



St Stephen's School

ALGESTER



Parent Handbook 2025

156 Ridgewood Road, Algester 4115
Ph: (07) 3711 4911

Email: palgester@bne.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.ststephens.qld.edu.au

Our Vision

To be a welcoming and caring Catholic community, where all people are truly valued and seek to be the very best of themselves.



Our Mission

Driven by the life and teachings of Jesus, our mission is to actively shape and enrich the spiritual and educational journey of students, staff, families and all people within our community. Offering excellence in learning and teaching, we embrace differences and individuality, whilst living in harmony with God's creation.

Our Motto

Growing in Courage, Wisdom and Faith

Our Foundation Stones (Core Values)

Courage

At St Stephen's, **Courage** is recognising our vulnerabilities, building resilience and overcoming struggles.

Standing firm in our beliefs, we step out into the unknown, whilst always speaking and acting from the heart.

Wisdom

At St Stephen's, **Wisdom** is knowing what is good in ourselves, in others, and in the world, through the gift of God's grace.

Through God's eyes we see the needs of others.

Through God's ears we listen to the knowledge and truth of others.

Through God's loving heart we respond with justice and charity.

Faith

At St Stephen's, **Faith** is using our inner strength to trust in things not easily seen; believing in God, in ourselves and in others.

With God in our hearts, we stand firm as a community to share the Good News of the Gospel daily.

WELCOME!



Welcome to St Stephen's Catholic Primary School. A dynamic learning community founded on the life and teachings of Jesus, fostering positive, trusting relationships with students, families and the wider community.

At St Stephen's, we create a school environment which recognises the unique "Learning Adventure" that each child takes, whilst providing stimulating and rewarding learning experiences for all our students.

We are committed to building a community where students are engaged in learning and care about themselves, others and our world. We get to know each student and meet their spiritual and educational needs. At all times, our Catholic ethos and our commitment to the values of the Gospel drive us to keep the students as our focus.

It is through these actions that we seek to bring to life our Vision, *"to be a welcoming and caring Catholic community, where all people are truly valued and seek to be the very best of themselves."*

You as parents play an integral role in your child's education. You join us in partnership, enabling your child to reach their full potential. We encourage parents to become actively involved in their child's learning and all aspects of our school community. The contribution that every individual makes to our Catholic community is greatly appreciated. I personally encourage you to become part of the wonderful tradition we have of parent involvement and collaboration at St Stephen's.

This Parent Handbook contains important information so please keep it on hand and refer to it when needed. I am always available to meet with parents so please feel free to contact the office if you would like to meet with me to discuss any aspect of life at St Stephen's.

Once again thank you for choosing St Stephen's School.

John Bates
Principal

TERM DATES – 2025

Term 1 Wednesday 29 January – Friday 4 April (10 weeks)

Term 2 Tuesday 22 April – Friday 27 June (10 weeks)

Term 3 Monday 14 July – Friday 19 September (10 weeks)

Term 4 Tuesday 7 October – Friday 5 December (9 weeks)

PUPIL FREE DAY FOR 2025

Term 3 Friday 5 September *

***N.B. Students do not attend school on this day.**

TIMETABLE

Daily Timetable

First Bell	8:25 a.m.
Morning Session	8:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.
<i>Morning tea Break</i>	<i>10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.</i>
Middle Session	10:45a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
<i>Lunch Break</i>	<i>12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.</i>
Afternoon Session	1:00 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.
Final Bell	2:50 p.m.

ACTIVITIES / EXCURSIONS

Class activities/excursions are a means of highlighting school studies and stimulating interest in classroom work. All children are expected to participate in scheduled activities/excursions. Parents are advised of scheduled activities via email through a program called EdSmart. Parents are requested to give permission via this digital format prior to the event.

ASSESSMENT & REPORTS

School reports and parent/teacher interviews are designed to inform parents about their child's achievements and progress at school. Formal parent/teacher interviews are held twice a year. These meetings provide a forum for an exchange of information about each child. Staff members also welcome interviews with parents at other times. These meetings should be arranged by appointment.

Written reports are compiled twice each year, at the end of each school semester. Parents can access and download these from the Parent Portal.

ATTENDANCE

At St Stephen's we value high levels of attendance and punctuality. A record of the attendance of students is kept on a daily basis.

Parents, please notify the school by 8:45am via the Parent Portal or BCE Connect App if your child will not be attending school for the day and the school has not been informed already. Otherwise, a text message will be sent to your family's main school contact enquiring as to your child's whereabouts.

