



Holy Family Parish School
Parkes

Parent Handbook 2026



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
WILCANNIA-FORBES

Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes Statement of Faith

Our schools are communities of faith, learning and transformation founded upon the person of Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Where the Gospel is proclaimed and lived within the communion and the rich tradition of the Catholic Church.



Holy Family Vision Statement

Holy Family School finds its justification in the Mission of the Church and is:

An integral part of the parish community where Gospel values are demonstrated and celebrated;

A place of harmony, respect and love where each person is treated with justice and dignity and feels safe and accepted;

A community that fosters the development of the whole human person: spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Holy Family Parish School

Address: 37a High St, Parkes NSW 2870

Phone: 0268621610

Email: admin.parkes@wf.catholic.edu.au

Web: <http://www.wf.catholic.edu.au/schools/parkes/>

Parish Priest: Fr Barry Dwyer barry.dwyer@wf.catholic.org.au

Principal: Mrs Denise Gersbach principal.parkes@wf.catholic.edu.au

2026 School Term Dates:

- **Term 1** Thursday 29th January - Thursday 2nd April (10 weeks)
- **Term 2** Monday 20th April - Friday 3rd July (11 weeks)
- **Term 3** Monday 20th July - Friday 25th September (10 weeks)
- **Term 4** Monday 12th October - Friday 18th December (10 weeks)

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2026 School Staff

Leadership Team:

Principal	Mrs Denise Gersbach
Assistant Principal	Mr Andrew Berger
Religious Education Coordinator	Mrs Beverly Berger
Leader of Pedagogy	Miss Nicole Westwood

Classroom Teachers:

Mrs Rachael Jones	KJ
Mrs Judi Cannon/Mrs Bernadette Clowry	KC
Miss Laura Cook	1C
Mrs Sue Caldwell/Mrs Virginia Rice	2CR
Mrs Shane Noonan	3N
Mrs Hayley Wheeler/Mrs Jessica Ross	4WR
Mrs Beverly Berger/Mr Andrew Berger	5/6B
Mrs Julie Herring/Miss Nicole Westwood	5/6HW
Mr Michael Somers	Additional Needs Teacher
Mrs Ken Hanstock	RFF Teacher
Mrs Jessica Ross	Transition Teacher
Miss Gillian Lee	Family Engagement Coordinator

Support Staff:

Mrs Wendy Huppatz	Administration/Finance
Mrs Monique Labuschagne	Administration/IT
Mrs Donna Payne	Aboriginal Education Officer
Mrs Claire Cusack	Aboriginal Education Officer
Mrs Shev Brown	Learning Support Officer
Ms Lee Hodge	Learning Support Officer
Miss Gracie Jones	Learning Support Officer
Mrs Larissa Skulander	Learning Support Officer
Mrs Janelle Thompson	Learning Support Officer
Mrs Mandy Westcott	Learning Support Officer
Mr George Greig	Groundsman
Mrs Robynne Casperson	Canteen/Cleaner
Mrs Margaret Bilbow	Cleaner

Absences

A class roll is a legal document, therefore parents are required to inform the school in writing, via the COMPASS parent portal or with a phone call, of the reason for any absence from school. This also includes 'partial absence' such as late arrivals or short visits to doctors etc, where parents are required to sign their children out from school and back in on their return at the front office.

Accidents

In the case of accidents or sudden illness, the following procedures are used:

- **Serious Cases**

Qualified staff will administer First Aid and the parents/emergency contacts will be notified. In extreme cases, an ambulance may be called – this is covered under the Diocesan Student Accident Insurance

- **Minor Cases**

When a child becomes unwell or suffers a minor accident, appropriate First Aid is administered and the child rests in the sick bay. Any medication administered will be done so at the permission of the parent. If necessary, parents may be notified to collect their children.

- **Medication**

It is imperative that class teachers are notified in writing of any medication that is to be taken during school hours. Medication should be left at the front office and will be administered by school staff.

- **Infectious Diseases**

Exclusion from school for infectious disease is imperative for the health and well-being of the whole school community. Some infectious diseases and their exclusion times are listed below;

- Chicken Pox – Until all sores have dried.
- Viral Hepatitis – Until a medical certificate is given.
- Conjunctivitis – Until fully cleared.
- Ringworm – Until treatment has begun.
- Impetigo (School sores) – Until healed or covered by a bandage.
- Head Lice – Until all eggs are removed.

