Parent Handbook
2012

Built on Faith, Knowledge, Respect

ROSARY PARK
CATHOLIC SCHOOL BRANXTON

ABC
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Rosary Park Catholic Primary School, Branxton. It is hoped that you and your family find your association with our school both happy and rewarding. We hope that this handbook serves as an introduction into school routine and daily activities of our school.

There will be some aspects of school life not covered as each year may vary. If the information you require is not in the booklet, please ring the school on 4938 1541 or call into the school.

We have a firm commitment to creating and fostering a caring, Christian community where parents, teachers and students work together in mutual support and respect.

We provide quality education and a caring environment, which is steeped in our Catholic values and tradition.
Rosary Park Catholic School Branxton

Mission Statement

Rosary Park Catholic School Branxton is a caring, faith community aspiring to live, love, learn and serve in the Light of Christ.

Vision Statement

At Rosary Park Catholic School Branxton we aspire to:

- Promote an environment that values justice and lives its daily life by the Gospel

- Provide a holistic education which empowers children to become lifelong learners and reach their full potential

- Create a collaborative relationship between parents, school staff, parish and the broader community which enhances the learning environment

- Encourage and promote a happy inclusive environment that acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual.
HISTORY:
In response to the needs of the Catholic community of Branxton, Greta and the surrounding districts, the first Catholic School was established in 1886 by Sisters of Mercy, Singleton Congregation.

Historical records of the early days of the teaching Sisters of Mercy at Branxton indicate that they worked in difficult circumstances. We can recall with gratitude the faith and dedication of the pioneer priests, sisters, teachers and parents of the Catholic community who laboured tirelessly to establish the Faith and Christian traditions we express and value today.

On Wednesday 21 September, both these schools closed their doors for the last time. Rosary Park Catholic School (K to 6) began educating the children from Branxton Parish on Monday 10 October, 2011.

A new school was built on the St Brigid’s site and it was decided that the Infants would be accommodated at St Mary’s Greta. Until mid 2011 St Brigid’s was considered the Primary School (Years 3 to 6) and St Mary’s Greta the infants (Kinder to Year 2).

Catholic Education is an integral part of the Church's mission and is grounded in the Scriptures, in the teachings and great traditions of faith and prayer. Rosary Park is committed to creating an environment which is characterised by acceptance, security, justice and happiness.

We are committed to the pursuit of excellence in all areas and the development of an Australian spirituality, which reflects our Catholic story and multicultural heritage.

EDUCATION:
As Religious Educators at Rosary Park, our role is to provide the teaching and learning experiences so that the children may grow in their faith, in their personal relationship with God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as they learn more about the person of Jesus, His life, His ministry and His message. As the children move through Primary School their capacity to understand concepts and the teachings of Jesus grows and develops. The children will be led to express their love of God in their own way; celebrating the joy of belonging to the family of the Church.

English: including talking and listening, reading and writing. Students are encouraged to develop their spoken and written English skills for a range of purposes.

Mathematics: students study patterns and relationships. Children analyse, count and sort numbers and solve problems in the areas of space, measurement and number.
Science & Technology: helps students understand their environment, both man-made and natural, by investigating, designing, making and using technology.

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education: helps students develop self-esteem, social responsibility, personal fitness, fundamental motor skills and the ability to make informed decisions about health and lifestyle issues.

Human Society and its Environment: encourages students to study relationships between people, cultures and languages, with a special focus on civics and citizenship.

Creative Arts: students participate in the art forms of dance, drama, music and visual arts through creating and making their own works.

We endeavour to provide an education for our students which develops their talents and capacities to their full potential. Students are encouraged to achieve high standards of learning and to develop self-confidence and high self-esteem. At Rosary Park we endeavour to educate your child in 5 key areas – spiritually, pastorally, academically, socially and physically. Each classroom teacher adopts a personal approach in fulfilling these areas of education.

We believe that Rosary Park is the building block for further education and, therefore, we need to provide a respect for learning and positive attitudes for a life-long education. We need to assist our students to become transforming influences in society and we believe that young Australians should be offered the highest possible quality education.

Schools are generally acknowledged as a partnership between parents, students, teachers, parish and the wider community.

Parents can show their commitment to the partnership by participating in their schools in many ways, none more vital than supporting their children in their learning, which occurs in and through the home.

Rosary Park plays a supportive role in the parish-based sacramental program. Students commencing at Rosary Park are invited to become part of this program. This program allows for parents to take an active part in the preparation of their children for the sacraments of the Eucharist and Confirmation.

