



St Patrick's School Ballarat

2021 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 29

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Mark Hogbin, attest that St Patrick's School is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2021 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.

10/03/2021

NOTE: The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au

Governing Authority Report

The governance of fifty-six schools in the Diocese of Ballarat was transferred to Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) on 01 January 2021. Thus, beginning an exciting and challenging first year of governance under DOBCEL and continuing the long partnership between all schools of the Diocese and Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) of continual improvement of learning outcomes for the students in the schools of the Diocese.

COVID-19 continued to cast a long shadow over the communities in the Diocese. Our students, their families and our dedicated staff are to be commended for their ability to move from one mode of learning to another with very short notice. The true impact on learners may not be known for years. We may well reflect on the 'challenging and uncertain times of COVID' in a similar way to the those reflected on the Spanish Flu a century ago. We will remember with awe the commitment of our school communities, those who lead them and their staff. We will also speak of the resilience of the children of this generation in meeting a 'new normal' and often leading our wider communities in an optimistic response.

In 2021, our school communities and CEB have maintained a strong focus on reviewing and updating policies, procedures and practices that reflect the new governance model and continuing their commitment to providing safe, learning environments for all learners.

I thank the priests of our school communities for their ongoing pastoral care and ministry, without the demands of Governance resting on their shoulders. I acknowledge and thank the Principals of our schools for their committed leadership, care and support of their school community.

I commend this Annual Report to the School Community as a summary of the many achievements in supporting the learning needs of our students.

Tom Sexton

Executive Director

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited

Our School Vision & Mission

Our Motto:

To Love is To Serve

Our Vision Statement:

St Patrick's is a nurturing Christian community that inspires learning and achievement, acceptance and equality in a child safe school environment.

Our Mission Statement:

For our children, families and staff to live the Christian Message of Love through:

- Faith; By living Christian values in the Christian tradition.
- Learning & Achievement ; By creating educational opportunities for all members of the school community to work towards their full potential.
- Acceptance & Equality ; By providing a just and caring environment in which all individuals are valued and respected; where each person has a sense of self-worth and achievement.
- Community; By building a strong sense of belonging, based on partnerships between home, school, parish and local community.

Our Commitment to Diversity:

All members of our school community will endeavour to promote awareness of cultural, religious, gender and political diversity. We seek opportunities to foster inclusiveness for all people and to promote the dignity of the human person. Our policies and programs will acknowledge the rich diversity of Australian culture, and we will embrace each member of our school community regardless of ability, belief, gender affiliation or practice.

Our Commitment to Child Safety:

All students enrolled have, and any child visiting has a right to feel safe and to be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and we will create a child safe and child friendly environment where children are safe and free to enjoy life to the full without any impediments to their safety.

School Overview

Since 1924 Saint Patrick's Primary School has stood on its current site in the centre of Ballarat. With its origins on the gold fields, the school continues to educate students in faith with a focus on looking towards the future. The student enrolment in 2021 stands at 250 which is at capacity across all year levels. Classes range from Foundation to Year 6 and students are taught in 10 multi-age classes. Specialist classes are held in Physical Education, Indonesian, Library and Environmental Science.

In accordance with the annual action plan the school entered in to its third year of training in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) philosophy. This will continue in to 2022. Ms. Felicity Lane, CEB worked with the Principal and Staff to undertake the necessary professional development in PLC with an agreed curriculum target area being the reading and writing comments of the English curriculum.

Throughout 2021 Compliance became the focus area for the Catholic Education Office as it continued to transition to DOBCEL, Funding was provided for Compliance Officers to be employed across schools so that this important area could be addressed. Availability of staff with the necessary skills to complete the tasks has proven difficult, and we made the decision to reallocate one staff member's role to include Risk and Compliance. This has been a successful move, and we anticipate it will continue into 2022.

