners from across the Ministry District are invited to attend Mass at St. Brendan's Dunnstown on Friday May 26th at 10.30 am. This Mass is a celebration of Damascus College's St. Brendan's Program for which sees approximately 75 Year 8 students from Damascus spend a term at the St. Brendan's Campus where they work with an alternative curriculum. Please let Cathy or Nat know if you would like to attend morning tea after Mass so that the school have numbers for catering.

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

DIOCESAN ARCHIVES HERITAGE & HISTORY TALKS WINTER SERIES 2026

All are welcome to attend the Heritage & History Talks Winter Series 2026 on Thursday, June 25, 2026 at the Archives & Gallery, 5 Lyons Street South, Ballarat from 10.00am – 12.00noon. The program is: "The Count O'Loughlin Legacy: The Ballarat Diocesan Collection" presented by Dr Michael Taffe; "Biblical Coins: A Private Collection" presented by Mr Jeremy McKnight; "The Bishops' Heraldry: A study on development and application" presented by Mr Richard D'Apice AM KCSG AIH; "The Higgins, Haydens and other families from Ballarat East" presented by Mr Andrew Hayden; and "Mitres and Crosiers: The Ballarat Diocesan Collection" presented by Dr Malcolm Borg. Refreshments provided. RSVP by June 20 to archives@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ph. 0499 015 030.

WHATSAPP FOR ROSTER CHANGES

Parishioners involved in Liturgical Ministries at St. Alipius' Church are advised that WhatsApp groups are available within the parish. These groups are used to coordinate changes to rostered roles. To join, please complete a privacy form available at the sound desk in the church. Please note that your phone number will be visible to all group members. For further information, contact the parish office.

TAP 'N GO MACHINES

Parishioners attending Mass at St Alipius' and Ss Peter and Paul's will notice an additional Tap 'n Go machine in the church foyers in the coming weeks. This second machine has been installed to provide clearer giving options.

Previously, all contributions made via the Tap 'n Go system were directed to the Presbytery, which was not widely understood. The machines are now clearly labelled 'Presbytery' and 'Parish' to ensure greater transparency for those who wish to contribute.

PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES

Planned Giving envelopes for the new financial year will be available in churches from this weekend. Please pick up your envelopes to save postage. If you notice that there are envelopes there that you could pass on, we would be happy for you to do so.

THE ST VINCENT PALLOTTI SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

The St Vincent Pallotti Scholarship Trust offers scholarships to enable lay people to further their understanding and skills in leadership/ministry or a specialised activity, such as promoting faith enhancement, social justice and pastoral care. For further information and application forms, go to <https://uacpallottines.au/>. Closing date is Friday, July 31, 2026.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2026

The World Day of Prayer Ballarat has contributed \$1,500.00 towards a Bible Society project aimed at supporting and empowering displaced and persecuted Christians in Nigeria, through trauma healing, food, clothing and back-to-school necessities. Additional local giftings for the project have come from World Day of Prayer Committees at Ballan, Bealiba, Beaufort, Creswick, Maryborough, Meredith, Newstead and Skipton. A total of 210 shared in Ballarat's 2026 World Day of Prayer, with services held at Rosebank Retirement Village, Hailey House Hostel, Pineview Residential Care, Calvary-Kelaston Nursing Home, St Columba's Catholic Church, Carmel Welsh Presbyterian Church and Nazareth House. Many thanks to all who participated. Next year (2027), Australia celebrates 100 years of "World Day of Prayer" and this will be held at St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat.

ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH NANDALY -

100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

All are welcome to celebrate the 100th anniversary of St Joseph's Church, Nandalay on Sunday, October 11, 2026. We plan to celebrate Mass and a meal to follow (to be organised). For planning purposes, please contact one of the following people to register your attendance: Jo Brady, ph. 0427 572 752; Sam Brady, ph. 0427 781 244; Barb Hall, ph. 0408 059 784. We would be grateful for any photos, documents, or historical information you may have to help commemorate this wonderful milestone. All items will be returned following the day. Please contact the above listed people if you can contribute. Accommodation is available at Nandalay (limited), Sea Lake and Ouyen. More information at a later date.

Precious in God's Eyes

A Reflection on the Gospel

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

(Matthew 10:26-33)

Veronica Lawson RSM

Many of those who once looked through the barbed-wire fences of Australia's detention centres carry personal stories of fear of persecution. One such story, the story of Najaf Mazari, is beautifully narrated by Najaf and Robert Hillman in their joint work, *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif*. Najaf is an Afghani Hazara who suffered persecution and torture at the hands of the Taliban. He escaped to Australia via Indonesia in 2002. After some time in detention, he established a rug making business in suburban Melbourne. He was reunited with his wife Hakeema and daughter Maria in 2008 and became an Australian citizen in June 2014.

