



St Philomena School



Parent and Student School Handbook



St Philomena School bids you welcome!

St Philomena's is an independent Catholic school run by the Fathers of the Society of St Pius X. Our school is unique as a primary school in that from the earliest age we seek to give a classical education to our children. Of all educational methods, the classical curriculum seems to be the most tried and true. It includes learning Latin, classical studies in Ancient Greek and Roman history, and the study of Logic. Only literary classics are studied in class, and French is also taught in the upper grades. Our academic results are reflected by the myschool website, rating St Philomena School the best in the local area, and one of the best schools in Queensland.

Of at least equal importance to us is the study of the Catholic Faith, including studies of the traditional catechism, Sacred Scriptures and Church history, the lives of the saints, prayer and the liturgy. The motto of the school being *Sine Deo Nihil* (nothing without God), both study and practice of Catholicism is the focal point of the school. The school day begins and ends with prayers; the children attend a weekly school Mass; they conclude each week in the school chapel with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

We see the type of education we wish to impart upon our children as the best means to prepare them for life after St Philomena's. Excellence in every endeavour undertaken is encouraged, and primary children formed at our school may be confident that their character and academic training will prepare them to meet future challenges.

One of the great features of St Philomena School is the support afforded by the broader school community. We have a great partnership with our parents, and mutually support one another in the formation of their children. A very tangible sign of this partnership is the fact that the Parents and Friends Association annually raises some \$50,000!

This handbook will give you some idea of life at St Philomena's, but you are more than welcome to visit the School to see it in action and to ask any questions you may have.

Fr Karl Pepping
Principal

Our Motto

Sine Deo Nihil – Without God there is Nothing

Our Mission

To provide excellence in Catholic and classical education, for the love of God and learning.

Our Philosophy

At St Philomena School, we value education for education's sake, and not merely as a means to something else. A true education includes so much more than mere knowledge and includes the formation of a child's character.

That is why we have high standards in behaviour, manners and courtesy. In many ways, our education philosophy might be termed "old school", yet at the same time modern methods and technologies are employed to the degree that they are useful. Nevertheless, St Philomena's is not about technologies and innovative methods; it is about the children. It is about the development of their individual personalities in such a way as to make full use of the various gifts God has given them, and to share these talents later for the betterment of society.

School Vision – Sine Deo Nihil

The school motto, *Sine Deo Nihil*, sums up all that we are striving to achieve, i.e. to form Catholics who, when they leave school, will know their Faith, practise their Faith and, most importantly, have been helped to acquire a love of God and a deep desire to serve Him.

We aim to produce young men and women who will leave this school balanced and well adjusted, ready to go out and make the best contribution to society that they are able.

The most important part of education is the formation of character. Someone who has character lives by principles. They are responsible. They fulfil their duty with the proper diligence. They have a good work ethic. They have the courage to refuse to go along with what they know to be wrong while standing up for what they know is right. They choose the good; they reject the bad.

This school strives to be an environment in which your children can be nurtured and directed to grow into mature and responsible adults, strong in the Catholic Faith. The goal is not to form men and women without any ambition to use their talents to further good, but who will rather work to build up the reign of Our Lord around them.

Living the Catholic Faith properly implies striving for excellence. Ideally we use our God-given talents to give back to Him the best of which we are capable. This is the expectation of students at St Philomena School.

St Philomena's classical education curriculum plays a very important role in the formation of character of our students. Through the study of Latin, Logic, Rhetoric, Literature and History, students need to practise self discipline and diligence to learn and master these subjects. They also develop their memory and their abilities to analyse and express themselves.

A Classical Education

While we live in a frenetic world with a preoccupation for all things new, St Philomena School consciously chooses to educate according to the tried and true methods of the past 2,500 years.

A classical education is one that:

- treats the classical languages as organising principles of education.
- relies on a relatively small number of accepted literary masterworks to teach excellence in speaking, writing and acting.
- educates the whole person: spirit, emotion and will, as well as mind.
- recognises that memory, analysis and expression are important facets of learning at all levels, and so considers grammar, logic and rhetoric (the classical *Trivium*) as the foundation for a true education.
- is based on the principle *multum, non multa* (much, not many—quality rather than quantity). Attention is focused on the rudiments of knowledge, while peripheral areas of modern education are either homogeneously incorporated into the curriculum, or ignored altogether.
- where possible, teaches subjects not as discrete disciplines, but in relation to each other and in the context of broader intellectual concerns.
- encourages lateral thinking; Maths and Sciences are integrated with the humanities through biography, history and ethics.
- is essentially conservative in that it seeks to pass on the wisdom of the greats that have gone before us, rather than recklessly trusting the educational fads of the day.