Information regarding Reconciliation/Confirmation/Eucharist is distributed at the Parish Mass Centers and in school newsletters.
PASTORAL CARE

PASTORAL CARE POLICY
Pastoral care is the total care of students and all others in our school community. The responsibility of care is entrusted to all members of the school community. The family is recognised as the true context of the educational focus. Quality relationships and mutual care are central to effective pastoral care and should enable all to grow and to be affirmed in their dignity and worth as persons.

Through the Pastoral Care Policy we hope to:
- Ensure that Pastoral Care is integral and permeates the total environment and culture of the school;
- Create a caring network between families, school and the wider community in which we live;
- Develop skills in building personal relationships based on Gospel values of love, compassion, tolerance, acceptance, forgiveness, reconciliation, respect and justice;
- Develop structures, policies and practices which support the individual student and all members of the school community;
- Be aware of pressures and concerns affecting students, teachers and families within the school community;
- Create a culture that has no tolerance to bullying within the learning environment.

Discipline is part of our Pastoral Care Policy. The procedures are fair and gives each child the opportunity to discipline him/herself and also teaches him/her to be responsible for his/her behaviour. Parents will be informed if their child/children is/are continually being spoken to about negative behaviour.

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS AT ROSARY PARK
Liturgical Celebrations are an integral part of the curriculum at Rosary Park. We have special times when we pray together as a community. Students take an active part in all liturgies and parents are invited to attend. Music, mime, liturgical dance and processions are features of our liturgies. Our liturgies and masses are an important part of school life. You and your relatives/families are invited to join us for these celebrations.

Affirmation and self-esteem builders are integral to Rosary Park. These take the form of Merit Certificates awarded each week at Friday's assembly. Principal's Awards awarded after three Merit Certificates are earned. An Award of Excellence badge is awarded once three Principal's Awards are earned. Further awards:
- School mug after six Principal's Awards.
- School pen after nine Principal’s Awards.
- An Aussie of the Week is given to a child selected by the teachers who displays the school's values:

Birthdays are celebrated at morning assemblies.

Children’s achievements in all fields – sporting/academic, are recognised in assemblies and in the fortnightly newsletter. Please feel free to contact the school if your child/children has achieved in activities outside school.

Missions: we as a Catholic school, are involved in raising money for the “Catholic Missions”. This money is used to buy clothing, food and provide educational needs. The children are asked to bring 20c each Friday (sports day) and this money goes to the Missions. We also hold a Mission day once per year. At Christmas time we ask each family to purchase a gift for children in our community who are less fortunate. These are distributed by the St Vincent de Paul Society and through our Mini Vinnies School group.
SPORT

At Rosary Park the children take part in many different sports. Sports day is on Friday of each week. Children wear their sports uniform on this day.

At a school level various sports are offered through the year. The children also have the opportunity to participate in the cross country, athletic and swimming carnivals at school level. Development officers from the Knights, Netball, the A.F.L. and The Soccer Federation visit the school each year and conduct clinics with the children.

Following our athletics, swimming and cross country carnivals, the school teams then participate in the regional carnivals. Children from each age group have the opportunity to be part of the school team for these events. From the regional carnivals the team to represent the Maitland Diocese is chosen. If selected, children represent the Diocese at athletics, swimming, cross-country, touch, AFL, winter and summer sports, which may lead to selection at Polding or State level.

At an inter-school level the children are offered the chance to participate in netball, rugby league and soccer. For the purpose of competition at carnival days and for other school activities, children are placed in one of the following House Teams:
Red McAuley
Gold Marcellin
Green Woods

All the children from one family are placed in the same sporting team and, as far as practicable, will remain in this team for the whole of their schooling at Rosary Park.
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

BOOK CLUB
All children have the opportunity each month to purchase books from Scholastic Book Club. All children are encouraged to purchase books from this club as the interest level suits individual reading ability. Prices are very reasonable and the school benefits from sales. Order forms are sent home at regular intervals.

COMPUTERS
A new Technology room will be set up at Rosary Park. It will have a data projector, lap top and smartboard. These are all resources that will be used to develop the children’s knowledge and skills. Smartboards are installed in each classroom. One standalone computer will be set up in each classroom. Each child will be required to sign a Cybersafety & Internet Usage Agreement.

EXCURSIONS
These form an integral part of the children's education. Ample notice is given to parents in writing regarding such excursions. Parents are asked to make every effort to see that their children attend an excursion. Special assistance is available for those who are unable to pay.