Throughout 2021 St. Patrick's School continued to meet the educational and social needs of students, staff and families. This became challenging when we moved to extended periods of Remote Learning across all year levels while still providing supervision for increasing numbers of students at school each day. Staff were redeployed and rostered to attend on site and all lessons were conducted via electronic means. Despite the challenges though, the willingness of all stakeholders to embrace the vision and mission of the school remains a strength for St. Patrick's. The School Advisory Council was supportive of the school's leadership and was always willing to embrace their consultative role. The staff worked as a cohesive unit to ensure that the Leadership team was supported in their endeavours to lead the school, and the Canonical Administrator continued to offer his support unconditionally. On reflection, 2021 was a very successful year at St. Patrick's School despite the continued challenges of COVID.

Principal's Report

It is my pleasure to provide the annual report for the school year of 2021. In our second year of the global pandemic, we have faced many challenges. An extended period of remote learning throughout the year continues to be the norm as we follow on from the first exposure to COVID in 2020. As this report goes to print I am glad to read that extreme measures seem to have worked and that Ballarat and Victoria are now able to feel more confident as we move into our new COVID normal. We are still required to amend learning programs, regulate visitors on-site and modify gatherings, but with many restrictions now lifting, we look forward to a more relaxed end to the school year.

One frustrating element of COVID that we have come to live with is the short notice of closures across the state for schools, retail and so many other forms of work and leisure. Throughout the year schools were called to respond to new regulations, often with less than 24 hours notice. Parents are often informed of changes before schools were given time to implement these and staff continue to be placed in the position of having to create a curriculum that could be accessed with minimum adult support knowing that for many families, this would be the student's reality. Luckily, our move to 1:1 learning devices in 2019 paid off. Each child was sent home with their own iPad or Chrome-book and these have allowed every student in our school to access the technology that they require to be able to make use of the learning programs. As an Advisory Council, we managed to keep to our SAC agendas for the school year. This has meant that we can also keep abreast of the building program and other issues which affect our school community. Well done to our SAC members for your dedication to the task!

We have maintained our Catholic School Culture with the continuation of school assemblies and whole school prayer each week. These are filmed and sent out to the classes so that everyone can watch them together without leaving their classroom when we can't gather as a whole school community. The children look forward to this each week and the sounds of our school prayer and the various songs of praise are heard each week throughout the school as we all take part in our virtual gatherings. The sacramental program has continued to fall victim to shutdowns over the year. With 200 students receiving the sacrament of Confirmation, we were all very pleased that this has been able to occur. Even with some very creative thinking from our Parish sacramental team and Fr. Justin. After more than 12 years as our Parish Administrator, we say farewell to Fr. Justin at the end of this year. Fr. Justin has led us through staff employment, sacramental programs, the royal commission, transfer to DOBCEL and so much more. As Chaplain to our school and community Fr. Justin has always shown great interest in our school and the directions in which we aspire to grow and evolve. As mentor and friend, we will certainly miss him, but we wish him well for the move to Daylesford parish where he will most certainly be welcomed.

The staff of our school continues to support each other and the students in our care. It would be fair to say that in our second year of restrictions, the staff is feeling the effects of amended programming for all students, as is the leadership team. Just like our parent body, we are all ready for a break! I continue to be supported by my leadership team of Cathy Whelan, Kerin Johnson, Thea Hubble, and Jacqui Pierce who are so willing to assist me in my role at any time. I am proud of what we have been able to achieve this year, in the most challenging of times. We are now beginning to focus on our external school review to be held in 2022. Our Advisory Council has been versed in what this will look like and staff will begin preparations in the coming weeks. We have allocated time to work together as a staff for the review and this will commence on the first two days of term one next year.

Isolation continues to present challenges to our families. With the assistance of Sharalle, our Catholic Care support worker we are able to offer support to anyone who seeks it. I am grateful to the Catholic Education Office, Ballarat for continuing to fund this important position across our Catholic schools. Our NCCD funding will once again allow us to run support programs for students in need. We have received less money for 2022 than we hoped but this reflects the number of students who have advanced in their learning and now require less support than previously.