St Philomena's remains a unique school in all Queensland for offering the classical approach.

School location and history

St Philomena School was established in response to the concerns of Catholic families about the available education choices for their children. Parents approached the Society of St Pius X (SSPX) to ask for assistance in developing a truly Catholic school that would assist them to provide proper spiritual and academic foundations for their children.

In early 1992 under the auspices of the SSPX and with the assistance of then District Superior, Father Francois Laisney, a small group of parents and friends began the monumental task of establishing a Catholic School in Brisbane. Through the great generosity of Dr Felice and Mrs Marie Zaccari, eleven rural acres at 61 Koplick Rd, Park Ridge, was purchased in February 1993.



St Joseph's Building when it first arrived on site

Over the next six years parents and friends undertook a range of difficult tasks including negotiations with Council, curriculum development, purchase, movement and refurbishment of buildings, fundraising, and meeting State and Commonwealth government requirements for funding and approvals. Under the intercession and guidance of St Philomena all obstacles were finally overcome and St Philomena School opened on Tuesday 2 February 1999. In its history, St Philomena School has been guided and developed by five principals:

Founding Principal

Father Gerard Hogan

1999 - 2001

Father Hogan handled the complex negotiations with various levels of government, other authorities and contractors to bring the school to fruition.

Father Jules Belisle

2002 - 2006

Father Belisle introduced the study of French, presided over the legendary French Dinners, gained a number of valuable grants for the school and was responsible for the purchase of the current Chapel and other buildings.

Father Benoit Wailliez

2007 - 2008

Father Wailliez presided over the restoration of the Chapel, was the driving force behind the Dinner Auction fundraisers, gained a number of grants and consolidated relationships with various government representatives and agencies.

Father Brendan Arthur

2008 - 2011

Father Arthur implemented the classical curriculum in the school, developed the School Master Plan, and began and completed the majority of the application for secondary education at St Philomena School.

Father Karl Pepping

2011 – Present

Fr Pepping submitted the application for secondary education, developed in large part by Fr Arthur, which was approved in 2011. Starting in 2012 with Years 8 and 9, the Secondary School is now complete, providing education for every year level from Year 7 to 12. Fr Pepping has also had the privilege of overseeing the implementation of St Philomena School's master plan. The primary school buildings were completed in 2014 and construction of the first secondary school building, purpose built science and art classrooms, will begin this year, 2015.



St Philomena

On May 25 1802 excavators in the ancient catacomb of St Priscilla in Rome came upon a well-preserved shelf tomb sealed with terracotta slabs in the manner usually reserved for nobility or great martyrs. The coffin inside revealed the remains of a girl of about twelve or thirteen years of age.

In 1805 a Neapolitan priest, Don Francesco di Lucia, travelling to Rome with his newly-appointed bishop, requested, and after a brief delay, received the relics of this martyr "Philomena" to enshrine in his village church at Mugnano near Naples.

Immediately upon the official donation of St Philomena's sacred remains signal favours began to be granted through her intercession and unusual events began to occur. The favours, graces and even miracles started to increase, even before her enshrinement in Mugnano and they steadily grew in number thereafter such that this virgin martyr soon earned the title, "**Philomena, Powerful with God**". In 1837, only thirty-five years after her exhumation, Pope Gregory XVI elevated this "wonder-worker of the nineteenth century" to sainthood.

Our school was named after St Philomena thanks to her intercession in establishing it in 1999, and St Philomena School continues to experience that no matter is too trivial or too unimportant to concern our saint. We are honoured to enjoy her patronage.

Latin

*Latin's a dead language,
As dead as dead could be.
It killed off all the Roman's,
And now it's killing me.*

As the above ditty often found in old Latin textbooks indicates, Latin is a dead tongue; nowhere in the world is Latin spoken as a first language. One might inquire as to the purpose of studying such a seemingly purposeless subject. Would it not be better to study Chinese, or Japanese or Indonesian?

