

Built on Faith, Knowledge, Respect

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Term 1 Week 2 2026
Thursday 5th February

Rosary Park Catholic School

Station Street, Branxton NSW 2335

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Website: www.branxton.catholic.edu.au

We acknowledge the Wonnarua people-the first custodians of this land.

IMPORTANT DATES

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults - particularly those who participate in the life of the Diocese. All employees are required to undergo a National Police Check and, where legislated, hold a Working with Children Check. Diocesan workers are expected to personally adopt and enact the Diocese's Safeguarding Commitment Statement.

Weekly Mass Times: 6pm Saturday Branxton; 8am Sunday Greta.

FEBRUARY		FEBRUARY	
Mon 9 th	Kindergarten First Full Day	Fri 20 th	Opening School Mass – Student Leader Commissioning – 9:15 am
Wed 11 th	Parent Information Evening 4:45 – 6:00 pm	Tue 24 th	Regional Touch Footy Trials
Fri 13 th	Regional Swimming Carnival	Wed 25 th	Diocesan Swimming Carnival
Fri 13 th	MSP Kindergarten Photos	MARCH	
Wed 18 th	School Assembly – 9am	Wed 4 th	School Assembly – 9 am

Principal's Message

Dear Lord,

As we begin a new school year, we thank you for the many blessings you have given us.

Thank you for the school holidays that gave us time for fun and relaxation with our family and friends.

Thank you for bringing us safely back to school this year.

We ask that you help us to:

use our eyes to see new friends and new opportunities,

use our minds to learn new things,

use our ears to hear your message as we try to live like Jesus and use our hearts in our interactions with others.

Help us to remember you are with us when we face challenges.

Help us to truly learn together and enrich the lives of all that we meet.

Amen

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back to our 2026 school year!

I hope you had a happy Christmas and enjoyed some time together as a family. It has been terrific to see the students back so happy and engaged with their learning in the first few days, as they navigate new friendships, different teachers and new surroundings.

To those students and families whom we welcome in 2026, I sincerely hope you have had a settled start to a new environment. We are always here to help.

Welcome to the following new staff:

- Miss Maeve Lawson, who came to us from St Joseph's Merriwa. She is teaching in Year Three.
- Mr Nicholas Redgrove, who came to Rosary Park via Holy Spirit Abermain. He is working in Year 1.
- Mrs Maryanne Hacker comes to us from St Patrick's Lochinvar, and will be our Assistant Principal, Learning Support Teacher and Pedagogical Mentor.
- Miss Maddy Percival returns for Term One at the very least, as EAL/D teacher.
- Miss Zoe Koster will start Term One as our Pastoral Care Worker. Students may remember her from

After a meeting today, we have also been advised that our Groundsman – Mr Nigel Levido will be taking a leave of absence for the next 6 months. As some of you will already know this is due to some ongoing health issues and we ask everyone to keep Nigel in their thoughts and prayers for a speedy recovery.

Please take the time to contact me if you ever need to discuss matters pertaining to the school or have any ideas for fundraising etc. I am always happy to schedule parents in to visit and chat, as you are one extremely integral piece in the puzzle that is Rosary Park.

I thank you for entrusting us with the carriage of educating and forming your child, your most precious commodity and we welcome your input wherever necessary.

Staff 2026

Kinder Blue - Kylie Lunn

Kinder White - Ellen Rae

Year 1 Blue - Louise Kevin

Year 1 White - Nicholas Redgrove / Deb Parkes

Year 2 Blue - Naomi Allen

Year 2 White - Nick Standing

Year 3 Blue - Maeve Lawson

Year 3 White - Danika Graham / Chelsea Edwards
Year 4 Blue - Grace Dever
Year 4 White - Terry Fitzsummons
Year 5 Blue - Nellie Connolly
Year 5 White - Simone Cameron
Year 6 Blue - Paige Pringle / Kate Burgess
Year 6 White - Emelia Lindus / Paige Pringle

Learning Support - Kath Piggott / Maryanne Hacker (0.4) / Phoebe Bridge (0.4)
Aboriginal Education - Katrina Easton
EAL/D - Madelaine Percival (0.3)
RFF - Chelsea Edwards
Librarian - Melanie Flynn
Librarian Assistant – Jenny Bailey
Pastoral Care Worker – Ms Zoe Koster

Primary Coordinator - Danika Graham
Pedagogical Mentor - Emelia Lindus
Religious Education Coordinator - Nick Redgrove
Assistant Principal - Maryanne Hacker
Principal - Ashley Borg