In the case of an extended absence, parents should advise the school in writing or via the BCE Connect app / Parent Portal of your child's anticipated return date to school.



Absences add up!



Did you know



1 in 5

BCE primary students don't attend school regularly

What families can do...

- Be firm: send your child to school every day, all day, unless they are sick
- Develop good sleep and morning routines
- Schedule appointments and extra-curricular activities outside of school
- Avoid taking holidays during term time
- Seek help early before your concerns become serious

It's never too late to improve attendance

- Going to school more often will make a difference
- Attendance habits will follow your child into work and life



Schools are here to help...

- Going to school more often will make a difference
- Attendance habits will follow your child into work and life

BCE/2018/001



Absences add up!



It's never too late to improve attendance

- Going to school more often will make a difference
- Attendance habits will follow your child into work and life

Did you know



1 in 3

BCE secondary students don't attend school regularly

What families can do...

- Be firm: send your child to school every day, all day, unless they are sick
- Develop good sleep and morning routines
- Schedule appointments and extra-curricular activities outside of school
- Avoid taking holidays during term time
- Seek help early before your concerns become serious

Each day missed...

- Puts your child behind and makes it harder for them to catch up
- Can lead to lower achievement in reading, writing and numeracy
- Can lead to gaps in learning and connections to friends
- Makes school completion less likely
- Makes the transition into the workforce or tertiary education, post school, less likely to be successful



Schools are here to help...

- If you are having attendance issues with your child, speak to your school about ways to address it.

BCE/2018/001

© Brisbane Catholic Education (2023)

ACCIDENTS & ILLNESS

Should your child suffer from an accident or a sudden illness at school, office staff will attempt to contact you by telephone. Parents should advise the school of any changes to contact information, including telephone numbers, as soon as possible so that the school's records are up-to-date and contact can be made in an emergency. These changes are to be made via the Parent Portal.

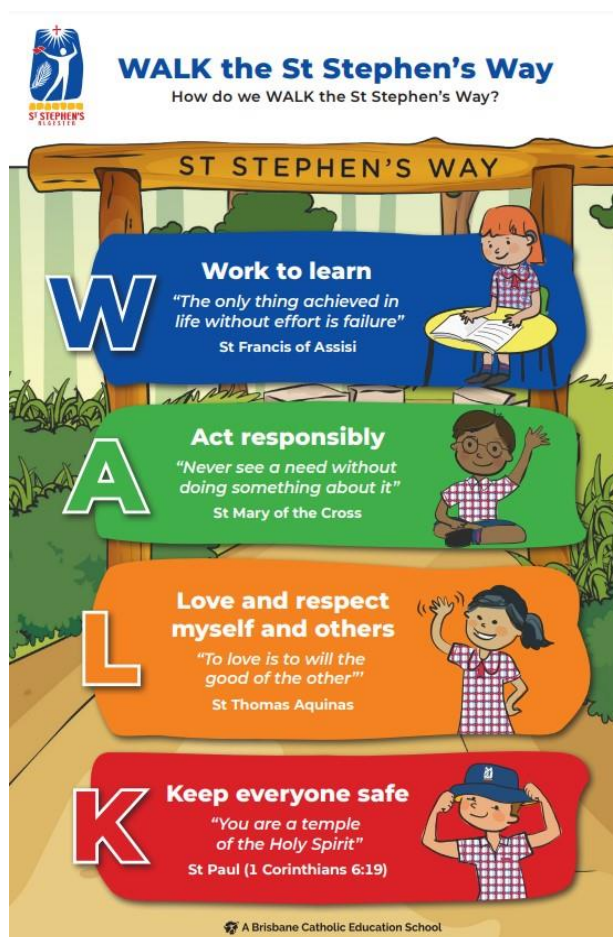
The school will call an ambulance for medical emergencies.

AWARDS

Student awards and certificates are presented at school assemblies and on other occasions to positively affirm the children for their engagement and behaviour.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

St Stephen's is a Positive Behaviours for Learning (PB4L) school. This means we focus on teaching students expected behaviours and attitudes. Teachers focus on positive interactions and praise for all students, promoting engaged learning behaviours. Our students strive to 'Walk the St Stephen's Way' – Work to Learn, Act Responsibly, Love and Respect Myself and Others and Keep Everyone Safe.



