24th January, 2026

Dear Families,

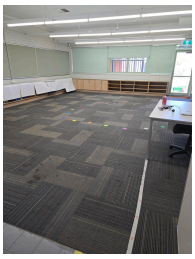
Welcome back to a brand new school year! I hope you and your child/children had a restful, joyful summer, and are excited to begin another year of learning, growth, and building community together.

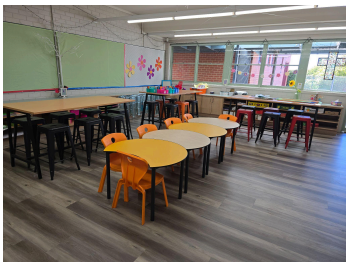
This year, we are introducing a 2026 school theme, *"Let Your Light Shine,"* which aligns with St Bernard's school motto, *"Love Serves."* St. Bernard of Clairvaux showed that love serves through both his actions and his teaching, through humble service, compassion and care for others. He believed that true love is not self-seeking, but is expressed by giving oneself for God and for others.



Throughout the year, we will encourage all in our community to shine their light through kindness, curiosity, perseverance, social justice, creativity, and respect for others. *"Let Your Light Shine"* also reflects our commitment to creating a safe, supportive environment where every student feels seen, valued, and empowered to be their best self - spiritually, academically, socially, and emotionally. You will see this theme reflected in classroom activities, school events, PBL (Positive Behaviour for Learning) and TRP (The Resilience Project) lessons, and the ways we celebrate student successes, both big and small.

I am thrilled to inform you that over the holidays new flooring was installed in our brand new Art space (previous Foundation classroom). Ms Julie (Constable) is super excited to be teaching our Art program in 2026, which further enhances our curriculum, supporting children to build creativity and fine motor skills, spark curiosity and support emotional expression.



Franca Frangomeni has accepted a position at another Catholic primary school, so will not be returning to St Bernard's in 2026. Franca has been a valued member of staff at St Bernard's for over 10 years and I would like to thank Franca for her contribution to St Bernard's community. Franca has held various roles over the years and has shown unwavering dedication and a genuine commitment to supporting staff, students and families. I am sure you join with me in deep gratitude for the countless hours Franca has invested to ensure the optimal wellbeing and learning outcomes for everyone at St Bernard's and in wishing her every success for the future.

Interviews for the Learning Diversity Leadership Position/Literacy enhancement role have taken place and I am pleased to announce that Belinda Smith will be joining our St Bernard's community in 2026. Belinda has extensive experience in leading and strengthening inclusive educational practices in multiple school settings, with her most recent appointment working for the Department of Education as an Inclusive Education/Learning Diversity Coordinator. Belinda will begin her role at St Bernard's on the 16th of February, working Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We warmly welcome her to our school community.

The playground games have now been installed, and they were well worth the wait! After gathering feedback from our Junior students in 2025, we were able to include an additional Snakes and Ladders game, along with a *chess board* and *hopscotch*. I look forward to seeing our students enjoy and make full use of these bright new additions to the Junior Playground.

Please note: Grade 3 students will be able to choose which playground they would prefer to play in, rather than restricting them to the Patterson St area, providing more options for engaging activities on the Junior or Senior playground. This will be reviewed at the end of term 1.





I am delighted to welcome our Prep students who will have their first day of school on Wednesday 27th January from 9am-1pm. A reminder to Prep families that their ‘Getting to know you Chat,’ will take place on Wednesday 4th February.
Booking Link - https://www.schoolinterviews.com.au/code/nv5kv

I look forward to seeing the students for their first official day of school for 2026 on Thursday 29th January. A reminder that students are supervised by a teacher on the Patterson St yard from 8.30am. To comply with Catholic enterprise agreement time allocation requirements, students will now enter their classrooms at 8.50am (instead of 8.45am).

Please make sure you have booked your ‘Getting to know you Chat,’ which will take place for Years 1-6 on Wednesday 28th January.
Booking Link - https://www.schoolinterviews.com.au/code/hm5b2

I am eager to gather feedback about St Bernard’s current ‘Reporting Student Progress and Achievement Processes.’ I invite you to complete the following anonymous survey sharing your thoughts and ideas to review and enhance our current practices. St Bernard's Reporting Student Progress and Achievement Feedback

The ‘Bernardo’ newsletter for 2026 will be distributed fortnightly beginning on Wednesday 11th February. The newsletter will feature a slightly updated format this year, including regular updates on learning and teaching, religious education, wellbeing, and digital technologies, to further support and enhance parent engagement in learning. Switching to fortnightly newsletters will allow for these changes to take place. If you have any questions or concerns about the change to fortnightly newsletters, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

I deeply value working in partnership with families and know that when we work together, our students thrive. Thank you for your continued support, trust, and engagement in your child’s learning and involvement in our school community. I look forward to a year filled with learning, growth and connection, and many opportunities for our students to shine.

Warmest regards

Julie Di Noto

Julie Di Noto
Principal