Senior Admin School Officers: Mrs Amanda Percival (Mon - Friday)
 Mrs Kim O'Rourke (Wed-Thu-Fri)

Pastoral Care Worker: Mrs Kylie Johns

Learning Support Assistants: Mrs Katherine Allen, Mrs Jessica Bellott, Mrs Kacie Bishop, Mr Jeremy Brown, Mrs Natalie Cortis, Mrs Renae Craft, Ms Kimberley Gargan, Mrs Kylie Johns, Mrs Cherie Lane, Miss Linda Museth, Mrs Emma Nevin, Ms Fiona Roberts

Groundsman: TBC

Canteen Coordinators- Fridays- Mrs Cassandra Freeman

Parent Information Night – 10 FEBRUARY

Our Parent Information Night will be held Wednesday February 10. Please ensure you are at school for a 4:45pm START in the Hall. I will take you through some very basic expectations and notices and then there are two sessions per class (just in case you have a couple of children!)

5:00 – 5:25pm – SESSION ONE

5:30pm – 5:55pm – SESSION TWO

Grade and Principal's Awards

In recent years, we have worked hard at Rosary Park to build our children and staff's understanding of the vision and work of the founding sisters of our school- the sisters of Mercy and in particular Catherine McAuley who founded the sisters of Mercy in Ireland in 1831. This has included the formulation of new Vision and Mission statements for our school in 2020 and expanding our school prayer to include aspects of these statements and our Mercy Pillars in 2022.

Also in 2022, we introduced our grades taking one of the Mercy pillars to focus on in class. This has led to a deeper understanding for all our children of the Mercy pillars and how we can display these in our interactions with others. Every Monday at our assembly, our student leaders introduce

the PBL rule of the week and the Mercy pillar which we will all try to focus on in our lives for the week. Every Wednesday at our assembly there is one Mercy award given to a child who has consistently displayed this Mercy pillar. Once a child receives ALL of the six Mercy awards (that is for respect, courage, compassion, service, justice and hospitality) they will receive a special set of Rosary beads which represents our school's patron saint, Mary (the mother of Jesus) and the special prayer that we pray to her- the Rosary.

Children are invited to hand in 3 merit and/or Mercy awards to receive a principal's award at our Wednesday assembly. Any MJR awards received by a child in previous years- prior to 2023, CAN still be used for a principal's award. Children accrue multiple Principal's awards over the course of their education at Rosary Park.

The following rewards are given once a child accrues several Principal's awards:

- Once a child receives **5** Principal's awards, they will receive a Catherine McAuley card.
- After **10** Principal's awards they receive our Rosary Park badge of excellence
- After **15** Principal's awards they receive a Cross + card (prayer) to acknowledge the child's efforts in consistently displaying the pillars of Mercy.

I am sure you will agree that these rewards add further meaning to the Mercy pillars for our children. As always, any questions or constructive feedback on our awards structure is always welcome.

Contacting Teachers

The best outcomes occur for our children when school and home, work together. We look forward to continuing to build the strong links between families and school. Your child's teacher is obviously an integral part of this and there may be times during the year, aside from our scheduled student led conferences at the end of Term 2, that you need to contact your child's teacher. If so, contact can be made via the school's administration email: admin@branxton.catholic.edu.au .

These emails will be forwarded to the relevant teacher by Mrs Percival / Mrs O'Rourke or myself / Mrs Hacker. Teachers will respond to your email within 2 business days and during the hours of 8:15am and 5:30pm.

You can also contact your child's teacher through our office, by leaving a message for them by phone. They will return your call as soon as possible.

As you can appreciate, teachers are very busy during the school day so any 'urgent' messages for your child regarding travel arrangements, medications, lunches etc must be made by calling the office.

St Nicholas OOSH Branxton

A reminder that St Nicholas OOSH offer before and after school care 7am-8:30am & 3pm-6pm, as well as Vacation Care in holidays. OOSH can be contacted on **0448 751 549** to make enrolment inquiries. Vacation care is available during holidays and pupil-free days.

School Attendance

The Education Amendment (School Attendance Bill) states that ALL children must attend school EVERY day that they are well enough to be there. Parents are DISCOURAGED from taking children out of school for holidays during school time. School work will not be set by the class teacher if you choose to take your child away on holidays during the school term.