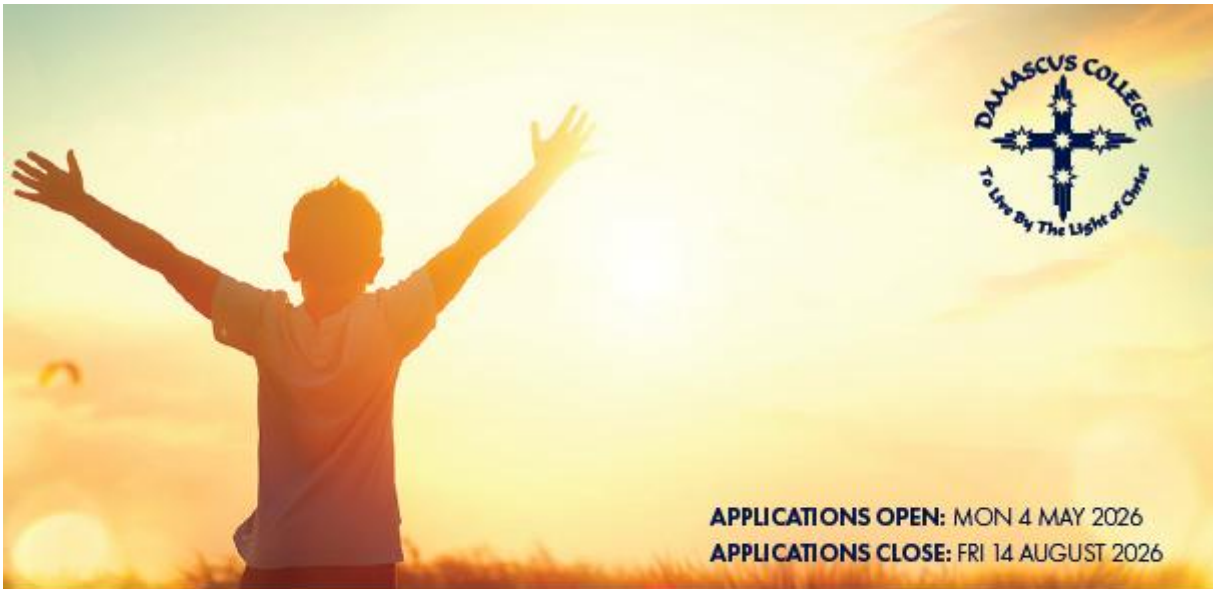
Some first century Christian groups, including Matthew's community, were a bit like the Afghani Hazaras in that they are persecuted simply on account of who they are vis-à-vis those who seek exclusive political and cultural power, although persecution by the Taliban is no longer restricted to the Hazara community. The suffering people of Afghanistan have every reason to fear bodily harm and even death, as suffered by Jesus and his followers. Jesus himself experienced fear in the face of his impending suffering and political execution. Yet Jesus tells his disciples, not once but three times, not to fear those who kill the body.

How are these words to be understood? To return to the story of Najaf: the Taliban had power to destroy his body, but no power over his spirit.

A man of deep faith, supported by a family who sacrificed their own comfort and placed their trust in God (Allah), he survived against the most incredible odds. Even if he had died in the effort to find freedom, his faith in the fullness of life with God would remain, in contrast with the bullying power of the Taliban who could kill the body but not an indomitable spirit.

Trust in God is at the heart of Jesus' response to suffering. The disciples are sent to proclaim, in the marketplace or from the "housetops", the gospel they have received in the security of the household. If they acknowledge Jesus, he will in turn "acknowledge" them before God. They can expect rejection and humiliation. This is not to deter them from their mission. They are not to give up the struggle or capitulate in the face of persecution. Like all of God's creatures, including the sparrows, they are precious in God's eyes and will not be abandoned. On the contrary, even the hairs on their heads are numbered by God. Trust in God is the appropriate response to suffering endured for the sake of God's empire as opposed to the empire of Rome. Trust in God does not take away the pain. We join with asylum seekers, refugees, unwanted migrants, the hungry and the homeless for the justice that is their right. They are precious in God's eyes. They are precious in our eyes and must not be abandoned.





APPLICATIONS OPEN: MON 4 MAY 2026
APPLICATIONS CLOSE: FRI 14 AUGUST 2026

BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP

When families are in crisis, disaster strikes or financial disadvantage is overwhelming, keeping kids in school and on track to succeed can be challenging, if not impossible. Around the world, 124 million children and youth are out of school. We believe that a brighter future starts with an education and giving a child the opportunity to thrive at Damascus College is the aim of the Bright Futures Scholarship.

Established in 2018 the Damascus College Bright Futures scholarship sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy (John Thirsk Estate), Fr Brendan Davey and Damascus College, is for the purpose of supporting students and families who are experiencing financial or personal disadvantage, and who demonstrate a strong commitment to social justice activities and contribute to their local community, but may not otherwise be able to afford a Catholic education.

This scholarship is awarded annually to one incoming Year 7 student for 50% tuition relief, and is awarded for the duration of a student's enrolment at Damascus College (maximum of 6 years).

To be considered for this scholarship, applicants must meet the selection criteria requirements overleaf.

A bit about the scholarship benefactors...

John Thirsk was a notable sports journalist who was cared for by the Sisters of Mercy as a result of family tragedy. The Sisters of Mercy provided John with an education and a safe place for him to return throughout his life. He considered the sisters as family and his gift to them was to enable them to provide for others the support that they offered to him. The Sisters have entrusted these funds to Damascus College.

