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.
ROSARY PARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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.

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).

At the end of Term 3, 2011 both these schools closed and Rosary Park Catholic School was opened to cater for the children within the Greta and Branxton Parishes.

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 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 and Eucharist is distributed at the Parish Mass Centers.
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 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.

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. 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

These names are presently being reviewed.

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.
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 is set up at Rosary Park. It has 30 computers, a data projector and a laptop. These are all resources that will be used to develop the children’s knowledge and skills. Smartboards are installed in each classroom and in the Library. The P & F are looking at purchasing five ipads for the school that will assist children experiencing difficulties with literacy. 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. 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 is entitled to extra release one day a week, the REC is entitled to extra release one day a week and the Primary Co-ordinator gets an extra release day each fortnight.
SCHOOL TUITION FEES

Please see the full fee explanation/structure towards the back of this Handbook.

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. EFTPOS is also available.

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 $200.00 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. This will also include the cost of two incursions planned for 2014—Snake Tails and Tabloid Sports.

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 $609.00 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. Rosary Park, indirectly received a substantial amount of money from this fund to assist with the building of the new facility.

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 an 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 co-operation 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.
Lunch commences at 11.00 am - 11.50 am
Afternoon tea commences at 1.30pm - 2.00 pm
Dismissal is at 3.00 pm following the afternoon assembly at 3.05 pm.

Parents are reminded that the playground is unsupervised before 8.30am. All children arriving for school before this time are to sit on the steps near the hall until 8.30am 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 of an afternoon, please wait for them at the school’s main gate.

PROCEDURES

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 Thursday. 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 NIGHT
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.
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 sheet before working with the children. This procedure has changed for next year.

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.

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 each Monday and Friday.

A priced menu will be sent home at the beginning of each term.

To order lunch on Monday and Friday, 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 near the canteen. Special lunch bags are available for purchase from the canteen.

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.
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 on Monday mornings from 8.30am until 9.15am. Orders for clothing can be made at the office on other days.
- All school shoes are to be black polish able shoes.
- All sports shoes should be predominantly white with white laces.
- All socks will be white (unisex).
- Navy bucket hat with emblem screen printed.
- Jumper – v-neck navy blue pullover with embroidered emblem.
- Socks are white and must be seen outside the shoe with no writing or colour on them.

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 embroidered emblem while the girls will wear a school badge – both the iron-on/badge will be available through the uniform shop. Navy blue elastic-waisted shorts (no cargo pants/designer shorts) +with short sleeved school blue shirt.

Winter
- Girls. The winter tunic will be navy check or navy blue tailored gabardine pants (no dance pants, no leggings) with long sleeved white shirt (Peter Pan Style) – winter tunic.
- 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’
**SCHOOL UNIFORM**

**Some Extras**

- No nail polish is to be worn at school.
- A general tidiness of hair style and no fancy hair accessories.
- No undercuts, wedging, dreadlocks or mohawks
- Long hair must be tied back securely.
- No dyed, bleached or tinted hair.
- Rat’s-tails are discouraged and must not be visible (i.e. must be tucked into shirt collar).
- One pair of sleepers or small gold/silver studs only to be worn in pierced ears.
- No facial piercings.
- Hair ribbons to be school colours—navy blue/white.
- One watch.
- School fundraiser charity bands only.
- One gold/silver bangle
- One necklace with religious symbols only.

Children are asked to bring a note to explain any variation from school uniform. The school has the support of the P & F Association to enforce the uniform code. The staff and P & F believe that complete school uniform provides students with an opportunity to display pride in themselves, their school and their standard of dress. It helps to foster their level of self-discipline.
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.

Corporal punishment will not be given by any teacher, staff member of non-school persons.

COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS AGREED PROCESS

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.
CONTACT DETAILS

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

Assistant Principal  Mrs Rhonda Wright  (02) 4938 1541

School Secretary  Mrs Jane Johansen  (02) 4938 1541
Mrs Kim O’Rourke

Hours of duty  8.30am to 3.00pm

SCHOOL ADDRESS: 36 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: 8.55am to 3.00pm

SCHOOL DAY

First Bell  8.55am
Assembly  9.00am
Lunch 1  11.00am – 11.50am
Lunch 2  1.30 pm – 2.00 pm
Dismissal  3.05 pm
**Fee Explanation**

Families with two children attending Catholic schools will receive a 10% discount on each child’s tuition fee. If for example you have a child in a Primary school and a Secondary school you will receive a 10% discount on the Primary fee and the Secondary fee instead of paying the full tuition fee for each child. This change to discounting for families represents a significant financial saving for a large number of families in 2014, and for most families across their child/children’s K-12 Catholic school experience. The biggest saving for a two child family will be when the eldest child is in Year 11 or Year 12 and the second child is in primary school as they will receive, for the first time, a discount on the higher rate senior school tuition fees.

Proposed rates and structure for Diocesan Tuition Fees are reviewed annually by the Catholic Schools Council, Federation of Parents & Friends Association and the Diocesan Finance Council for recommendation to the Bishop. Structure and rates for Diocesan Tuition Fees in 2014 approved by the Bishop follow.

2014 Diocesan Tuition fee full rates are set at:
- Kinder – Year 6 $ 1,068
- Years 7 – 10 $ 1,470
- Years 11 – 12 $ 2,274

Family discount for each child off the Diocesan Tuition fee full rate continues as in 2014 at:
- 1 child family 0% - full rate to be applied
- 2 child family 10% each child
- 3 child family 20% each child
- 4 child family 40% each child
- 5+ child family 50% each child

A family fee payer holding a low income Australian Government Health Care or Pension Card continues to receive a 50% discount off the full tuition fee rate for each member of the family.

**Diocesan Family & School Building Levy (DF&SBL)**

The DF&SBL is a diocesan family levy charged to the oldest child in each family. The levy assists in the financing of capital works and repairs and maintenance of school facilities, the provision of new schools and the need to provide for annual debt-servicing requirements. This levy also supports the diocese in its pastoral ministries including the provision of Pastoral Workers, Refugee and Aboriginal ministries, the Hospital Apostolate and the change, loss and grief program, Seasons for Growth. In 2014 the levy will increase to $609 per year per family.