



Weekly Newsletter #42 - 5 Feb 2025

Reflection - Another Year of School

Once again our schools will welcome students to another year of learning and discovery. For some it will be easy, for others this year will present challenges. Some will return reluctantly, some full of excitement, others with apprehension. And parents and caregivers and teachers will do their best to guide them through this adventure, the highs and the lows, the successes and the failures. Watching the little ones step out of home for the first time in this new stage of life brings many emotions. Some come with enthusiasm, others are wary and others are, to say the least, reluctant. They cling on to what they know.



The late Barry Dwyer was an educationalist and author of note. Not many students seeking tertiary recognition for essays or papers would not quote Barry to support their ideas or conclusions. He had a profound understanding of the nature of education. In one of his books, he suggested that all students come with a set of questions that they try to answer over the years.

Who am I?
Am I worthwhile? Am I competent?
What is of value, important?
Is the world to be trusted?
Can I make a difference?
Why am I here? Where am I going?
Why did this happen to me?
What should I celebrate?

Is there a God? How could God love me?

They are good questions and some of them can take a long time to answer. For those teachers, parents and caregivers who accompany children and young people on their journey, it is worth taking some time to think about how you would answer them yourself and how you found out the answers. For example, little children know the answer to 'Who am I' in relation to their family but when they step out into the wider world of school that question requires a greater understanding. Who am I now in this group, in this place? What am I good at? Sometimes young people are told that you can do anything you want, you can be whatever you want and then they discover that isn't true. So how do we help them discover what is worthwhile and how each of them can make a difference. Is the world to be trusted is a much more complex question than it was when I went to school. How do we as parents or caregivers or teachers address that question now? And how we help our children to understand that they can make a difference.

How do our children come to answer the God questions? Just because we tell them that God exists is not enough. Awareness of God's existence begins with an experience of awe and wonder, that there is something (someone) greater than just me and my awareness. In the words of Rabbi Abraham Herschel; *The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder. Awareness of the divine begins with awe and wonder.*

How do we nurture that? Celebrating is such an important part of education, not just the successes and the highs but rejoicing in life itself. Jesus was a great teacher, not simply because he told good stories but because he connected with people, he listened deeply to them, he came to appreciate their deepest longings – he had a special ear for the marginalised, the outcaste, those who

received no hearing from others. He taught them, how could God NOT love someone like you!

He was a good teacher because he was hospitable, in other words he encouraged people to come, to talk, to explore. They did not feel condemned or stupid or outcasts – they felt safe in his presence.

One of my first principals asked great questions! As an example, every six weeks or so we began our staff meeting with a ten-minute silent reflection. She asked the same question each time: How in the last six weeks did your students know that you loved them? It was an important and challenging question.

This isn't meant to be another guilt trip, more pressure on parents and caregivers and teachers but rather a reminder that what we do, how we care for our children, how we encourage and support them, how we help them to discover new ways and new ideas, how we help them to appreciate each other is building a better world, a better future, helping to bring about the vision of God. And in doing so, may we always remember that we are all precious in God's sight.

From the Executive Director

I trust the initial days of the school year have gone smoothly for you.

I would like to acknowledge it has been a difficult week for many across the diocese with the passing of Peter Kerwan. Peter was a well-

known and deeply valued member of the Catholic Education community in the Ballarat Diocese for many years. More is said below in this newsletter. May Peter rest in Peace.

As our first DOBCEL Strategy 2035 system-level initiative for the year, this Friday (7 February) we are privileged to host world authority on educational change, Professor Andy Hargreaves,



who will work with middle leaders from around the diocese. Andy, Pasi Salhberg and Dave Runge will also continue to work with a group of our middle leaders across the remainder of year.

Staff are also welcome to register to hear Professor Hargreaves' 90 minute keynote address online from 10.00am: Go [here to register](#).

Leading authority on system and school improvement, David Hopkins will also be with us on the 17th February to present a keynote address. Places are still available to attend in person or online. (Details later in this newsletter)

For this week's stimulus, I encourage you to read a paper/video by David Hopkins on school improvement: [Unleashing Greatness & video](#). The first five minutes of this video will provide a good sense of David's educational 'compass' and how he fits so well with the direction in which we are heading with our new strategy.