Appointments

Parents are invited to be active participants in the learning journey of their children. As such, speaking to the class teacher or Principal is important for consistent communication. It is usually best to make an appointment by ringing the school office or via email (admin.parkes@wf.catholic.edu.au) to make an appointment time. Parents are reminded that classes should not be interrupted during lesson times unless in the case of an emergency.

Assembly

Assembly is held each fortnight, usually on Friday afternoon, in the School Hall at 2.45pm. Parents and friends are warmly invited to join us.

Behaviour Management

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by school persons and non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the school.

Book Club

Order forms are issued by the class teacher at various times throughout the year. Children may buy books and computer programs applicable to their age at a reasonable price. Order forms, together with correct money, must be returned to the office before the closing date. We regret that it is impossible to accept orders and money after the closing date. The school receives a commission on sales which allows us to supplement library books and readers in the school.

Concerns & Complaints

We take concerns and complaints seriously and try to resolve them in the most appropriate, efficient and confidential manner possible according to the principles of procedural fairness.

We encourage any person with a concern or complaint to promptly raise the matter so that it does not become overwhelming for those involved.

For further information on resolving school concerns and complaints an information brochure is available from the school office or can be sourced from the CEWF Concerns and Complaints Handling Policy on the CEWF website: www.wf.catholic.edu.au/policies

Concerns and Complaints of a Child Protection Nature

If the concern is about the inappropriate behaviour of staff, misconduct or reportable conduct towards any child or young person, it should be directed immediately to the Principal. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

Crunch and Sip

Crunch and Sip is a break in the morning for students to refuel on fruit and salad vegetables and rehydrate with water, which assists physical and mental performance and concentration. Each day students need to bring a piece of fruit or vegetable and a water bottle for Crunch and Sip.

Excursions

An excursion is an educational experience, organised to allow children to discover other environments and is aimed at further developing a unit of class work. Excursions requiring transportation will require a permission note which will be sent through the COMPASS parent portal. No child will be permitted to attend an excursion without written or online consent of the parents.

Fees

Holy Family School is a systemic Catholic school. State and Federal funding covers some expenses such as salaries and capital works, however day to day running costs and resources are provided for through school fees. Our fees include tuition, a building levy, a Chromebook levy and an activities levy. At Holy Family all families meet their fee responsibilities. However, the school is able to offer flexible arrangements and fee support to any family should genuine hardship arise. Fee payments may be made by direct debit and the school office can assist with the necessary paperwork.

Front Door Policy

All parents and visitors are requested to call at the front office when they arrive for a school activity. For the protection of the children, volunteers are required to sign a Prohibited Employment Declaration form and must also sign in on each occasion.

Homework

The position of homework and its validity will always be questioned, but we have in place at Holy Family a homework policy which allows families to follow up on class learning. Homework should not take more than the following time each night;

- Kindergarten – 5 minutes
- Stage 1 (Year 1 & Year 2) – 10 minutes
- Stage 2 (Year 3 & Year 4) – 20 minutes
- Stage 3 (Year 5 & Year 6) – 30 minutes

Homework can be as simple as having your child read out aloud to you or watching a news article together, or completing jobs around the house. These experiences help our children develop learning habits at home.

Library

Our Library has a wide range of fiction, non-fiction and reference books and reflects our strong focus on literacy. All children need a library bag for borrowing and each class will attend a library lesson once a week.

Lost Property

Lost property, when clearly marked, will be returned to the owner when found. If unmarked, lost property will be kept in the staffroom.

Lunches

The school has a not-for-profit canteen on site which offers a range of lunch options for students. Lunches can be ordered through Compass. The canteen also operates at Recess providing a range of drinks and snacks at this time.

When packing lunches, please be aware of other children with allergies and avoid sending nut products to school.

Mass and Reconciliation

At Holy Family the children enjoy regular opportunities for Liturgical worship as a class community, a school community and a parish community. Primary classes are rostered to lead liturgies in the Chapel each term followed by Reconciliation.

Money Sent to School

When sending money to school for any reason, please enclose it in an envelope marked clearly with your child's name and class, the amount of money enclosed and the purpose.