We are nearing the end of the school year which means that reports are now being assembled for all students. Once again, this will be an amended report format due to remote learning periods (12 weeks this year) but still important for all students and families. Our work in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) context continues to evolve and we have achieved much this year. The staff has shown great dedication to working together in this space. We have reviewed all core learning areas now and we will move into a focus on achievement for all students (Universal design for learning) next year. We have seen some significant changes in staff this year with Mr. Tim Delaney moving to St. Patrick's College, Ms. Susan Bourke stepping away from teaching and Ms. Sarah Sneddon accepting a position at Siena Primary School in Lucas. This has allowed me to offer Mr. Matthew Wakely an ongoing position in our school and Mrs. Kim Whittle has moved into a full-time classroom teaching position. We will review the position held by Sarah (Learning Support Officer) and may need to employ early in the new year. There may yet be more changes to staffing and if this is the case, we will advertise for staff to commence with the new school year. Some part-time positions are yet to be filled and this will occur in the coming weeks. Classroom teachers have been allocated their positions for 2022 and these will be shared this evening.

Our school community struggles with extended periods of restrictions. We are in our second year now of not being able to welcome parents into the school and this comes at a cost to our community. If we can achieve a more settled period in 2022 it will be important to create opportunities to gather and celebrate again in many forms. Our Parent Club certainly feels a sense of frustration at not being able to gather, hopefully, this will change in the new school year. As restrictions have begun to lift this term I have continued to hold a conservative stance on any forms of gatherings that expose us to the wider community. My belief here is that we don't want to make any decisions that might lead to regrets if a breakout occurs in our school. Likewise, we do have some families who are exercising their right to not be vaccinated and this has the potential of causing a sense of disharmony in our community. In this regard, I pray for patience and look forward to 2023! Our building program continues at this present time we are waiting for the successful tender to be announced. Once this has occurred (this Friday) we will be able to set dates for commencement. I would like to thank the Advisory Council for your support with this over the year as it has driven most of the content of our meetings this year.

To Wadih our diligent Chairperson and all members of our Council, I thank you for your dedication. In the spirit of true consultation, you have been a great support to me and to our staff. When we work together as a community, we can achieve so much. Even in trying times. In our prayer each time we gather we pray that we will be able to accept the challenge to look beyond our own needs and desires or those of our own children. With Gods help I believe that we have been able to do this and I thank you for your willingness to truly engage.

May you all have a very pleasant holiday break. May your family Christmas be blessed and may 2022 be the year in which we can enjoy life without too many restrictions placed upon us.

Principal

Mark Hogbin.

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School Board Report

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Catholic School Culture

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To strengthen authentic relationships with our families, parish & wider community (SIP 2018-2022)

Staff Retreat - 2 days. Why Pray?

Achievements

On 10th November we met with Fr. Justin, Mr. Tom Sexton and the Principals of Siena and St. Thomas More schools to mark a significant occasion. After celebrating mass together we witnessed the signing of our school over from local governance to the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL). This will become effective from 1st January 2021. The Director for Catholic Education, Mr. Tom Sexton said at the time that this was the biggest shift in Catholic education for our diocese in 175 years. While this may certainly be the case in terms of governance administration, the community of St. Patrick's, Siena and St. Thomas More schools will continue to operate much as we have in the past. Fr. Justin will maintain a strong presence in our communities, and we will continue to draw on him for pastoral support as we have in the past.

VALUE ADDED

Our parents learned much about the traditional practices of the catholic school during remote learning. As the students were supervised for their daily online learning sessions the parents took part in daily prayer and other liturgical celebrations which for many, was a new encounter. This was seen as a positive experience for our families as they were offered the chance to take part in classroom practices each day.

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Re-build a positive sense of community after 2020 remote learning and lock down.