HOMEWORK
Homework is usually set on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights. At the beginning of each year teachers will provide an outline of class procedures in the form of a Homework policy. Remember, parents need to support their child's home study, not do it for them. We have a school Intranet that allows children to complete some homework at home on the computer. An accompanying letter shows you how you can access the site. The children will be taught at school. Web address for parents: http://branxton.catholic.edu.au

LIBRARY
Rosary Park has a teacher Librarian and Librarian Assistant. We have a well equipped school library for the use of all children. Children are permitted to borrow books but require a library bag to borrow. The library is used at times by class teachers. Lost books must be paid for. It would be appreciated if a thorough search could be made before a book is declared lost. A fine may be imposed on children who continuously have books overdue.

STAFF INSERVICE DAYS
Three staff in-service, pupil-free days, are held each year. Students do not attend school on these days. The days are used by staff for the purpose of improving the school and planning curriculum. Usually at least two weeks’ notice is given to parents prior to such days. The last two days of the school year are used by the staff as part of their working award. The appointed Assistant Principal, Religious Education Co-ordinator and Primary Co-ordinator are also entitled to extra release every week.
SCHOOL TUITION FEES
School Tuition Fees are set by Bishop William in consultation with the Catholic Education Office. You will be notified of the fees scales as soon as they become available. Fees can be paid by term or weekly. First child tuition fee is $323.00 each term for three terms.

A family discount structure across both primary and secondary sectors allows for fourth and subsequent children attending diocesan Catholic systematic schools to be educated freely. Accounts are sent home early each term. Parents who find the paying of fees a burden are asked to contact the Principal. Inability to pay fees should not be a reason for depriving your child of a Catholic Education. You may wish to pay your fees by direct debit or BPay. Forms for direct debit are available from the office.

Families ignoring constant requests for interviews about fees will not be given a fee clearance for their child to proceed to High School or possible enrolment for any future children in Kinder.

Information regarding fees will be forwarded to the CSO if requests for interviews are constantly ignored.

RESOURCE FEES
This is an additional fee which enables us to provide text books, photocopying, art and craft materials, worksheets, activity books and computer paper. It will be $160.00 per year for each child at Rosary Park.

Forty dollars goes directly into IT maintenance, as the school has to constantly upgrade computers and associated costs.

The following items are not covered by the scheme and are compulsory:

Library Bag, pens, pencils, rulers, rubbers and other basic consumables.

ALL FEES ARE REVIEWED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS AND ANY FEE ADJUSTMENT WILL BE NOTIFIED TO PARENTS.

BUILDING LEVY
This is an additional $546.00 per family per year (collected at the oldest child’s school) included on the school fee invoice. This amount is collected by the school and deposited into a central trust account at the CSO.

This money is to be used by the Office to fund capital works for schools within our Diocese.

It is a new levy introduced in 2004 and will appear as part of the bill on your eldest child’s account at the beginning of the year.
INJURY TO STUDENT AND ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

INFORMATION SHEETS
At the beginning of the year, you will be asked to complete a general information sheet. It is important that these be completed and returned promptly so that all information is readily obtainable should there be an emergency situation. These are available to all staff members. All information gathered on each child can only be used to assist with their education or as part of the school’s duty of care for each of the children.

SICK BAY
Rosary Park has the facilities to cater for the treatment of minor injuries. We do ask if you are doubtful in any way regarding the fitness of your child for school on a particular day that you make arrangements for his/her care at home.

Should your child become ill while at school and it is considered advisable that he/she be sent home, this will be done. We will contact you by phone before taking such a step. In such cases we will require the services of a member of the family. It is crucial that the school have the name and phone number of and Emergency Contact Person who is accessible in cases of emergency through the Information Sheets.

In the case of serious accident it is important to have parent's permission to call an ambulance to attend to the child at school, take the child to the nearest hospital or to a doctor you recommend. In all cases parents will be contacted immediately through the information on the Information Sheets.

MEDICATION
Should students require medication while at school a medication note, (copy available from the secretary’s office), regarding type of medication and instructions is required.

No medication will be given without the appropriately signed medical forms.

Children using Ventolin inhalers or the like should bring them to school each day and make the same known to class teacher.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN/LOCKDOWN
A detailed plan has been formulated in the event of an emergency requiring the total school population to be moved to a "safe area" or for the classes to go into “Lockdown”. The plan concerns the safety of all and as a result children must not deviate from the plan. Speed and cooperation are the two essential elements of the plan. Plans are displayed in each classroom and fire drills will be practiced regularly.
SCHOOL HOURS AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Classes commence 9.00am with a morning assembly at 8.55am.
Morning Recess commences at 11.20 am - 12.10 pm
Lunch commences at 1.30 pm- 2.00 pm
Classes cease at 3.05pm with the children dismissed at 3.10pm.