As many will know, I am a strong supporter of play-based learning. Primary schools, and particularly those with play-based learning programs as an integral part of their rich pedagogical practice, may be interested in nominating for a [\\$10,000 award](#) with a practical idea that has impacted children's lives through play.

With best wishes,

Tom Sexton, Executive Director

Sad News - Passing of Peter Kerwan

It is with great sadness that we share the news of Peter Kerwan's unexpected passing over the weekend.

Peter was a well-known and deeply valued member of the Catholic Education community in the Ballarat



Diocese for many years. His contributions spanned across his time as a teacher at St Patrick's and Loreto Colleges, his work at ACU and the University of Ballarat, and his dedicated service at the Catholic Education Office as Executive Officer to the Director and later as HR Manager. Over his 13 years with CEB, Peter provided support, guidance, and a listening ear to many, both within the office and the wider school community - support that for some continued beyond his retirement in 2020.

To those who knew Peter well, he was the epitome of *the fullness of life*, always smiling, a devoted husband to Jacinta, a loving father to Stephanie and Rebecca and their partners, and a cherished friend to many. Peter was generous with his time for others and is remembered for his warmth, encouragement, and love for community, golf, and his beloved Magpies.

We pray for Peter's family, friends, and everyone who knew him during this difficult time.

May he rest in peace.

Vale' Sister Lesley Dickinson

Sister Lesley Dickinson died suddenly but peacefully at Mercy Place, Ballarat on Wednesday 29th January.

Lesley had been a secondary teacher since 1953 at Sacred Heart College, Ballarat East. Her other ministries included Bursar General and office duties at the Sisters of Mercy Congregation, secretary to the director at Aquinas College, Ballarat and secretary to the Rector at Corpus Christi College, Melbourne.

We remember Lesley as a woman of deep faith and devoted Archivist for the former Ballarat East Congregation, as well as her work for St Mary's Parish in Geelong.

May she rest in peace in the loving embrace of her God whom she served so faithfully.

The funeral for Sr Lesley Dickinson will take place on **Friday 7th February, at St Alipius Church, Ballarat, at 1.00pm AEST.**

The livestream links are as follows -

Funeral - <https://youtube.com/live/QjBHUL1IBR8?feature=share>

Burial - <https://youtube.com/live/Xj-pmWtWI4M?feature=share>

In Mercy,

Barbara, Kirstin, Mary, Shona

South B Leadership

REMINDER: DOBCEL Strategy 2035 – System Initiative opportunities

Andy Hargreaves keynote presentation: Leading from the Middle

[Online Registrations still available]

This keynote, by **Andy Hargreaves**, will focus on how leadership from the middle becomes a driver of transformational change. How can leaders enable their schools and communities to be adaptive, safe and effective places of learning that help young people develop the knowledge and character that will empower them to shape their futures?



Andy Hargreaves

Research Professor at Boston College, Visiting Professor at the University of Ottawa, and Honorary Professor at Swansea University

Event Details:

- **Date and Time:** Friday, 7 February 2025, 10.00 am to 11.30 am
- **Format:** Online spots are still available.
- **Audience:** Open to anyone interested in the content.

Registration - click [here](#).

Keynote Presentation Professor David Hopkins - 'Unleashing Greatness – a strategy for school improvement'

Event Overview

This 90-minute keynote, from **Professor Emeritus David Hopkins**, will focus on international best practice in School Improvement. David Hopkins has been Chief Adviser to three Secretary of States on School Standards in the UK, Dean of Education at the University of Nottingham and consultant to the OECD and WHO, as well as advisor to some 20 Ministries globally and a secondary school teacher.

The keynote is open anyone in our Diocese interested in School Improvement, either in person or online via video-conference.

Strategic Outcomes – Rich Pedagogical Practices, Collaborative Cultures, Sustainable Stewardship

Event Details

- **Date and Time:** Monday 17 February 2025 9.00 AM - 10.30 AM
- **Format:** Available in-person at Sovereign Park, 223 Main Road, Ballarat or online via video conference (VC).
- **Audience:** Open to anyone who is interested in School Improvement.

Registration

To register, [click here](#).

Registration Deadline - Tuesday, 11 February 2025.

Confirmation

In person registrants will be sent confirmation of their registration by Thursday, 13 February 2025.

Virtual registrants will be sent a zoom link by Thursday, 13 February 2025.