The main points:

- All absences must be recorded and kept by the school for 7 years. Parents must give the school a reason for their child's absence (Compass, email or by phone) within 7 school days, otherwise it is marked in school records as an 'unexplained absence.'
- Principals may request a doctor's certificate if leave is for several days OR there are patterns of absence e.g. every second Monday.
- Parents are urged to avoid booking holidays in term time. If, however, your child needs time from school (more than 10 days) you must complete an 'Exemption from Attendance' form available from the Principal, PRIOR to exemption. It cannot be granted retrospectively. These are retained by the school. Exception from Attendance over 100 days in a 12-month period must go to the Minister via the Catholic Education Commission NSW.
- According to the Guidelines: Principals and the Diocesan Director may grant exemptions due to exceptional domestic circumstances, including, but not limited to participation in family holidays during school term, subject to being satisfied that this is in the best educational interests of the child.

School Website

Our website can be accessed via, <http://www.branxton.catholic.edu.au>

Our 2026 newsletters can be accessed there by clicking on the Newsletters button.

We also have relevant diocesan policies (which are followed by the school) on our website site such as Privacy & Complaints Resolution for Parents and Carers.

Please have a look, any constructive feedback or ideas about features or additional information you would like to see on the site is welcome.

Camps 2026

In 2026, our year 5 students will attend Great Aussie Bush Camp 15-17 June (approx. cost \$450/child) whilst our year 6 students will have their excursion to Canberra on 19-21 August (approx. cost \$500/child). As these excursions are a significant financial commitment for families (**not** covered by our resource fee), I am giving you advanced notice so that you are able to budget for them.

Please note: the Great Aussie Bush Camp will be held at the Kincumber site on the Central Coast.

Resource Fee 2026

Diocesan fee information for 2026 has been received and the DFSBL will be \$1,964 with Tuition being \$1,768. Our school resource fee is **\$610** per child and will include one excursion for each class. This cost covers all aspects of school life, apart from Year 5/6 camps and sport that is not based at school (Gala Days, Representative Sport, etc)

2026 Student Leaders

Congratulations to our 2026 Leaders. They will receive their badges at our opening school liturgy on **Friday 20 February, from 9:15am.**

Mercy Team: Elke B
Environmental Team: Sasha A

PB4L: Ellie A
Active Lifestyle: Shahaan S

Freeman House Leaders: Addison K and Blake C
Thorpe House Leaders: Jye D and Matthias K
Bradman House Leaders: Lucy S and Luke H
Fearnley House Leaders: Charlize L and Hunter B

Communication

We pride ourselves on communicating well with families and trust that our families do the same whenever there are any issues.

The points in time which we will be doing this in Semester One are:

Term 1 - End of Week 5 - Email about basic progress and settling in
Term 2 - End of Week 9 - Report
Term 2 - Monday of Final Week of Term - Student Led Conference

Of course, if there is anything we need to speak with you about, we will contact by phone or email and we expect you will reciprocate and do the same.

Please ensure all email communication is done via the admin@branxton.catholic.edu.au email.

As Principal, I am more than happy to receive direct emails to my work email ashley.borg@mn.catholic.edu.au

Rosary Park is truly a unique School and Parish community with an inclusive and nurturing atmosphere where we learn together and enrich the lives of each other. I am very much looking forward to continuing to work with you, your children, and the staff this year to ensure that every child at Rosary Park thrives in 2026!

Kind regards,

Mr Ashley Borg

PRINCIPAL

Religious Education Coordinator's Message

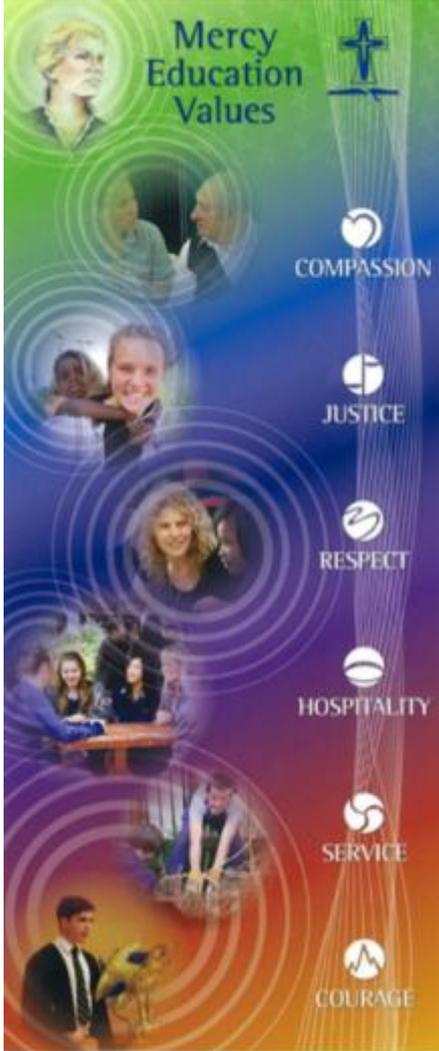
A very warm welcome to our 2026 school year at Rosary Park, Branxton. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff, students and families for their very warm welcome they have given me since starting my new position here. It is clear to see that we are a part of a very community-minded school and I feel truly lucky to be now part of this. I look forward to meeting and get to know our families a little more as we work our way into the new school year.