© Brisbane Catholic Education, St Stephen's School (2024)

BOOKS & STATIONERY

The school will order all textbooks/equipment/resources and stationery your child will require for the year. Parents will be charged a levy in order to pay for these items. This levy will appear on the School Fees Account for Term 1. If you are required to collect items prior to school commencing, you will be notified via email regarding a collection date.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAMS

Our school is assisted in its work by a team of qualified consultants employed by Brisbane Catholic Education. Team members specialise in areas such as:

- Religious Education
- Inclusive Education
- Child Guidance/Protection
- Curriculum and Teacher Development
- Information Technology
- Planning and Building

FIRE & EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

When the evacuation siren is sounded, children and adults must leave buildings via the exit doors and move, as directed by the teachers. The fire warden will ensure each building is empty. The roll is called when all children are assembled in the safety zone. Children and adults may return to classrooms after the roll is called and the all clear signal has been given. The evacuation plan is displayed at the main exit point of each room. Evacuation drills are held at least once each semester. The usual assembly point for an emergency evacuation is our oval.

The school will send a courtesy email to parents and caregivers when an evacuation drill has been completed.

HEALTH

The school should have up-to-date information about your child's health. Please advise the office of any changes.

HOMEWORK

Homework is assigned because:

- (a) the development of a regular home study habit can assist children with their learning
- (b) homework can provide parents with an opportunity to participate in the school's educational program.

- At St Stephen's we have a consistent approach to Homework across the school. Homework will be assigned each Friday and needs to be completed by the following Friday. Homework tasks are available via the Seesaw app.
- Reading/ Sound Letter Practice
- Maths Mentals/ Mental facts
- Word Study/ High Frequency Words

Parents are asked to check that homework is completed. If homework is not completed for a valid reason, then communication from home explaining the circumstances should be sent to the teacher.

The formal assignment of homework commences during Prep.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

School staff members value the uniqueness and individuality of each student and endeavour to provide opportunities for all children to experience success at school. We also endeavour to provide an environment that allows students to progress according to their abilities. Support is provided to those children who require additional assistance.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

At St Stephen's School, we recognise the tremendous impact technology has in all areas of society. Therefore, we endeavour to expose children to a variety of technologies, particularly computers and information technology. By using iPads and related technologies in the classroom, students are able to acquire skills and attitudes that will extend and enrich their learning. Students are given opportunities to use on-line information retrieval skills and electronic mailing to assess, manage and handle information in many forms, within a range of subject areas.

In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, our students are given the opportunity to use an assigned device for use at school and learning at home.

In Years Prep, 1 and 2, students are assigned an iPad to use at school.

LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY DEPARTURE

Students who arrive to school after the bell at 8:25am must be signed in at the school office electronically with either their parent or a caregiver. After signing in, please see the office staff to collect a printed slip, which is then handed to the class teacher. Similarly, for an early departure a parent/caregiver must email the school office and teacher prior to the day and then come to the main office to sign their child out before collecting them to leave, with the exception of Prep.

Parents are not permitted to walk their student to and from the classroom.

LIBRARY

Our school library is a resource centre that provides materials to meet the learning needs of our students. The library provides children with opportunities to develop the ability to co-operate with others by working in an area where reading, listening and viewing can be shared with other children. Through literature children can acquire a love of reading, which will enrich, enlarge and extend their world, stir their imaginations and help them to better understand themselves and others.

Modern technology, in the form of a computerised search and borrowing system, access to the Internet and educational programs are available in the library to allow children to become familiar with the use and benefits of computers in education.

To help children take appropriate care of library books, it is necessary for each child to use a water-resistant library bag, marked clearly with his/her name. Parents are asked to assist by ensuring that library books, when not in use, are kept in a library bag. Books are normally borrowed for a maximum period of two (2) weeks.

Library staff members appreciate offers of help from parents to volunteer to assist with book covering and other library tasks.

LOGO

St Stephen was one of the early leaders of the Christian Church. He has the distinction of being both the first deacon and the first martyr.

Well-educated and fluent in Greek, St Stephen preached the Gospel to those who were ultimately responsible for his trial and death by stoning.

At his trial, St Stephen spoke of the beliefs with which he is associated today, i.e.:

- The positive and powerful influence one's own faith can have on others.
- The need to live one's life according to values that have lasting importance.



© Brisbane Catholic Education,
St Stephen's School (2023)

Our logo shows an active figure responding to the influences of learning (symbolised by the book) and the love of God (symbolised by the cross). The palm frond is a symbol of martyrdom. This is especially significant to St Stephen, as the first Christian martyr. The figure in the logo is standing on stones that represent the solid moral foundation of Christianity and a Catholic education.