While these languages certainly have their relevance for Australian children in the twenty-first century, and is of use in understanding our neighbours, Latin helps Australian children to understand who *they* are. Western civilisation has a Latin foundation: Latin in language and Latin in its political, legal and cultural institutions. So many great works of prose, poetry, and music have been written in Latin, and exposure to them in the original language ennobles the mind through the noble sentiments such art communicates.

In a Catholic School, where the sacred liturgy is offered in Latin, studying this language has an immediate importance in the life of the school. The children learn, moreover, to sing the ancient Gregorian Chants at Missa Cantatas (Sung Masses) and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Even were one never to make use of Latin after school, this particular discipline gives many other benefits. The student of Latin, for instance, can easily go on to learn Italian, French or Spanish; even non-Romance languages can more easily be picked up, thanks to a deeper grammatical understanding that the study of Latin ensures.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of Latin, however, is that it trains the mind to think analytically and to pay attention to detail. Every sentence must be as carefully constructed as a masterpiece of joinery; every part must fit perfectly, if the end result is to be a thing of beauty. There are so many word endings in Latin, so many possibilities to make errors, that no progress can be made without a great deal of concentration and sense of pride in one's work. The memory is another beneficiary of Latin study, since not only vocabulary, but long lists of declensions and conjugations must be learned by rote.

Latin as a school subject has been neglected on account of its apparent uselessness. We maintain that if it improves our cultural literacy and helps equip the mind with the skills outlined above, Latin is a subject that should at least take equal place among the other subjects.

Logic

Logic is divided into two areas: formal logic and material logic. A brief summary of each is given below.

Formal Logic. Formal Logic is the art of right reasoning and teaches the student to analyse the term through the process of simple apprehension, the proposition through judgement and the syllogism through deductive inference. The student learns to formulate simple categorical syllogisms and detect fallacies in the same. This training to formulate a logical argument develops the analytical skills of the mind and the ability to both argue a point based on sound logical principals and to avoid sophisms. The student will then progress to formulating more complex syllogisms.

Material Logic. The student hereby shifts his or her attention from dialectics to metaphysical epistemology. This includes a study of the transcendentals: the one, the true, the good and the beautiful. If formal logic is concerned more with the *validity* of an argument, material logic is concerned more with the *truth* of an argument. The two studies united enable the student to formulate a *sound* argument.

CONTACT DETAILS

Principal: Father Karl Pepping

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E-mail: admin@stphilomena.qld.edu.au

Website: www.stphilomena.qld.edu.au

School Hours: 8:00am – 2.45pm

Office Hours: 8:00am – 3:15pm

Class Times

PRIMARY SCHOOL		SECONDARY SCHOOL	
8:10am	First Bell	8:10am	First Bell
8:15am	Chapel/Prayers	8:15am-8:25am	Pastoral Care Class
8:20am-10:30am	Classes	8:25am-9:10am	Period 1 Class
10:30am-11:00am	Morning Tea Break	9:10am-9:55am	Period 2 Class
11:00am-12:30pm	Classes	9:55am-10:10am	Morning Tea Break
12:00pm	(Bell) Angelus	10:10am-10:55am	Period 3 Class
12:30am-1:15pm	Lunch Break	10:55am-11:40am	Period 4 Class
1:15pm-2:45pm	Classes	11:40am-12:20pm	Lunch Break
		12:20pm-1:05pm	Period 5 Class
		1:05pm-1:50pm	Period 6 Class
		1:50pm-2:00pm	Afternoon Tea Break
		2:00pm-2:45pm	Period 7 Class
8:20am Monday	Whole School Assembly	8:20am Monday	Whole School Assembly
8:20am Tuesday	Primary School Mass	8:20am Wednesday	Secondary School Mass
12:00pm-12:30pm Friday	Benediction		

Attendance

Full time attendance at school is compulsory. If a student is going to be absent parents are required to call or email the school on or before the day of the absence and advise of the reason and duration of the absence.

Bus

The school currently uses the services of Bus About Transport. Many families use this service which is charged per student but on a reducing fee scale. The bus currently travels between Oxley and the school via Forest Lake, Forestdale and Hillcrest.

Please refer to the school bus policy for conditions, rules and fees.

