

Kindergarten 2025

Welcome to our new parents and students, and "hello again" to parents who already have children at St Therese's

Anticipating and preparing for a child's entry to Kindergarten is a parenting milestone. Although many children now attend a preschool program when they reach three or four years of age, Kindergarten is still viewed by most parents as their child's "official" entry into a formal system of education.

The Kindergarten vision at St Therese's is:

"Learners in Early Stage One are creative and critical thinkers, compassionate responsive citizens, who display a love and respect of God, self and others"

This complements the St Therese's Mission and Vision Foundational Statement:

*"Relationships at St Therese's are centred on the development of a **supportive and collaborative** learning environment that are built on the Gospel values of **trust, support and respect** where all participants feel **valued and welcomed.**"*

Kindergarten is a time for children to expand their: love of learning, general knowledge, ability to get along with others, resilience, and interest in reaching out to the world. It is also a lovely time when the children begin to learn about and better understand our Catholic faith and traditions.

The Kindergarten "curriculum" includes activities such as creative play and discovery in individual, small group and large group formats, as well as those activities we think of as traditionally educational. Play-based learning plays a crucial role in our classrooms. Play and learning are not dichotomous, young children learn and make sense of the world around them by manipulating materials, engaging with their peers, engaging all their senses, and working through their thoughts and feelings. There are many benefits of play-based learning. Through play, children develop their sense of curiosity, learn to problem solve, take turns, negotiate with peers, cope with disappointment, listen to others and empathise.

Our developmentally appropriate Kindergarten classrooms, encourage the growth of children's self-esteem, their cultural identities, their independence, and their individual strengths. We believe that children have unlimited potential to love and learn. It is amazing what kids can do when given the opportunity! Kindergarten sets the foundation for learning while building self-esteem, carrying children forward into their world with confidence!

We look forward to a very exciting and successful year working with your child. We have lots of fun, educational, social, and emotional experiences planned to make this year a special one for each child.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does my child need to bring to school?

- Backpack (**clearly labelled**) big enough to fit everything in (can the bag fit in a lunch box, drink container, jumper, raincoat, homework folder and other treasures). We have bags for sale here at St Therese's as an option, however these are not compulsory.
- Library Bag (**clearly labelled**).
- Raincoat (**clearly labelled**).

Lunch

For the first two weeks, the Year 6 buddies will assist the children with their lunch, while the teachers supervise the children while they eat. A small lunch is best for the first few weeks. We often find that our new Kinder children will just ‘nibble’ their food at the start of the term – often because of the excitement of school and the busy playground. Do not be too concerned by this.

Children will often be hungry after school. They may also be very tired in the first few weeks, especially if the weather is hot. We do not force children to eat all their food, but we will not allow them to throw food away. Uneaten food will go home in your child’s lunch box so you can see what your child is, or is not, eating to make any adjustments.

Afternoon Recess

Recess is a shorter period of 30 minutes. We encourage the children to sit while they eat before going to play. As this is a short break, be careful not to send too much food. Large items of fruit, such as apples, are difficult for young children to eat especially when their teeth start getting “wobbly”! Please cut fruit into bite-sized pieces.

Learning to Write Names

When teaching your child to write their name, it would be helpful if you showed them their name written with a capital letter at the beginning only, followed by lower case letters. For example: Jane.

What happens on the first day?

The long awaited first day of Kindergarten has arrived!

A good night’s sleep and a healthy breakfast will help to make this exciting day even more enjoyable. Allow plenty of time for the morning routine (packing their school bag the night before may be a good time saver).

Walk your child to their Kindergarten classroom. Class lists will be displayed outside each room. Allow them to carry their own bag and be responsible for placing it on the hook labelled with their name outside the classroom. Upon arrival, take your child to their teacher. Your child can look for their nametag on their desk and start the activities that their teacher has placed on their desk. Your child’s buddy will join them for lunch and recess.

If there is important information you would like to tell the teacher on the first day, a good tip is to write it down and hand it to the teacher when they receive you and your child.

Remember to smile and be encouraging. Make positive comments – your good attitude will rub off! Your child is beginning a great adventure! Remember to bring the camera!

When it is time to leave, a short and reassuring goodbye will give your child confidence and greater independence. Be guided by your child’s teacher and school staff who will have many strategies in place to encourage a stress-free start to the school day. Once you have said goodbye to your child, it is time to go and share a coffee with the other parents in the school hall. The best advice for the first day of school is, do not linger over goodbyes or stay too long.