LOST PROPERTY

All items of clothing/property should be clearly named. Items of unclaimed property are kept in the school office. The school donates any unmarked and unclaimed clothing to the 2nd Hand Uniform Shop and other lost property is disposed of at the end of each term.

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

The school will not administer medication to children, unless:

1. There are written instructions prescribed by a doctor or other legally qualified medical practitioner on the container that specify:
 - (i) the name of the child,
 - (ii) the name of the medication,
 - (iii) the dosage,
 - (iv) the times the medication should be administered and
 - (v) the method of administration of the medication.
2. The school holds a signed Student Medication Request Form. (These forms are available from the school office and the BCE Connect App and Parent Portal, and, in some instances, both a parent and a medical practitioner must sign.)
3. **Staff are not able to administer non-prescribed medications e.g. analgesics or headache tablets.**

In the interests of all students and members of staff, if children are ill, they should not be at school until they have recovered from their illness.

NEWSLETTER

Each second Friday (even weeks), a school newsletter is published and is available on the BCE Connect app and/or Parent Portal. The newsletter is a very important means of communication between school and home. Parents are encouraged to read the newsletter to be informed of school activities, events and policies. **Please ensure that you advise us of any change to your email address via the Parent Portal.**

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are from 8:00a.m. – 3:30p.m., on weekdays, during each school term.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Parents and Friends Advisory Committee (P&F) endeavours to actively support the school. All parents and staff members belong to the P&F. The school's P&F Advisory Committee meets each term. Information about upcoming meetings is included the school newsletter.

All parents are encouraged to attend these meetings to be informed about school activities and share in decisions concerning the P&F. Social activities conducted by the P&F provide opportunities for families to connect with each other. Parents are welcome to join meetings via TEAMS if they're unable to attend in person.

PARENT/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

If you would like to discuss a classroom/school issue, please see your child's teacher in the first instance. To do this, please request an appointment, via email sent directly to your child's class teacher. If you would like to discuss a general school matter, please make an appointment to see a member of the school's leadership team (Principal, Assistant Principal or APRE).

PARENT PORTAL and BCE CONNECT APP

For all general school information the St Stephen's Parent Portal and/or BCE Connect App is the best place to go. The Parent Portal and App publishes important information to our community in a password protected and safe environment. Information such as the school calendar, school forms, tuckshop menus, teacher contact details and excursion photos can all be found on the Parent Portal. If you do not have your Parent Portal/BCE Connect app credentials please email the school palgester@bne.catholic.edu.au

All changes/updates to your personal details, including contact and address details, email address or your child's medical information needs to be made via the Parent Portal.

POLICIES

St Stephen's School has local policies in place and these policies are found at the back of this handbook: Enrolment Policy; Fee Collection and Payment Policy; Bullying Policy; and Uniform Policy. These policies are also available on our website.

Please contact the office should you have any questions or require further information about these policies.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our Catholic school is an integral part of the parish community and Archdiocese of Brisbane. The school's Religious Education program prepares children for full participation in the life of the Parish and aspires to educate and form students who are challenged to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and are literate in the Catholic and broader Christian tradition, so that they might participate critically and authentically in faith contexts and wider society. Our school follows the Religious Education Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Brisbane and teachers are regularly in serviced in this curriculum area.

The Assistant to the Principal - Religious Education (APRE) is a key member of the school's leadership team. The APRE is responsible for the coordination of the school's Religious Education program and the religious life of the school.

Because the Catholic faith underpins our school's mission and vision, we endeavour to encourage personal commitment and worship through:

- the gentle initiation of early years school children into year level and school liturgies, prayer assemblies and masses
- the inclusive involvement of all children in school worship
- cooperation with the parish in the preparation of children for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation.

RETENTION AND PROMOTION

Promotion from one year level to the next is based on a child's readiness. This is determined by assessing factors such as his/her academic, social and physical development. When the retention of a child is under consideration, parents, teachers and the Principal will be involved in the decision-making process. **Generally, the retention of a child would take place in exceptional circumstances only.** In most instances this would only occur in the Prep year.

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

Class, individual and family photos are taken each year, at school. Individual and class photos will be incorporated into your child's fees. Family photos will be at an additional cost.

SPORT & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Our school endeavours to maintain a balance between the teaching of physical skills and sports competition. Interschool Sport is a component of our Physical Education program, which commences in Year 4 through participation in Gala Sports Days. Children have opportunities to represent the school in cross country, athletics and swimming at a district, regional and state level.