Showcasing our Catholic schools in Action

This section will highlight the wonderful holistic learning opportunities happening in our Catholic schools throughout the Diocese. The DOBCEL marketing and communications team is always looking for positive stories to share with our community. Please email your stories for consideration to: comms@dobcel.catholic.edu.au.

New cubby house for St Colman's - thanks Mercy Regional College VET students!

Last year, Mercy Regional College VET Furnishing, Building and Construction students built a new cubby house for St Colman's Primary School. The building project was part of their practical coursework for the year. Well done to all the students involved.

This is a wonderful example of a secondary school strengthening its relationship with a primary school. St Colman's Primary School is very blessed to have such a fruitful relationship with its Network feeder school.

Huge congratulations to Shane and Troy from Mercy Regional College for delivering the cubby house to the school last week.



David Hopkins

Chair of Educational Leadership at the University of Bolton, as well as Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Education, University College London and the University of Nottingham.





Social Justice Update

The Feast of St Josephine Bakhita, 8th February

"The example of a saint of our time can to some degree help us understand what it means to have a real encounter with this God for the first time..."

...The liberation that she had received through her encounter with the God of Jesus Christ, she felt she had to extend, it had to be handed on to others, to the greatest possible number of people. The hope born in her which had "redeemed" her she could not keep to herself; this hope had to reach many, to reach everybody."

Pope Francis

ENCYCLICAL LETTER - SPE SALVI

Patron Saint of Victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Pope Francis designated 8th February, the feast of St Josephine Bakhita, as the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action Against Human Trafficking. On this day Catholics are encouraged to pray for all those affected by the crimes of modern slavery and human trafficking, and the people that volunteer and work to eradicate this crime.



PRAYER FOR VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

We pray for the victims of human trafficking that they may be brought to freedom and rebuild their lives after the traumatic experiences they have suffered.

We pray that St Josephine Bakhita, sold into slavery as a child, intercedes with God for those trapped in a state of slavery, so that they will be released from the shackles of captivity.

We pray for all those who are dedicated to eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking that they will have the courage and strength to reach out and overcome challenges.

We pray that by our actions as consumers we always reject as gravely wrong any goods or services tainted with slavery.

We pray for our governments that their laws will protect victims of human trafficking and reject goods and services from sources associated with slavery and forced labour.

We pray that the Church will continue to defend and free victims of human trafficking and be a source of love, hope and faith to bring the vulnerable and enslaved to find healing for their wounds.

Amen.

St Josephine Bakhita,

Patron Saint of Victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking,

Pray for Us.

Catholic Identity and Mission Updates

Aggiornamento [ECSI 101] - Registration closes 19 February



Small bites of theological conversation for people with questions

Aggiornamento [ECSI 101] Registration and Enrolment	Closes 19 February 2025
Registration steps	Follow the steps to register here
Enrolment (via a google form)	Click here to ENROL

Please make sure both your principal and REL/Team Leader are informed and authorise your participation in Aggiornamento; contact me should you have any questions: gbernasconi@ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au



Catholic Dialogue School Consortium - Registrations close 7 February

The Catholic Dialogue School Consortium - Pilgrims of Hope sessions will run between 24-26 February 2025.

Registrations are due by **Friday 7 February 2025**.

Please [click here](#) to view the flyer.

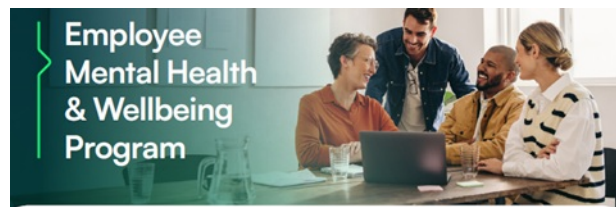
People and Development Updates

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



A reminder of the available resources for all DOBCEL staff through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

- Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing access (See below our organisational code for appointment bookings)
- Converge 2025 Wellbeing Calendar – [Jan to March Wellbeing Calendar](#)
- Support for Wellbeing through the [Converge Wellbeing App](#)
- Free Subscription to the [Flourish Wellbeing E-Magazine](#)
- Free Subscription to the [Thrive Podcast](#).



The Employee Mental Health & Wellbeing Program is provided independently to your organisation. When using the service, you can speak with a qualified clinician specifically selected to best support your issue. Our clinicians are experienced across a range of issues including:

- personal and work-related stress
- relationship or family matters
- nutrition advice
- financial coaching
- interpersonal conflict and tension
- changes in your work environment
- grief and bereavement
- career issues
- mental health concerns
- personal crisis or trauma.