If there is a problem, take your child to the classroom teacher, and then leave yourself. Children usually settle in quickly once parents have left. Please feel free to phone the school later if you are worried, to check on your child.

Be patient. Many young children are overwhelmed at first because they have not had much experience in dealing with new situations. They may not immediately like school. Your child may cry or cling to you when you say goodbye each morning, but with support from you and their Kindergarten teacher, this can rapidly change.

For Week 1, parents are asked to pick up their child directly from their classroom anytime between 2.30-3.00pm each day. From Week 2 children, will go to afternoon dismissal with the whole school.

What happens on the Second Day and Beyond?

Walk your child to their classroom and, once again, they should be carrying their own bag; and this time they should be responsible for placing it on their hook.

Various activities and toys will be set up inside for the children. Once again, say a positive goodbye and leave.

You are encouraged to drop your child at the Royal St or Burke St pedestrian gates as soon as you feel your ready is ready. These gates open at 8:45am each morning. Children enjoy meeting with their friends in the playground and engaging in play before the morning bell.

How does Afternoon Dismissal work?

For the first week, you will be collecting your child from their classroom. Beginning Week 2, the children will learn how to line up with the rest of the school for afternoon dismissal. It is a school rule that children attend the assembly lines and the teachers on duty escort them to the various gates. From Week 2 onwards, parents/carers will not be permitted to pick up children from their class. If we find that the children need an extra week to settle into school before we start afternoon dismissal, we may extend this to Week 3 – this will be communicated to you early in the new year via Compass.

Teachers will contact you via an email or survey prior to Week 2 for you to indicate how your child will go home each day and which exit they will be leaving from. More information about the options for pick up will be available in the first week of school.

What happens at school assemblies?

There is an afternoon assembly in the hall for the whole school on Mondays weeks 2, 6 and 10 each term. Assembly starts at 2.30pm. Assemblies involve a liturgy, led by our Year 6 student leadership team, school news, important notices, and the presentation of the School Spirit Awards for exemplary behaviour. You are welcome to attend this at any time.

How do I do a lunch order?

We ask you to send a packed lunch for the first two weeks to allow your child to settle in. After this if you would like to order your child's lunch, see below:

- You can order via the “Flexi Schools” app. Download the app and create your account via <https://www.flexischools.com.au/>. Enter St Therese’s Primary School New Lambton

A lunch order box is located on each class verandah for children to place their paper bag orders in when they arrive at school. The lunches will be delivered to your child’s classroom just prior to lunchtime.

What is the Compass app?

Compass is a comprehensive student information system that enables the school to effectively manage all information relating to your child/children and their school journey. The system forms part of a broader implementation for the Diocese of Maitland - Newcastle. This solution will offer a secure, yet easy, connection to communicate with the school and receive information about your child's journey at St Therese's.



The Compass Parent App is available for you to download. You will receive your login and password **early in the school year!** This is our primary source of information distribution. We encourage parents to familiarise themselves with Compass and how Compass works. At the Kindergarten Information Night early in the year, we will demonstrate all the features of Compass. The types of information you will find from Compass includes:

- Monitor your child’s attendance and enter in explanations for absences.
- View ‘My News’, a news feed of school announcements, newsletters, alerts and updates.
- View your child's schedule and the school calendar.
- Download and view your child's semester reports.

You can log into the Parent Portal by using the URL <https://newlambton-nsw.compass.education/> or download the Compass School Manager app from your app store (iPhones) or the Play Store (Android).

You will receive a letter before the end of the year, with your unique code that is relevant to you as an individual guardian. Upon your first log-on attempt, you will be prompted to create an individual password. Please be mindful of the importance of protecting this password and username. A parent guide to Compass will also be sent home with this letter. Using the parent guide, follow the instructions to log-into the system and access key information relating to your child.

Also, use the opportunity to download the Compass School Manager App on your smartphone. The log in process on the app will be identical to the school log-on. Please ensure you have downloaded the App and allowed push notifications, as well as regularly checking the portal for key information relating to your child/children. This will ensure effective communication between school and home.

The phone app is useful for adding attendance notes. We recommend using the app on a PC or iPad for all other uses of Compass.

Parent Engagement Group

The school Parent Engagement Group (PEG) is a voluntary body of parents that meet to look at the focus of the school and for specific projects across the school year.

PEGs will be advertised in the school Newsletter and parents/carers are encouraged to participate in PEGs they are interested in.