SUPERVISION BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL

Supervision of children in the school hall commences at 8:00am each morning. Teachers are also rostered for supervision in the pick-up area, after school, until 3.10 p.m.

The pick up zone can be used by all students from Prep, provided your child buckle their own seat belts. Names are called using the laminated signs given to you on enrolment and children will come down the stairs from the hall to the designated pick up bays. Please note for safety that drivers must remain in their vehicle at all times and there is no access to car boots in this zone.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Parents, members of staff and visitors are expected to drive safely when in the vicinity of the school or on school property as the safety of everyone on the school site is a priority. Please abide by all traffic signs and do not park on the grass areas. To avoid traffic congestion at pick up time, please do not queue in the pick up bays prior to 2:45pm.

KEEPING SAFE AT ST STEPHEN'S

CARPARK ZONE & DRIVING SAFELY

- Drive at 5km/hr and follow all signage.
- Exercise patience, courtesy and caution as you navigate the carpark and Stop Drop Go zone.

MORE ABOUT THE STOP DROP & GO ZONE

- Stay in your vehicle
- Do not access the boot
- Teach your children to buckle their seat belt
- Our staff are here to support your child/ren get into the car safely

SUPERVISION BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL

Formal supervision before school commences 8am

Students consistently dropped off well before this time will be contacted by school

Students are formally supervised after school at Stop Drop Go zone from 2:50-3:15pm. Beyond this time we have a duty of care to monitor students who remain after this time.

Your cooperation in ensuring that children are collected before 3:15pm would be greatly appreciated.

TOP GATE AT ACKAMA STREET

If you are coming into the grounds to collect your children, it is your responsibility to ensure the safety of your children upon collection.

We ask that you actively supervise your children if you stay on the school grounds after the bell.

We would like all parents to be aware that the top gate on Ackama Street will be closed and locked at 3:15pm each afternoon

DOGS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

Due to BCE guidelines, dogs are not permitted on school grounds. This is a health and safety regulation based on allergies and the unpredictability of dogs.

TUCKSHOP (CURLEW CAFÉ)

The tuckshop provides children with an opportunity to purchase nutritious food for lunch. The Tuckshop Convenor welcomes the assistance of parent helpers. The Tuckshop is cashless, and orders can be placed using the Qkr! app. Our tuckshop operates Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Tuckshop orders must be placed **before 8am** on the day of ordering.

Our Tuckshop convenor, Mrs Natalie Malesevic, can be contacted via email: nmalesevic@bne.catholic.edu.au

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

When visiting the school during school hours, please register your arrival and departure by signing in/out at the office. When you sign-in, you will be given a badge to wear, e.g., visitor, volunteer. These procedures assist with school safety and security.

VOLUNTEERING AT ST STEPHEN'S SCHOOL

Volunteers, be they parents or friends of St Stephen's School, are very welcome and are a critical part of daily school life. Volunteering in classrooms or for Tuckshop, P&F, School Board, working bees, Fetes, or other roles, enhances the quality of teaching and learning that we provide.

All volunteers must be trained in student protection and safety protocols before they are able to lend their skills and services to the community. By undertaking the online training accessible through the BCE website, parents, grandparents and friends can agree to a code of conduct and register as volunteers in our school. The online volunteer training takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Volunteer training must be completed annually.

Background

The training of volunteers is now mandatory in Queensland under ***The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG) Act***. Most of these training expectations are in relation to Child Protection and exist for the good of all students in our care. There are some very specific expectations on schools in relation to volunteers who work in the school. These are set out in the Volunteer Registration Pack.

Volunteers Who Are Not Parents (this includes the grandparents of school students)

All non-parent volunteers at our school must also undergo **employment screening** and receive a **Positive Notice Blue Card** for Volunteers. This positive notice is now an essential requirement, under Queensland Legislation, before the services of volunteers can be accepted at our school.

Along with this card, you must undergo the Student Protection Training mentioned above and complete the various documents to ensure you and the school comply with the requirements for volunteers under the current legislation.

Once registered, volunteers may become involved in a range of volunteer tasks. Volunteers are asked to sign in at the office on every occasion they work in our school.



St Stephen's School Prayer

Dear God

This is our school.

Help us to make it a happy and peaceful place –
full of smiling faces
friendly voices and
kind actions.

Help us to grow in courage,
wisdom and faith.

Thank you for the love of family,
friends and teachers.

May our love for You shine through.

Amen.

Attach current TIME OUT poster from
Qld Health

St Stephen's School Policies

- Enrolment policy
- Fee Collection policy
- Bullying policy
- Uniform policy