Our clinicians assist you to gain insights to inform decisions and directions, and will support you to develop strategies to drive positive changes in behaviour and lifestyle. They can help you to adapt to change, seize opportunities and provide coping strategies when dealing with difficult situations.

Your Employee Mental Health & Wellbeing Program is:

- A free, confidential service
- Available to all employees 24/7, anytime, anywhere

Details of your discussion will not be shared with your manager or workplace. You can read our Privacy Policy on our website.

Book an appointment to speak with us:



Visit convergeinternational.com.au to Live Chat with a counsellor.

Call 1300 687 327 (Australia)
0800 666 367 (New Zealand)



Leadership Development - Program Offerings for Term 1

Throughout 2025 a number of leadership development opportunities will run to support the implementation of the DOBCEL strategy 2035 and the development of our leaders.

During term one, the following opportunities are offered.

Crucial Conversations - DOBCEL facilitated

Date, time & location	February 27&28 in St Brigid's College, Horsham (9am – 4pm)
Program overview	Crucial Conversations teaches a model for effective communication, that can be applied to any situation, but particularly difficult or high-stakes situations. It focuses on fostering dialogue, managing emotions, and achieving mutual understanding. The model helps to navigate high-stakes discussions with openness, respect, and skill, enhancing relationships and driving positive outcomes.
Target Audience	This program is designed for anyone who would like to develop skills in providing effective feedback and fostering open dialogue.
Booking Link	https://www.trybooking.com/CYJJY
Cost	\$500

For further information (including additional program dates for 2025) on Crucial Conversations please click [here](#).

Personal Leadership - Facilitated by BTS Sparks

Date, time & location	March 5, Sovereign Park Motor Inn, Ballarat 9am- 4pm
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Program overview	<p>Understanding your leadership style is essential for any leader. Regardless of how long you may have been in a leadership role this program enables the leader to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on their personal leadership and learn practical strategies to widen their 'leadership toolkit'. • Get clearer on your natural leadership strengths • Identify a key leadership shift that feels important in your current context • Gain a deeper level of self-awareness • Learn how to manage your state so you can increase your personal effectiveness • Learn some practical strategies to build rapport and influence others • Uncover the core values that motivate you to do your best work
Target Audience	This program is designed for current people leaders – eg: Early Career Principals, Deputy or Assistant Principals, members of school leadership teams and is also suitable for aspiring people leaders and CEB staff.
Booking Link	https://www.trybooking.com/CYJLQ
Cost	\$450

For further information please click [here](#).

(Minimum participant numbers apply for the program to run)

Feedback - Facilitated by BTS Sparks

Date, time & location	March 6, Sovereign Park Motor Inn, Ballarat 9am – 12:30
Program overview	<p>Feedback plays a crucial role in the development of collaboration skills.</p> <p>The focus of this program is shifting mindsets from –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a feedback culture is created by giving feedback, to, a feedback culture is created by asking for feedback, and; • Constructive feedback is necessary but creates distance, to, understanding that feedback can create connections and strengthen relationships, and; • I give feedback as part of the performance process, to, I give feedback because every person wants and needs it.
Target Audience	This program is designed for current people leaders – eg: Early Career Principals, Deputy or Assistant Principals, members of school leadership teams and is also suitable for aspiring people leaders and CEB staff.
Booking Link	https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1342196
Cost	\$275

For further information please click [here](#).

(Minimum participant numbers apply for the program to run)

Collaboration - Facilitated by BTS Sparks

Date, time & location	March 6, Sovereign Park Motor Inn, Ballarat 1:00pm – 4:30
Program overview	<p>The focus of this program is to deeply understand what collaboration means and how to bring the best version of yourself to collaborate.</p> <p>It focuses on shifting mindsets from –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am most effective when working by myself, to, I am most effective when collaborating with others, and; • I work best with people who think and work like me, to, we create the best results by having diverse backgrounds, opinions and ideas on the team, and; • Teams either work or they don't, to, effective teams require constant attention and evolve and grow over time.
Target Audience	This program is designed for current people leaders – eg: Early Career Principals, Deputy or Assistant Principals, members of school leadership teams and is also suitable for aspiring people leaders and CEB staff.
Booking Link	https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1342190
Cost	\$275

For further information please click [here](#).