Parents are reminded that the playground is unsupervised before 8.30 am. All children arriving for school before this time are to sit on area outside the hall until 8.30 am when morning duty begins. We would also like to stress the importance of children arriving for school on time. No student will be permitted to leave the school grounds for any purpose without the written consent of parents. Children absent through illness must bring a written note to the class teacher on their return to school. Children who are continuously late for school should have a written note. If parents wish their child/children to leave the school early they are to sign the leave book in the secretary’s office. These children need to be out of the school by 3.00pm.

If you are picking your children up early of an afternoon, please come to the office where you can sign them out and they will be paged and they will come to the office to meet you.

TRANSPORT
Most children travel to and from school by bus. Parents are asked to regularly reinforce correct behaviour and good conduct on buses. All children in the infants school and children who live outside the 1.6 kilometer radial distance or 2.3 kilometer or more by the direct practicable walking route are eligible for free transport. Parents who have to transport their children more than 1.6 kilometers to the nearest bus stop are also eligible for a car subsidy. Application forms are available from the school office. If a child loses his/her bus pass, parents must report such to the bus company who will supply a new pass at a cost. The major bus lines associated with the school and their contact numbers are:

Hunter Valley/Blue Ribbon
Phone: (02) 4935 7200

McLeod’s
Phone: (02) 4938 1428

Children who ride their bikes or scooters to school must always wear a helmet and ride according to the road rules.
PHOTOS
We have a number of school events/activities during the course of the year and photos are usually taken. These can be published at a later date in various publications. Some people do not like having their children’s photos published. You indicate what you want to do on the information sheet filled in by you at the beginning of the school year.

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER
A school newsletter is published each fortnight and forwarded to you by your eldest child in the school. This should reach you on a Tuesday. It is important to ask your child for this newsletter. All school activities and P & F news are published in this newsletter. It is our way of keeping you informed of the various events taking place in the school. The school newsletter will also be published on the School’s Portal. I also post announcements and dates on our school portal. This can be accessed from home.

MONEY AND NOTES
All monies your child brings to school that have to be sent to the office must be in an envelope, with your child's name, class and reason for payment clearly marked on the front. Change is not kept at school so it is important that the correct money be sent in.

SCHOOL BANKING (CDF)
Our Diocesan School Development Fund offers our children the opportunity to save each week with their SPF Savers Club, which is a special school Savings Scheme operated by the Fund. The mechanics of the Savers Club are simple but it offers our students the opportunity to learn basic money management through an organised savings scheme operated conveniently as part of our school system.

To open an account for your son or daughter, simply complete and return an application form which is available from the school.

PARENT - TEACHER NIGHTS
At the commencement of each year Parent & Teacher meetings will be held. This gives you the parents the opportunity to meet the class teacher. It is also an information night as to the curriculum and what is expected of the children.
PARENT PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT

SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT
Parents and the community are very welcome to become involved in the life of the school in many ways, including:
* Reading support for children identified through the Special Needs Program
* Canteen helpers
* Sport programs
* A supervisory role on excursions and fun days
* Attendance on school maintenance days

Each volunteer needs to complete a child protection form before working with the children.

PARENT AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION
We encourage all parents to take an active part in the meetings and with the running of various activities and fund raising functions. The P & F meetings are held monthly. The funding provided by this hard working group is poured back into improving the learning environment and teaching resources for our children.
Over the past three years the P & F have been busy raising funds for air conditioning at the new school, Rosary Park.

The association’s aims are:
* To promote the interest of Catholic Education in general, and our schools in particular.
* To support the work done within the school.
* To assist the schools through fundraising activities, to purchase materials and equipment.
* To help with maintenance and upgrading of the buildings.
* To provide a means of meeting socially for all those associated with the school.

SCHOOL CANTEEN
The School runs a Healthy Canteen and is run by volunteer parents on a roster basis.
A priced menu will be sent home at the beginning of each term.
To order lunch on Monday, please print clearly your child’s order on a paper bag:
* Child’s name and class * Item required * Cost (please enclose correct money)

All lunch orders are placed in a basket at the canteen. Ice-blocks and drinks are available during lunch time.

Special lunch deal days are held at various times during the year. Grandparents, aunties, uncles and friends are welcome to join the volunteer list to help on the canteen. All volunteers are required to complete a declaration form prior to commencing.
SCHOOL UNIFORM

CLOTHING
LOST PROPERTY
Please clearly write your child’s name on all articles of clothing. After checking carefully, students should report lost property to the class teacher. All unclaimed items of clothing are destroyed at the end of each year.