Excursions

From time to time excursions (and incursions) will be arranged to benefit the students and enhance their learning experiences. Often there will be a small cost associated with the excursion (or incursion). These costs will be advised in the covering letter attached to the permission slip. Payment is to be returned to the school, accompanied by the permission slip, by the requested date.

First Aid

If a student is ill during a school day their teacher will send them to the school office to be attended to and monitored. Parents may be contacted to collect their children. Please ensure that parents or guardians contact details are kept up-to-date and that the school is able to contact at least one parent or emergency contact at any time.

Please note that the school does not supply paracetamol or other pain medication. Only medication that is on a student's written permission or medication plan can be administered.

Please do not send sick children to school. Keeping sick children at home prevents the spread of any communicable or infectious illnesses to other children, teachers and to other families in the school community.

If you are asked to collect your child due to illness or injury, please do so as a matter of urgency.

Fees

St Philomena School is an independent school. The school receives some funding from the State and Commonwealth governments. All other funding comes from parents by way of fees.

Fees are invoiced at the beginning of each term. Each quarterly fee invoice will include the term fees, the quarterly grounds fees and any other costs associated with the term.

The school has a registered building fund. In term one a voluntary Building Fund Levy will be included on all invoices. Depending on the family's circumstances this amount may be tax deductible. The Term 1 invoice must be paid in full by 30th June of that year for a receipt for the building levy to be issued.

A Book Levy of \$50 per term will be charged for all primary students. This levy will cover the cost of all the stationery items and other requisites required by the students for the year. Additional costs will be covered by the school. The school continues its policy of arranging the supply of all stationery and requisites to ensure consistency within each class group. If a student loses or damages any of the non-consumable items issued to them such as calculators, books (eg missals) etc, replacements will be charged at cost. The Book Levy will be reassessed annually.

Families of secondary students will be responsible for the purchase of most text books and all stationery required for each subject. Some student texts will be purchase by the school as a class set. The cost of these is covered by the government text book allowance scheme, which is paid directly to the school on behalf of families with secondary students.

Term Invoices are payable within one month of issue unless a payment plan has been approved by the principal.

Late arrival

Students who arrive after the first bell at 8:10am must go to the school office accompanied by their parent or guardian. The parent/guardian is to sign the Late Register and the student will be given a Late Note to take to their teacher.

Leaving the school grounds.

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds without notification from a parent. A parent or guardian must sign the Register at the office before the student leaves.

Library

The school library is staffed by a librarian and a parent volunteer and opens on Fridays. Students visit the library on Fridays in their class groups for borrowing and return of books.

Lost Property

Articles of lost property that have been found on the school grounds are kept at the school office. PLEASE ensure that all items of uniform and other student property are labelled clearly with the student's name.

Any items not retrieved from the lost property at the end of term may go to the second hand sales at the uniform shop.

Medication

All prescribed medication that students require during the day must be taken to the school office on arrival at school in the morning. Written permission or relevant form from the office must accompany the medication. The medication will be administered by the administration staff. Students should not carry their own medication with them – except for asthma inhalers or epipens where necessary.

Asthma and other life endangering illnesses. A **doctor's health care plan** MUST be lodged at the school office for any student with asthma or other life endangering illnesses, such as severe allergies, requiring urgent medication.

Mobile phones and electronic devices

Some students need to bring a mobile phone to school for their safety or to contact parents out of school hours. Mobile phones are not permitted for use during school hours. Students are required to hand their telephones in at the school office for safekeeping upon arrival and collect them after school.

Ipods, MP3 players and other electronic devices are not to be brought to school.

Parents and Friends Association

Associated with the school is the St Philomena P&F Association. This group of parents and others meet and arrange events to raise funds for the school.

School Calendar

The school arranges the publication of a school calendar at the beginning of each school year. This calendar will be issued to each school family.

The information contained in the calendar is very comprehensive and includes term dates, religious holidays etc. Please retain this calendar for the full year

Sun Sense Policy – No Hat No Play

Uniforms

All students are required to wear the full and correct school uniform during the school day, as well as to and from school.