A full list of leadership development opportunities for 2025 will be shared soon.

If you have any questions related to Leadership Development opportunities please contact Fiona Murphy.

(Minimum participant numbers apply for the program to run)

Wellbeing Updates

This year we at the Student Wellbeing team welcome Jane Bennett. Jane comes with a wealth of knowledge and background supporting schools with SWPBS and student wellbeing.

Jane will be supporting the central schools as the Student Wellbeing leader and will also assist with the initiative of SWPBS. Jane will be part of our meet and greet next Monday's online meeting and is looking forward to partnering and supporting schools

If you have further questions, please contact the Student Wellbeing Team

Thanks

Anne, Brooke, Ash and Jane

Here are some upcoming dates to support Student Wellbeing Leaders.

Upcoming Opportunity for New Student Wellbeing Leaders

Date and Time	Monday 10 February 2025 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (UTC+11)
Focus of the session	<p>An opportunity for new leaders in the area of Student Wellbeing (including Mental Health and Wellbeing Leaders) to join the DOBCEL student Wellbeing Team online to discuss the documents and tools that will support them in their roles.</p> <p>This includes the revised Student Wellbeing Framework, a look at the Online Wellbeing Health Check and an overview of Social and Emotional Learning.</p>
Target audience	Leaders of Student Wellbeing
Meeting Link	<p>Microsoft Teams Need help?</p> <p>Join the meeting now</p> <p>Meeting ID: 419 931 087 355</p> <p>Passcode: Hw3Jt6BT</p>

Understanding and Responding to Harmful Child Sexualised Behaviour in Primary Schools

Date and time	<p>Date: 24th of February 2025</p> <p>Time: 9:00am – 11:30am</p>
Venue	MacKillop/Glowery Rooms St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat or online
Registration link	https://www.trybooking.com/CYJDS
For further information	For any further information contact Brooke Nester bnester@dobcel.catholic.edu.au

Key Dates: Term 1, 2025

- Monday 10th February** - New Wellbeing Leaders and MHWLs: Online Session.
- Monday 24th February** - Understanding and Responding to Child Sexual Behaviour.
- Tuesday 4th March** - ReLATE catch up day (Horsham).
- Wednesday 12th March** - ReLATE catch up day (Mildura).
- Wednesday 19th March** - Primary Wellbeing Leaders: Online Network.
- Friday 21st March** - SWPBS Refresher.
- Monday 24th March** - ReLATE catch up day (online).
- Wednesday 26th March** - ReLATE catch up day (Ballarat).
- Thursday 27th March** - Secondary Wellbeing Leaders: Online Network.
- Tuesday 1st/Wednesday 2nd April** - RRRR Masterclass in Hamilton. [Register here](#).
- Wednesday 2nd April** - ReLATE catch up day (Warrnambool).

What's NEW!

Our team has spent time developing the Student Wellbeing Framework and it is now ready for you to use! There have been plenty of new resources added in response to what schools have asked us about.

Additionally there are updated policies, a quick reference guide for support services and other features to enhance the work of our Wellbeing leaders. The Framework will be sent out to leaders at the start of 2025.

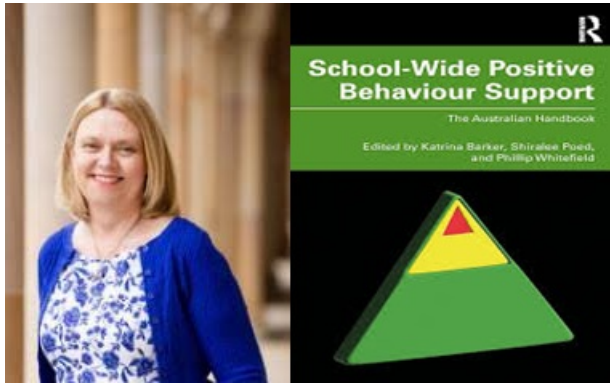
Another document we have updated is the SWPBS guide. Useful for current SWPBS schools to induct new staff and for those looking to embark on their SWPBS journey. This will also be sent out at the start of Term 1.

RRRR Masterclass: (Listed in the graphic above)
Registration Link: [Respectful Relationships – Wimmera South West | Event provider | Arc](#).

To support the release of the updated *Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships* (RRRR) curriculum resources, Department of Education will be running 2-day RRRR masterclasses. The Wimmera South West have already released their dates.