Newsletters

The School Newsletter is produced weekly on Mondays and is for the information of parents and children. The newsletter can be accessed via the COMPASS app, email and the school Facebook page. If internet access is not available, a hard copy of the newsletter can be sent home with your child if requested by parents.

Parents and Friends Association

Each year this group provides the school with funds to purchase resources. Without this contribution, school fees would need to be greatly increased. All parents are warmly invited to help in any way they can and new ideas are always welcomed to help our students. The P&F meet once a month at the Coachman Hotel.

Parent Information Nights

The staff at Holy Family are committed, together with families, to achieve the best possible outcomes for all students. Establishing consistent and meaningful communication is vital in that process. A Kindergarten Parent Information Night is held early in Term 1 to provide an overview for routines and units of work to be completed throughout the year. Other information nights will be presented throughout the year with a focus on student learning and well-being.

Personal Items at School

Children may bring to school special items for News in class. They are not to bring in items to swap or sell. Students are not permitted to bring electronic game devices, trading cards, footballs or other sporting equipment (tennis balls and handballs are an exception). Any item from home should be clearly marked or labelled. Mobile phones may be brought to school, but left at the front office through the day and collected at the end of the school day.

Reports

Comprehensive written reports are sent home in June and December. The reports are based on continuous assessment of class work, standardised tests, class tests and the child's general attitude and conduct. Parent Teacher Interviews are offered at the end of Term 2.

Sacraments

In the tradition of the Catholic Church, sacramental occasions are very important times. Children prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Year 2, First Eucharist in Year 3 and Confirmation in Year 6. The school supports the family and the parish in the Sacramental programs.

School Committee

The School Committee oversees the financial management of the school and the maintenance of buildings and grounds. Election of members is held amongst the school parents when necessary and members are elected for a two-year term. The School Committee meets once a term.

School Hours

- Supervision of students 8.25am
- Morning Bell/Classes commence 8.55am
- Recess 11.00am
- Classes resume 11.20am
- Lunch 1.00pm
- Classes resume 1.55pm
- Classes dismissed 3.15pm

Sports Day

Sports Day for students is on Friday. All students wear their sports uniform on this day and undertake sports activities throughout the day.

Sports Houses

Each student at Holy Family is allocated a sports house to compete at Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country. Families are allocated the same house. The four sports houses are;

Bushman (Blue)	Phoenix (Red)
Currajong (Yellow)	Welcome (Green)

Students with Additional Needs

A range of services are available for students at Holy Family with Additional Needs. The staff are committed to ensuring educational outcomes are challenging but achievable for all students. Strategies may include, but not limited to;

- Personal Plans (PPs) for learning in the classroom
- Enrichment or extension activities and programs
- Differentiated teaching methods

Some students may be eligible for funding from the Government due to diagnosed learning difficulties.

Student Leadership

School Captains – At the end of each school year, Year 5 students are invited to nominate for the position of school captain. A vote is taken by staff and students from Year 2 to Year 5. Two School Captains and two Vice Captains are elected at the vote.

Sports Captains – These leaders are elected from the same pool of students with voting taking place in house groups. Students elected as School Captain or Vice Captain cannot be elected as a Sports Captain. Two Sports Captains are elected for each sporting house.

Student Representative Council (SRC) – Two students are elected for the SRC from Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 and form the group together with the School Captains and Vice Captains. The SRC meets regularly to discuss concerns around the school and raise issues with the Principal and Assistant Principal.

Supervision

Students are supervised at Holy Family from 8.25am to 3.45pm each day. Our Behaviour Management Policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of students, teachers and parents with the aim of supporting families and the school in their duty of care for all students. We pride ourselves on the quality of care that is given to the pupils in our school. However, supervision is not possible outside the hours stated above.

Travelling to and from School

When bringing your children to school and picking them up please heed all traffic signs as these protect the safety of all children. Vehicles are not permitted to park in the bus loading zone between the hours of 8.30am to 9.30am and 3.00pm to 4.00pm. The Children's Crossing is to be kept clear at all times during the day. The *No Parking* zone is for dropping off and picking up only. When collecting students in the afternoon, please do not call your children across the street or cross with them at any place other than the Children's Crossing. Parents and students are not permitted to use the staff carpark to enter and exit the school for safety reasons. Students travelling via bus will enter and exit the school via the lower gate on High St and are supervised by teachers in the afternoon.