The P&F Association operates the school's uniform shop, where all items of uniform can be ordered and purchased. The uniform shop is operated on a voluntary basis and is open Mondays & Thursdays from 8:00am to 10:00am. Contact outside these hours may be made via the Uniform Shop's email: uniforms@stphilomena.qld.edu.au

Child Protection

Protection from All Forms of Harm

Every student is entitled to protection from all forms of harm.

St Philomena School recognises that protecting students from harm and the risk of harm is fundamental to maximising their personal and academic potential. For this reason the welfare and best interests of the children within our School will always be a primary consideration.

We expect our students to show respect to our staff, other students and volunteers and to comply with safe practices and we expect all employees to ensure that their behaviour towards, and relationships with, students reflect proper standards of care for students, and are not unlawful. The School will respond diligently to a report of suspected or actual harm, or risk of harm to a student.

What does the School mean by harm?

Recent Queensland legislation defines harm as:

Any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
- Physical neglect and/or inadequate supervision;
- Sexual abuse or exploitation;
- Domestic or family violence.

FOR STUDENTS

Remember – the most important thing is that you feel safe and free from harm. You must tell someone you are being harmed or afraid that you will be harmed.

Who should I tell if I am feeling unsafe at school or home?

Any forms of harm are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If a child is experiencing harm or if they believe they are likely to experience any form of harm (this includes any behaviour by a staff member, which is inappropriate) they should report the matter to either:

- A trusted classroom teacher
- The principal
- A priest at the school
- Any trusted member of staff

What will happen if I report what is happening to a staff member?

If the concern is worrying you but not causing immediate harm, then the member of staff will discuss with you ways to solve your problem. If the concern is serious and the member of staff believes that you are being harmed or in danger of being harmed, he or she will report it to the Principal.

What if I don't want it reported to the Principal?

The staff member will try to keep your concerns confidential as much as possible. However, if staff is aware or reasonably suspects that harm has been caused by anyone to a student of the school then the law says the matter must be reported to the Principal and then it may have to be reported to the police. If the staff member has to report what you have told them to someone else he or she will explain to you exactly what will happen next.

If you know or suspect that another student is being harmed or is likely to be harmed, then you should report your suspicions to one of the persons listed above.

How does the School protect students from harm?

The School has a comprehensive Child Protection Policy, which covers the actions to be taken if a member of staff or a parent of the School becomes aware or reasonably suspects that harm has been done to a student of the School by other staff, people outside the School or by other students.

What should a parent do if you become aware or reasonably suspect that harm has been caused to a student of the School by a member of staff, someone outside of the School or by other students?

You should report your concerns to the Principal or to any other member of School staff.

What will happen next?

If you report your concerns to a member of staff other than the Principal, the member of staff will report it to the Principal immediately, or if the subject of the complaint is the Principal then the member of staff will report to a Director

What will the Principal or the Director do?

If the Principal or Director receives a report of harm or suspected harm to a student of the School and he/she becomes aware of the harm having been caused or reasonably suspects the harm to have been caused then it will be reported to police immediately if the harm relates to sexual abuse; or to the Department of Communities if appropriate; or it may be dealt with internally if the matter does not require mandatory reporting to an outside body.

What happens about confidentiality?

Your report will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. It is the School's policy that confidentiality between the School and parents will be respected as much as possible and any concerns raised by parents will not rebound adversely on their children.

Each person who has access to information regarding suspected or disclosed harm has an obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality. However, the School is unable to promise absolute confidentiality since the steps of the Policy will require disclosing, internally and externally, certain details involved in responding to the report. State authorities can compel people to give evidence about actions under the Policy and to produce documents. You would be fully informed if information you provided was to be passed on to a third party.

Any action, which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of an allegation not requiring police intervention, would be handled confidentially within the School.

How will the School help my child?

The Principal will ensure that the following things are done to reduce the change of harm occurring:

- Ensure that each staff member understands and fulfils their obligations under this Policy and the Policy for reporting abuse.
- Ensure that there is an acceptable reference for each staff member engaged since the commencement of this protocol, from his or her previous employer.
- Ensure that each staff member and volunteer (who is not a parent) who has contact with children has a current positive suitability notice issued by the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

If the Principal receives a report of harm to your child, he/she will support the child by:

- responding rapidly and diligently to the report;
- reassuring the student;
- protecting the child's confidentiality as much as possible;
- offering continuous support; and
- providing counselling if requested.