Dr Shiralee Poed , Professional Learning - 24 April – Horsham

Click [here](#) for the booking link.



2025 dates for your diary

First Year ECT Program

	Central Location	Northern Location	Cost	Mode of delivery
		Session will go ahead subject to numbers		
Term 1	Tuesday March 11 9am-3pm Ballarat - Glowrey Room – St Patrick's Cathedral Hall Booking link https://www.trybooking.com/CYLBI	Monday March 17 9am-3pm Mildura or Robinvale (TBC subject to registrations) https://www.trybooking.com/CYLCH	\$80	Face to Face
Term 2	Monday May 19 9am-3pm Ballarat - Glowrey Room – St Patrick's Cathedral Hall	Wednesday May 21 9am-3pm Mildura or Robinvale TBC (subject to registrations)	\$80	Face to Face
Term 3	Formation Retreat - August 13/14 Halls Gap	Formation Retreat - August 13/14 Halls Gap	TBC	Face to Face
Term 4	ECT Check-ins Weeks 3 & 4 20/10 – 1/11	ECT Check-ins Weeks 3 & 4 20/10 – 1/11	N/A	Online

Learning and Teaching Updates

GENERAL NEWS



Early Career Teachers - Professional Learning 2025

The Early Career Teacher Program is a three-year integrated program designed to support early career teacher induction into the Ballarat Diocese and the teaching profession within the particular context of working in the ministry of Catholic education. The program reflects the partnership between DOBCEL and schools, who, together, support the professional growth of early career teachers. Elements of the program presented through these dedicated days will complement formation opportunities initiated by the school community.

Early Career Teacher program days will take place on the following dates throughout 2025. To encourage participation and decrease travel time for people in the north, program days in terms one and two will be repeated in two locations.

If you know an early career teacher, please share these dates with them!

Please note early career teachers who have been granted permission to teach are also welcome to attend.

Second & Third Year ECT Program

	Central Location	Northern Location Session will go ahead subject to numbers	Cost	Mode of delivery
Term 1 Location Booking link	Thursday, March 20 9am-3pm Ballarat - Glowrey Room – St Patrick’s Cathedral Hall https://www.trybooking.com/CYLDB	Tuesday, March 18 9am-3pm Mildura or Robinvale (TBC subject to registrations) https://www.trybooking.com/CYLCK	\$80	Face to Face
Term 2 Location	Thursday June 12 Online check-in (1 hour) 3:45-4:45pm	Thursday June 12 Online check-in (1 hour) 3:45-4:45pm	\$80	Online
Term 3 Location	Formation Retreat - August 13/14 Halls Gap	Formation Retreat - August 13/14 Halls Gap	TBC	Face to Face
Term 4	ECT Check-ins Weeks 3 & 4 20/10 – 1/11	ECT Check-ins Weeks 3 & 4 20/10 – 1/11	N/A	Online

If you have any queries about the program, please contact Julie Cooper jcooper@dobcel.catholic.edu.au or Sarah Hanley shanley@dobcel.catholic.edu.au



VIT Effective Mentoring Program

Calling mentor teachers!

The **Effective Mentoring Program (EMP)** is a free professional learning program developed and delivered in partnership with the Department of Education and VIT.

This two-day program equips participants with mentoring skills to support beginning teachers and guide them through the **provisional to full registration** process.

Any teacher who wishes to become a mentor for a PRT moving to **full registration** can participate in a VIT-approved mentoring program.

Two-day EMP Course		
Location	Day 1	Day 2
Ballarat	10 February 2025	19 March 2025
Bendigo	12 June 2025	7 August 2025
Geelong	3 July 2025	28 August 2025
Horsham	8 May 2025	26 June 2025
Mildura	21 August 2025	9 October 2025
Warrnambool	19 June 2025	14 August 2025

One-day EMP refresher course
Refresher courses are available for those who have completed the initial two-day training but would like to refresh their mentoring skills.

Location	Day 1
Melbourne	28 February 2025
Melbourne	30 May 2025
Melbourne	15 August 2025
Melbourne	20 October 2025

For further information and registrations, please click **here**.

Children & Youth Cultural Gathering: Close the Gap Day

Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative are hosting a cultural day on Thursday March 30 for Yr 1-9 First Nations students from Ballarat and district. All Ballarat schools are encouraged to promote this event.