General
· The colour scheme will be navy/blue/white.
· A uniform shop is available – opening on Monday mornings from 8.15am to 9.30/10am.
· All school shoes will remain black polish able.
· All sports shoes will remain predominantly white.
· All socks will be white (unisex).
· ‘Navy bucket hat with emblem screen printed—available at uniform shop.
· Jumper – v-neck navy blue pull-over (same as we have now) with embroidered emblem. Will be available at the uniform shop.

Summer
· Existing school girls’ summer uniform with navy tab – available at through Jess Dougherty (49381032) or Ingrid Waeger (49387101).
· Boys’ shirts will be school blue with an iron-on emblem, while the girls will wear a school badge – both the iron-on/badge will be available through the uniform shop. Navy blue elastic shorts (no cargo pants/designer shorts) with short sleeved school blue shirt. No designer shorts or cargo style.

Winter
· Girls. The winter tunic will be navy check or navy blue tailored pants (no dance pants, no leg ins) with long sleeved white shirt (Peter Pan Style) – winter tunic available at the uniform shop once we move. Drop pleat style. School badge. For a size fitting of the winter tunic you can go try them on at the uniform shop.
· Boys. Navy elastic long navy pants, long sleeved iron-on emblem school blue shirt. No designer pants. No cargo style.

Sport
· The sport shirt will comprise of a combination of navy blue, blue and white. It will be polyester cotton – mid range thickness. The emblem will be embroidered.
· Sport shorts – micro fibre – plain navy with RPCS embroidered on the leg of one of the sides of the shorts (white).
· Tracksuit micro-fibre fleecy lined top with emblem embroidered on the jacket. Pants will be navy blue with RPCS embroidered across the leg like the sports shorts (white). The track suit top can also be used as a jacket with normal uniform instead of a jumper.

HATS
Official navy blue bucket hats are available through the school. The school policy on hats is:

‘NO HAT, NO PLAY’. 
**DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline procedures are used at Rosary Park. The procedures are part of the School’s Pastoral Care and Welfare Policy. It is fair and gives each child the opportunity to discipline himself/herself and also teaches him/her to be responsible for his/her behaviour. We have also implemented a Behaviour Management Program, and an anti-bullying program at school, using both when required.

**DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE**

Discipline Procedures have been introduced to make our place of learning safer, tidier and friendlier. We encourage children to take responsibility for their own actions, rewarding positive behaviour and taking steps to act on negative behaviour.

Children are asked to encourage others to follow the procedures. The children continually choosing to ignore the procedures will be put on individual behaviour management programs. For us to have a safe, tidy and friendly school we need to have clear guidelines for everyone - students, parents and teachers. The children will choose the path they wish to follow.

If you have any concerns or complaints relating to the school, please contact your child’s teacher to discuss the issue. If you believe the matter has not been dealt with fairly, this process outline will assist to, hopefully, get a satisfactory outcome. Each family will get one at the beginning of the year and are available from the office.

We follow the following:

The be a good learner I need to be safe, responsible and respectful. This is displayed in the classrooms and around the school for all to see.
Rosary Park Catholic School—Branxton
Student Absence Note

My Child _____________________ in _____
Class
was absent from school on the following days on the
following date(s):

Beginning Date: ________ (complete only this line if
one day’s absence)
End Date: _____________ (complete if more than
one day absence)

The absence was for the following reasons:
(please tick appropriate box)
□ Illness
□ Medical Appointment
□ Parent Choice
□ Holiday
Other (Please specify)
__________________________________________
PRIVACY STATEMENT

I understand that to work as a volunteer at Rosary Park Catholic School it is really important that I do not discuss any child - their behaviour or progress with anyone other than the child’s class teacher or the principal.

Print
Name:__________________________

Signed:_________________________

Dated:__________________________
CONTACT DETAILS

School Principal
Mr Will Callinan  (02)4938 1541
Mobile Phone:  0410 487 331

Assistant Principal
Mrs Rhonda Wright  (02) 4938 7333

School Secretary
Mrs Jane Johansen  (02) 4938 1541
Hours of duty  8.30 am to 3.00pm
(Mon, Tues, Wed and Thursday)

SCHOOL ADDRESS: Station Street, Branxton
TELEPHONE NO:  4938 1541
FAX NO:  4938 1542
MOBILE:  0410 487 331
E-MAIL:  admin@branxton.catholic.edu.au
WEB PAGE:  http://www.branxton.catholic.edu.au
SCHOOL HOURS:  9.00 am to 3.00 pm

SCHOOL DAY
First Bell / Assembly  8.55am
Classes Begin  9.00am
Lunch 1  11.20am – 12.10pm
Lunch 2  1.30pm – 2.00pm
Classes End  3.05pm
Dismissal  3.10pm