Rosary Park Mercy Charism

At Rosary Park we celebrate our Mercy Charism by recalling the life of Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy. At the beginning of the year, we focus on lessons that outline some

of the positive impacts of the Sisters of Mercy throughout our world. Each grade at Rosary Park has a focus mercy pillar to specifically teach and demonstrate throughout our school community. With the exception of Kindergarten who focus on God's love for us.

You might like to have a conversation with your child/children about their mercy lessons, identify people they know who show these values and discuss ways they think they could demonstrate this value in their school and home communities.

<p>Grade specific Mercy Pillars</p> <p>Kinder – God's Love</p> <p>Year 1 – Respect</p> <p>Year 2 – Compassion</p> <p>Year 3 – Hospitality</p> <p>Year 4 – Justice</p> <p>Year 5 – Service</p> <p>Year 6 – Courage</p>	
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Vision and Mission Statement:

We have an ongoing focus and commitment to our school vision and mission statement. Which is drawn from the work of our school founder Catherine McAuley and the sisters of Mercy. In the light of Christ we love, serve and learn as a caring Faith community. Founded on the Mercy tradition Rosary Park educates and nurtures the faith and wellbeing of all through learning in:

Kindergarten: God's love

Year 1: Respect

Year 2: Compassion

Year 3: Hospitality

Year 4: Justice

Year 5: Service

Year 6: Courage

Our staff are on an ongoing journey with the students to make the vision and mission part of our everyday school language. Our Mercy pillars also linked with our PB4L (Positive Behaviour for Learning) rules of the week. At every Monday morning and Wednesday morning assembly our children and staff say our vision and mission statement during our prayer time.

Liturgies:

Opening school liturgy: Blessing our new school leaders

When: Friday 20th February 9:15am

Who: Whole School Community welcome

Where: Rosary Park School Hall

All students will attend this liturgy to bless/officially induct our school leaders and sport captains and present them with their badges. ALL families are welcome, especially our leaders' parents as we present our year 6 leaders with their badges for the school year ahead.

Ash Wednesday in class liturgies:

Wednesday, 18th February

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the sacred season of Lent. To mark this special occasion, teachers will be educating students about Ash Wednesday, what it represents and why we mark a black ash cross on our foreheads. These liturgies will be celebrated in class with teachers and support staff. Be aware that your child will more than likely arrive home with a black cross on their forehead on this day.

Sacramental Program:

2026 Parish Sacramental Program Expression of interests are being sought for children in Year 3 and above in 2026 who are ready to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Holy Communion. Please email the parish office with your child's name, date of birth and parish. singleton.branxton@mn.catholic.org.au . They will be in touch with dates and program expectations.

Any questions please reach out.

Enjoy the rest of your week.

Nicholas Redgrove
Religious Education Coordinator

Gifted Educational Mentor

Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the school community for 2026. I am the Gifted Education Mentor Project Officer working with Rosary Park this year. In this role, I will be supporting teachers, students, and families to enhance learning opportunities for High Potential and Gifted (HPG) students, ensuring they are challenged, engaged, and able to reach their full potential.

In this role, I will work closely with teachers, students, and families to help identify and support students with high potential, including those in the Virtual Academy. I aim to ensure that Virtual Academy students receive personalised support, resources, and strategies to thrive in their online learning environment, while also providing enrichment opportunities that challenge their abilities. Whether learning in the classroom or virtually, the goal is to create engaging experiences that are tailored to each student's strengths and needs.

I am passionate about ensuring that all HPG students—including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds—have access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive. I also value strong partnerships between schools and families, as working together is key to fostering student success.

I look forward to continuing working with the school community to support our High Potential and Gifted students. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the programs available.

Looking forward to an exciting year ahead!

Caroline Donohoe
Gifted Education Mentor Project Officer

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