More information and register here:
<https://forms.office.com/r/Tiq1mvXB7p>



FIRE Carrier Program

Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education

The FIRE Carrier Program is a way that schools can show their outward commitment to authentic reconciliation and their support of self-determination in education for First Nations students and their families. All members of a school community are encouraged to share reconciliation with others under the lead of the Commissioned Staff and Student FIRE Carriers.

Each school creates a School Covenant that emphasises the ethos and faith belief of Catholic schools and the social justice responses they are committed to make as part of their Catholic identity. The school covenant focuses on the three core values of Spirituality; Cultural Recognition and Awareness; and Practical Recognition and Justice. Schools commit to actions that meet each of these values. This is a living document that is referred to throughout the year and has the input from the school community including staff and students. First Nations students and families are also invited to contribute if they would like to part of the program.

The FIRE Carrier Program provides a framework for addressing School Compliance including Child Safe Standards and the VCEA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan. It is a great opportunity for student leadership, voice and action for social justice.

We look forward to your school becoming a FIRE Carrier School in the future!

For more information about the **FIRE Carrier Program** send an email to firecarrier@openingthedoors.org.au

You can visit our New FIRE Carrier School Information folder containing our Information Booklet, PowerPoint presentation, Fee Schedule and Expression of Commitment Form ready to share the FIRE Carrier Program with your school leadership, staff and students.



Opening the Doors Foundation

Financial Grants for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

The Opening the Doors Foundation provides grants to families to assist with the extra costs incurred in the schooling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary or secondary school students. The 2025 Grant Round is now open, with a closing date of **14 March 2025**. For students to commence the 2025 school year with the necessary items, the ideal time to apply is now or before the start of Term 1.

Please note that due to a substantial increase in applications, the Foundation's Trustees have had to modify the eligibility criteria. The updated criteria and guidelines are outlined on both the

Opening the Doors Foundation website and the **Opening the Doors Foundation Application**. Please contact the Foundation (details listed below), **Helen Christensen** (0467 415 768) or **Jeanette Morris** (0408 360 098) for further information.

Pertinent information:

Website: Opening the Doors Foundation; Foundation Application Criteria and Guidelines

App link: Opening the Doors Foundation Application

Phone: 0401 487 414 or 1300 236 356

Email: applications@openingthedoors.org.au

Closing date: 14 March 2025 (applications will not be accepted after this date)



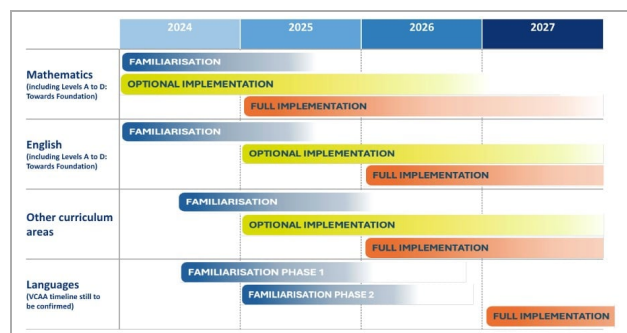
Victorian Curriculum F-10 Implementation

VERSION 2.0

The Victorian Curriculum F-10

The graphic below displays the expected implementation of the Victorian Curriculum 2.0 within DOBCEL schools.

More information regarding familiarisation and implementation can be **accessed here**.



PRIMARY NEWS



Flare Primary Literacy Leaders Forum

The Literacy Leaders' Forum is an online networking opportunity for anyone leading Primary Literacy to join with their peers to celebrate progress, problem-solve, form partnerships, find out what's happening in other diocesan schools and learn with and from one another.

Unlike other Flare PL and Coaching offerings, these events are NOT phase-specific and are not tailored to the particular needs of Guided Improvement schools. The agendas for these events will be co-designed with participants.

The dates for the 2025 Literacy Leader Forums are listed below. Please register via the [Flare Calendar](#).

Tuesday 18th Feb 10-3

Tue 13th May 10-3

Fri 22nd Aug 10-3

Fri 7th Nov 10-3

Please note that the Forums are *OPTIONAL*, even for Guided Improvement schools.