How do I let the school know my child is sick or going on holidays?

If your child is sick, or absent for any reason, please contact the school within 7 days of the absence. This can be done via the Compass app, sending an email to admin@newlambton.catholic.edu.au or phoning the school on 4957 4922.

If your child arrives late to school, or needs to leave early, please call at the school office and use the Compass kiosk available at the front counter to sign your child in or out.

If you are planning a holiday and will be away for 10 school days or more, written permission must be obtained from the Principal prior to commencing the holiday. Forms are available from the front office or on the school website under [Parents – Attendance Information/Request for Student Extended Leave](#).

What if my child needs medication?

If for any reason your child needs to be given medicine at school, please see the class teacher. Medicine is administered by the clerical staff. If medication is to be administered, medical forms must be completed by parents/guardians. These are obtainable from the school office. Children are **NOT** permitted to keep medicine in their school bag.

It is my child's birthday – can I bring in something to celebrate?

At school we like to share birthdays. You are most welcome to bring, cupcakes, donuts, chocolate etc, to school to celebrate your child's special day. Please ensure the treat is something that is easy and quick to dispense to students.

Can we share our family's exciting events?

We love to hear about exciting events that happen in your child's life. Please let your child's teacher know if something special has happened so we can share it with the class.

What sport activities will my child be involved in?

The Kindergarten children do not participate in competitive sports activities such as soccer, netball, etc. It is mandatory that children complete physical activity each week. The children will complete a variety of physical activities for approximately 10 minutes each day. Sport lessons are held once a week for approximately one hour and will focus on movement skills, dance, fitness, games, relays etc. Kindergarten has a specified sports day of which you will be notified.

Do you need parent helpers?

Parents are an important part of our Kinder classroom. If you can spare some time to join us, we would love to see you. Your class teacher will let you know when your assistance would be appreciated.

You will need to complete the Volunteer Induction on the Catholic School Office website, before you can volunteer at the school. Refer visit the Catholic School Office Volunteer site at <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/people/volunteer/>.

What is Seesaw?

Kindergarten use an App called Seesaw – this is a secure, private online space where teachers can keep you informed of what your child is doing at school and keep you involved and up to date with your child's development.

Seesaw provides each child with an online community, which you (their parent/guardian) own and control who has access to.

Seesaw helps educators, children, and families:

- improve understanding of each child's interests and abilities so they receive even better support
- deepen relationships and strengthen communication
- share videos, photos and text capturing children's learning and development
- create a portfolio of your child's learning that travels with your child and can be accessed by you forever
- reinforce experiences and deepen children's learning
- involve the children in their portfolio
- interact quickly and effectively through iPhone, Android and tablets

Content we add, will only be shared with our teachers, you and the family members you choose to invite. No personal information is shared with any third party.

You will receive an email early next year with an invite to your child's Seesaw community.

Payment of Money

School fees will be billed annually at the beginning of each year. Parents will be emailed their statement via Compass. Payments can be made via cash, BPay, direct debit, EFTPOS, or credit card.



Please ensure any cash sent into school, is in a clearly marked envelope stating, child's name, class, reason for payment and amount enclosed. Children should hand this envelope to their teacher at the beginning of the day.

A Few Final Tips

- Be flexible in the early days of school. Children may be tired and grumpy for a while until they settle in, and they sometimes need lots of support.
- Do not expect too much. New learning takes a long time and children learn at different rates. You can help by encouraging; taking an interest and showing you care.
- A snack straight after school can make up for a missed lunch due to excitement or anxiety. Children are often hungry after school and something to eat keeps them going.
- Talk to other parents and share your ideas, experiences, and feelings. Please remember not to compare your child to their classmates, even their siblings.
- Have faith that your child will be able to manage.
- Try not to be late picking up your child. A few minutes can seem like a very long time to a small child. Please call the school if you are running late. Be aware that your child will be supervised until you arrive.
- Let the teacher know if anything is happening in your family that might upset your child at school. Talk to the teacher if you have concerns or worries about your child.

Useful Websites for Parents

<http://www.kidspot.com.au>

An Australian website for parents including toddler, preschool, school age information (food, play, development, behaviour and health)

<http://kidshealth.org/parents/>

An American website with helpful information for parents regarding a wide variety of health issues (emotions, growth and development, nutrition, medical etc.)

Relax and enjoy starting Kindergarten! It will be an exciting journey for both you and your child. Kindergarten is the most memorable of grades and much of what your child learns begins in this grade.