Fr Brendan Davey grew up in Ballarat and was priest of the Diocese for over 60 years. Fr Brendan always had a great empathy for human vulnerability and valued the gift of education. Upon his death he gifted Damascus College with funds to enable Catholic education to be made available to young people who may not otherwise be able to access it.

The Bright Futures scholarship honours the Christian spirit that prevailed through the work of Fr Brendan as a priest of the Diocese and the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.



damascus.vic.edu.au

VALUE

One scholarship valued at 50% of the annual tuition fee at Damascus College, paid as one instalment at the beginning of the year. The capital expense and technology fee is included in this tuition calculation. The scholarship will be paid annually, for the duration of the award recipient's enrolment at Damascus College, which is a maximum of six years. The ongoing annual payment will be made at the beginning of a school year, and is conditional upon the recipient successfully meeting the ongoing requirements listed below.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Grade 5 student currently studying at a Primary School within the Ballarat area (50km radius from Ballarat), does not have to be attending a Catholic Primary School.
- Submitted Enrolment Application Form to Damascus College for Year 7 by the advertised deadline.

SELECTION CRITERIA

To be considered for the scholarship, applicants must meet the following selection criteria:

- Family is experiencing financial and/or personal disadvantage. Please provide evidence to support application.
- Student demonstrates involvement in volunteer, social justice, fundraising and leadership activities within the Primary School or broader community. Please provide examples.
- Student demonstrates an involvement and commitment to a faith tradition. Evidence must be provided.
- Student to choose two values to describe and give examples of how these values relate to them.
Values: Compassion, Justice, Respect, Hospitality, Service, Courage.
Student can choose to write up to 200 words for each value, submit a video or photos that describes how these values relate to them. Students are encouraged to be creative.
- One written reference, to be obtained from a community member in support of the scholarship application.

For applicants that are shortlisted, the panel will contact Primary School Principal for support of shortlisting applications.

APPLICATIONS OPEN ON MONDAY 4 MAY 2026 AND CLOSE ON FRIDAY 14 AUGUST 2026

Download the application form from the Damascus website at: damascus.vic.edu.au/enrolment/scholarships

GIVING TO BRIGHT FUTURES

As a Catholic school, Damascus College is committed to providing excellence in education, and it is our privilege to be able to offer opportunities that benefit our students and the wider community. Most important to us at Damascus is the welfare of our young people and hence the emphasis on providing an environment which is secure and safe, happy and productive.

Your generosity and commitment can help to make a real impact on the lives of our students.

Your gift allows us to support an exciting and enriching educational experience for students and can also make a difference to the causes you care about on a local and global scale. You may choose to give to fulfill your philanthropic aspirations as well as your financial plans, to honour the people you hold dear, or to strengthen and celebrate the Damascus College community. Whatever the reason, together gifts of all sizes add up to make a big difference.

Damascus College seeks to extend the Bright Futures Scholarship opportunity to more than one Year 7 student per year with your help. Proceeds raised will support this worthy scholarship fund, in order to extend its reach to multiple students each year.

If you would like to financially contribute to the Bright Futures Scholarship please call Damascus College 03 5337 2222 or visit damascus.vic.edu.au/community/giving

DAMASCUS COLLEGE ABN: 39 469 995 106

Inspired by Christ's Mercy

NETSTARS

NETBALL CLINIC

TRAIN. PLAY. IMPROVE. HAVE FUN!



DATE: FRIDAY 10th JULY 2026

TIME: 9AM - 3PM

AGES: 7 - 14 YEARS OLD

VENUE: SELKIRK STADIUM
989 NORMAN STREET, WENDOUREE

COST: \$90 PER PARTICIPANT

HOSTED BY
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COMMONWEALTH GAMES GOLD MEDALLIST

SKILLS
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CONFIDENCE

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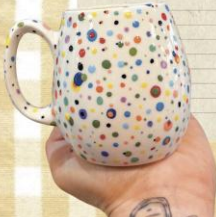


JULY SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

AT THE POTTYAGE

Paint Your Own Pottery Session

- suitable for all ages
- over 200 pieces to choose from
- 2 hour introductory session

BOOKINGS AVAILABLE VIA OUR WEBSITE

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.

What's On: Term 3

All programs are delivered by our qualified and passionate facilitators.

Multi-Session Programs

Tuning In to Kids | 6 Sessions, Mondays

Helping parents and carers build their skills to help their children develop emotional intelligence and manage their emotions, using 'emotion coaching'. For parents with kids aged 3-12

FREE | Mondays | 20 Jul - 24 Aug | 10:00am - 12:00pm

Online Via Zoom



Tuning In to Teens | 6 Sessions, Tuesdays

Helping parents and carers build their skills to help their children develop emotional intelligence and manage their emotions, using 'emotion coaching'. For parents with teens 10-17.

FREE | Tuesdays | 28 Jul - 1 Sept | 10:00am - 12:00pm

Online Via Zoom



Register:
www.catholiccarevic.org.au/workshops

1800 123 228 | (03) 5337 8999
34 Peel Street Nth, Ballarat VIC 3350