We would very much appreciate your input into the development of the forums. Therefore, all Principals and Literacy Leaders are invited to share their thoughts, preferences, ideas and questions in the following form:

<https://forms.gle/2gPvUJjbgD7EwdcCA>



Primary Leaders of Learning Meeting Schedule 2025

Our Primary Leaders of Learning network aims to provide a platform for open dialogue, sharing of evidence-based teaching practices, and collaboration among primary school leaders.

By coming together, we can leverage our collective knowledge of learning and experiences to enhance the quality of education we provide to our students.

PLOL Meeting Dates 2025 and Agenda Items for Term 1

Registrations will open next week

Term 1: Wednesday 5th March 1:30 – 3pm

Agenda Items:

Educational leadership

Curriculum updates

Reporting to Mathematics V2.0

Term 2: Wednesday 28th May 1:30 – 3pm

Term 3: Wednesday 27th August 1:30 – 3pm

Term 4: Wednesday 22nd October 1:30 – 3pm

Mathematics Professional Learning for 2025 - Registration closing at 5pm today!



Engaging Primary Students in their Mathematical Learning.

Online Professional learning facilitated by Michael Minas the founder of *Love Maths*.

Michael has worked in education for over 25 years and his areas of interest include problem solving and student engagement.

Rationale:

To impact on teacher practice through planning for and teaching of engaging Mathematical learning experiences.

Focus / Learning Intentions:

- Identify Mathematical tasks which are engaging for ALL students.
- Enhance participant's knowledge of the F-6 Mathematics Curriculum.
- Develop a student-centred approach to the teaching of Mathematics.

Read more in this flyer.

Registration is now open through this [Trybooking link](#)

Reach out to either Sarah or Teresa if you have any questions.
Sarah McKnight
smcknight@dobcel.catholic.edu.au OR

Teresa Hadden thadden@dobcel.catholic.edu.au.

F-6 Mathematics Curriculum V2.0

Where are you currently on the Roadmap in preparation for the implementation of Mathematics V2.0 in 2025? Reflect on what you have in place and cross reference your progress against the 2025 Implementation Roadmap document

Voices from the field sharing their journey about preparing to implement Mathematics V2.0

For more assistance, please contact:

Sarah McKnight smcknight@dobel.catholic.edu.au

OR

Teresa Hadden: thadden@dobcel.catholic.edu.au

2025 SIMON User Conference - 8 & 9 May

The conference will be located at ENCORE Events Centre - Hoppers Crossing.

It offers easy access from major freeways, ample car parking, modern learning facilities and nearby hotel accommodation for those who wish to stay overnight.

Please [click here](#) to view the conference flyer.



Keen to learn more about student data?

The Intellischool team - taking care of your SIMON student analytics - are excited to look after you and your school for training and best practice. Have you booked in for your free 1-hour training yet?



Career Opportunities in the Diocesan Education Community

Catholic Education Ballarat Vacancy

- **Employee Relations Consultant** – Ballarat Office, ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (closes 9 February)
- **ICT Support Specialist** – Ballarat Office, ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (closes 9 February)
- **ICT System Administrator** – Ballarat Office, ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (closes 9 February)
- **Education Officer: Student Wellbeing** - Mildura, Swan Hill or Horsham Office, ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (closes 16 February)
- **Education Officer: Positive Behaviour Specialist** – Ballarat or Horsham office – fixed term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 16 February)
- **Manager: Risk and Assurance** – Ballarat Office, ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (closes 16 February)

Principal Vacancy

- No Principal Vacancies

School Vacancies

- **Learning Support Officer** – St Columba's School, Ballarat North – fixed term position at 0.75 FTE (closes 7 February)
- **Music teacher** – St Thomas's School, Terang – fixed term position at 0.2 FTE (closes 10 February)
- **Mental Health in Primary Schools MHiPS Coordinator** – St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Warracknabeal – fixed term position at 0.4 FTE (closes 14 February)
- **Classroom Teacher** – St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Warracknabeal – fixed term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 14 February)
- **Classroom Teacher** – St Malachy's School, Edenhope – fixed term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 14 February)
- **Classroom Teacher** – St Joseph's School, Charlton – fixed term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 14 February)
- **Classroom Teacher (Monday and Wednesday)** – Sacred Heart Primary School, Colac – fixed term position at 0.4 FTE (closes 28 February)
- **Casual Relief Teachers** – St Brigid's School, Ballan (closes 28 February)

Catholic Development Funds (CDF) Relationship Manager

- Please click here to view the position description.