Achievements

We were able to maintain positive connections to our community throughout 2021 despite periods of enforced restrictions. Through surveying our parent community we were able to ascertain that virtual school assemblies, prayer services and celebrations that were sent out for viewing in the home, were highly valued. Our school presentation of 'Alice in Wonderland' was renamed 'Alice Interrupted' and the performance was filmed at school and sent out to families to enjoy at home. This production took two terms to finalise as we worked around periods of lockdown and remote learning.

We maintained connections with the Saint Vincent DePaul society through our regular fund-raising events when the children could return to school. Our Christmas drive for sanitary items was appreciated by the society, and we received recognition for our efforts. We were also able to contribute to CARITAS for their Christmas and Easter appeals.

COVID restrictions did not allow for us to end the year in our traditional way with liturgy and graduation celebrations however, the students were able to come together in their class groups to recognise the achievements of 2021.

PARENT SATISFACTION

We were able to conduct our bi-annual Insight SRC surveys in 2021. These surveys assist us to learn about parent and student satisfaction based on the five areas of the school improvement framework. Despite interruptions to the year, we maintained a consistently high ranking for parent satisfaction. Our score of 83 was in line with the previous ranking of 85 in 2019. Student satisfaction also remained consistently high with strong identification to school despite extended periods of remote learning. We are justifiably proud that our parents and students value their connection to our school.

Leadership & Stewardship

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Enhance the development of highly skilled staff through engagement in evidence based practices within a culture of continuous improvement (SIP 2018-2022)

Induct a new model of Leadership team to enhance our understandings of PLC

Establish new norms for meeting in teams with the whole staff.

Achievements

Leading a school community with empty classrooms and the majority of staff working from home for such extended periods has certainly created a unique set of challenges. Professional development of staff, which is a requirement of the award, was largely not met, curriculum development goals had to be amended and an overall relinquishing of plans to allow for new circumstances needed to be developed. I am pleased with what we have achieved this year despite the many obstacles we have faced.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

Most professional learning experiences for 2021 were cancelled due to COVID. Professional development days were redirected towards planning for remote learning. This involved all staff.

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2021	25
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$200

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Teacher satisfaction remains high at St. Patrick's school. Our latest Insight SRC shows that teacher satisfaction sits in the 80-85% range. We continue to work on role clarity with staff as we move through the PLC model of school improvement.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	88.7%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	90.9%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	11.8%
Graduate	17.6%
Graduate Certificate	5.9%
Bachelor Degree	76.5%
Advanced Diploma	41.2%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	20.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	16.9
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	8.8
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Engagement in high levels of learning (SIP 2018-2022)

Build teacher capacity in RE using Awakenings program

Whole school focus on improved learning and teaching outcomes

Achievements

What a resilient group of students we have! Since returning to school we have seen old patterns re-establish as the students respond to the return of routines around learning and being together. The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria has supported schools to meet government requirements around school reports and modified assessments. The state government tutor initiative has been very successful with excellent results attained for those students who were identified as vulnerable learners due to the continuation of remote learning.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

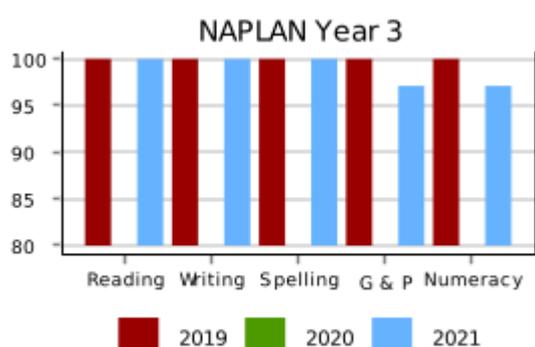
The school was able to assess learning through the PAT platforms as well as on demand testing and using teacher analysis of work completed. This informed reports at the middle and end of year.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	-	-	97.1	-
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	97.1	-
YR 03 Reading	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Spelling	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Writing	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	97.6	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Numeracy	95.1	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Reading	97.5	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Spelling	95.1	-	-	96.7	-
YR 05 Writing	100.0	-	-	100.0	-