Uniform

The staff encourage the wearing of school uniform because:

- We feel it is positive for children to develop loyalties to their school and to identify with an organisation to which their peers also belong
- We encourage children to be proud of their school and through genuine school spirit to communicate this pride of belonging to the community
- School uniform adds to the atmosphere and spirit of the school
- School uniform prevents the problem of unhealthy competition related to expensive clothing
- Wearing school uniform assists home morning routines

No jewellery, other than a crucifix or holy medal, wrist watch and one pair of earrings (sleepers or studs only) may be worn at school. No other piercings are permitted. Runners/Joggers are strictly not permitted to be worn with the school uniform except for Sports Day (typically on Fridays). All children with long hair must have it tied back while at school in a ponytail, plaits or pigtails.

If for any reason a student needs to be out of uniform, a note from home is required.

BOYS UNIFORM	
SUMMER	WINTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grey school uniform style shorts • Lemon short sleeved shirt • Black school shoes or boots with grey socks • School hat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grey school uniform style trousers • Lemon long sleeved shirt with school tie • Green knitted school jumper • Black school shoes or boots with grey socks • School hat

GIRLS UNIFORM	
SUMMER	WINTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottle green/white summer dress (length to knee or below) OR • Tailored navy shorts and lemon short sleeve shirt (alternate) • Black school shoes or boots with bottle green socks • School hat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years K-2 – Green and gold tartan pinafore (length to knee or below) or Tailored Navy Pants (alternate) • Years 3-6 – Green and gold tartan skirt (length to knee or below) or Tailored Navy Pants (alternate) • Lemon long sleeved shirt with green school tie • Green knitted school jumper • Black school shoes with green socks or tights • School hat

OPTIONAL WINTER UNIFORM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Beanie • Navy blue school heavy duty jacket

SPORTS UNIFORM	
SUMMER	WINTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School sports polo • Navy shorts • Joggers with plain white socks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School polo sport shirt and school hoodie. • Navy tracksuit pants

- **Hair**
 - Haircuts are to be kept simple and neat in natural colouring only.
 - Long hair (shoulder length or longer) to be tied back using only green or gold ribbons or bands.

School Bags

A Holy Family school bag is part of our uniform policy. Bags may be purchased at our school office.

Social Media

The school and P&F both have Facebook pages, where you can find information regarding what is happening at the school and with the P&F. On Facebook you can find the pages using the following in the search tool:

Holy Family School, Parkes

Holy Family P&F

Child Protection Information

CHILD SAFE SCHOOLS AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

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

In particular the school will:

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

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

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

In making a report the Principal will consider all of the information and seek appropriate advice from the Catholic Education Office. Any information about a child at risk is kept confidentially by the Principal.

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

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

ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR BY STAFF

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

Such complaints are handled differently to other types of complaints which may arise in the school because of legal obligations established by the Children's Guardian Act 2019. The Office of the Children's Guardian is a government agency which requires schools and other organisations working with children to ensure systems are in place for recording and responding to all allegations of a child protection nature against staff. You should be aware that 'staff' includes volunteer helpers (including parents), contractors as well as paid staff.

If you have concerns about alleged inappropriate behaviour by a staff member towards any child or young person it is important that you discuss your concerns with the Principal who in turn will consult with the Catholic Education Office.

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

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

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

Screening of those working in schools

Working With Children Checks are undertaken by staff working in our school. Non-exempt school volunteers, outside tutors, external providers and any staff engaged by an external organisation are also expected to provide schools with their WWCC which is verified prior to engagement.

Exemptions from Working With Children Check are:

- Children (under the age of 18);
- A 'parent of a child' includes a carer or person who has legal responsibility for a child;
- A 'close relative' includes a spouse or de facto partner, child, step-child, parent, step-parent, sibling, step-sibling, grandparent, step-grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

This exemption does not apply where the work is part of a formal mentoring program or involves intimate, personal care of children with a disability, or when volunteering on overnight camps.

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

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

- sign in on the Compass Kiosk at the front office and obtain a visitor's badge or slip as per school procedure;
- check with the school to ascertain the current legal requirements for working with children;
- not engage in any inappropriate behaviour towards any children. In particular, although parents and volunteers are not employed by the school, they are considered to be 'staff' for legal purposes and are subject to an investigation if an allegation of inappropriate behaviour towards a child or children is received.

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

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