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To enhance student learning & well-being (SIP 2018-2022)

Graduate/ New staff induction

Achievements

The second year of extended isolation brought new challenges our way this year. I have seen a rise in families experiencing financial stress as well as other stressors associated with the extended periods of lockdown. We are told to expect this to continue for some time yet. I am also mindful of staff well-being since many of our staff were required to work from home while educating their own children, running virtual classrooms and attending the work site to supervise children of essential workers during the lockdown. While this is in the past now, I am conscious of long-term effects on health and wellbeing. We are committed to ensuring that the workplace remains a positive and safe environment for all people and we are confident that our data reflects this thinking.

VALUE ADDED

The school Counsellor was employed 2 days per week again this year and she was able to work with students and families via virtual meetings. This proved to be worthwhile. In 2021 we saw an increase in anxiety among students. This is supported by data kept by the school Counsellor. Catholic-Care Ballarat has worked with our Counsellor to assist with program training in this important and growing area.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Data gathered from Insight SRC surveys would indicate that student satisfaction at St. Patrick's school remains high. Students feel safe at school and they believe that their teachers are approachable and meet their learning needs. Our student data continues to rank student behavior as low (50th percentile) but this is not reflected in any other data forms.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The school manages responsibility for student attendance according to diocesan guidelines. All students are recorded on the electronic rolls each morning and afternoon. These feed directly into the SIMON program and absences are noted. Any unaccounted-for absence is followed through by text or phone call by the staff in the school office. Any students leaving the

school before the close of day are recorded and signed out by the adult who is removing them from school.

During extended periods of remote learning, the school followed diocesan guidelines for student attendance. As directed, each student was expected to log in to their virtual classroom each morning and to attend workshops as timetabled. Attendance was recorded each day as requested.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	94.6%
Y02	94.2%
Y03	94.5%
Y04	93.2%
Y05	93.2%
Y06	91.8%
Overall average attendance	93.6%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

During 2021 the staff used daily contact with each student to monitor child safety while students were working from home. Information regarding online behaviours and expectations were communicated to all families. Students were made aware of the importance of working online under adult supervision and teachers monitored this through their daily online classes.

Achievements

Child Safety remains a priority area of focus for our school. All visitors are now required to report at the front office where they are inducted onto the site through the code of conduct and electronic identification. All staff, volunteers and visitors are trained in the school's approach to child safety. Student voice is taught and promoted at our school in many ways. Through the Daniel Morcombe Programs, students are given the correct terminology to use in confronting situations. These terms are utilised with staff and in all classes from Foundation to Year 6. The key messages of React, Respond, and Report are taught and reinforced at every stage of the program. Student voice is considered a priority at St. Patrick's. There are many opportunities where this is promoted including; through class meetings, Student Representative Council, Three Way Chats and school reports.

St. Patrick's School conducts risk management audits for any off-site trips or excursions when we are able to leave the school grounds. Medical forms are held online and accessible at all times. Regular audits of medications and safety plans are carried out by admin staff. The school conducts regular emergency evacuation and lockdown drills according to Diocesan guidelines.

All staff have updated their understandings of this priority area through completion of the Online training modules around mandatory reporting and the child safe standards. Our Staff Code of Conduct is updated annually to reflect changes to the law.

The Parent Code of Conduct has also been updated to reflect changes in law. The school's updated Acceptable Use of Digital Technology and Cyber Safety Agreement was introduced at the commencement of 2019. All students and parents were required to sign this agreement.

Future Directions

Saint Patrick's school is thriving in difficult conditions. The ongoing demands of a pandemic continue to restrict much of what we identify as community building in our school. The learning and teaching programs have continued to be altered to meet the changing needs of remote, on-site-remote learning and versatility is the key as we adapt accordingly. We look forward to a time when we can re-gather as a community to socialise and celebrate all that our great school has to offer.