VOLUME:II

Newsletter

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Catholic School Parents Victoria

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OCTOBER 2026

Newsletter

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Welcome from the Executive Officer



Welcome to the second edition of the CSPV newsletter.

In this edition, you'll find an update on our advocacy ahead of the Victorian State Election, the latest information on the *Thriving Kids* initiative, and some practical ideas for helping young people through assessments and exams.

CSPV is keeping parents informed via social media and emails for our parent community for upcoming events. This term we have already shared informative webinars from Andrew Fuller and Dr Simon Breakseapr. We look forward to sharing more opportunities in 2027.

Since our last newsletter, we've added some important new resources to the CSPV website to support parents and families. These include information on school attendance and school refusal, as well as services and support for families with diverse learners.

As the school year draws to a close and we enter the Advent season, it is also a time to pause and reflect on the hope, joy and community at the heart of our Catholic faith as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ.

On behalf of the CSPV Council, I would like to thank you for your support and engagement with CSPV throughout the year. We wish you and your family a blessed Advent, a joyful Christmas and a safe and restful holiday season.

Please feel free to share this newsletter with other parents, carers and members of your school community.

Warm regards,
Lee Tadic, Executive Officer, Catholic School Parents Victoria

Meet the Council: David Wilkins, Deputy Chair



As Deputy Chair of CSPV David Wilkins brings a strong commitment to Catholic education, family engagement and effective parent representation.

A father of children currently attending Catholic schools, David values the compassion, positivity and commitment to continuous improvement that are at the heart of Catholic education. He is passionate about strengthening the partnership between parents and schools and ensuring families have a meaningful voice in their children's education.

David is an experienced strategic and operational leader with a diverse professional background spanning healthcare, academia, technology and agriculture. He holds an MBA from the Australian Institute of Business and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He currently works at Melbourne Business School as Head of Development, Healthcare and Education, where he leads strategic partnerships and business development initiatives that support leadership and executive education across the sector.

Within his local school community, David serves as Chair of the School Advisory Council at his children's school, contributing to strategic planning and initiatives that strengthen family engagement. Through this role, he has seen firsthand the value of strong family-school partnerships in supporting student learning, wellbeing and community connection.

As CSPV continues to strengthen family-school partnerships and advocate on the issues that matter most to families, David's leadership, experience and dedication make an important contribution to the organisation's work across the state.

Advocacy Update

Many Catholic school families are hearing about changes being considered for 2027 as schools respond to rising costs. Understandably, this may raise questions for parents about what these changes could mean for their children and their school community.

One of the key cost pressures facing Catholic schools is the commitment to teacher pay parity with government schools. The Catholic education sector is committed to ensuring teachers in Catholic schools are paid fairly and recognised for the important work they do. Catholic school employers and the Independent Education Union are currently negotiating a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement that will increase wages by up to 32.4 per cent over four years.

Our teachers deserve this commitment, and it is important that Catholic schools can continue to attract and retain great teachers. However, these increases also add to the cost of running schools. Catholic schools are predominantly funded by the federal government through the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). However, this funding is not increasing at the same rate as the costs associated with running schools, creating a funding gap.

As it currently stands, too much of the burden of funding this gap is being passed onto Catholic schools and school families. Both the Australian Government and the Victorian Government need to step up and provide more support to schools to fund the forthcoming increases in staff salaries – not just force these costs on schools and parents.

Taking our concerns to the Federal Government

CSPV Chair Sue Sukkar wrote to Federal Education Minister Jason Clare on behalf of the CSPV Council and Victorian Catholic school parents, asking the Australian Government to review SRS funding in light of the increasing costs facing Catholic schools.

Under existing legislation, the Australian Government can adjust SRS funding in extraordinary circumstances. CSPV believes the unprecedented increases in teacher salaries that are facing Catholic schools in Victoria warrant such an adjustment. CSPV has requested a meeting with the Minister to discuss this issue alongside Catholic School Parents Australia. CSPV will keep our parent community informed of any developments.

Ahead of the Victorian State Election

Prior to the Victorian State Election, CSPV is working with VCEA to make sure the priorities of Catholic school parents are heard. A key election issue is school funding. Funding from the Victorian Government helps keep Catholic schools affordable, and is especially important at this time given the cost increases facing both schools and families.

The funding Catholic schools receive from the Victorian Government is linked to the funding it provides government schools. This linked is set to provide Catholic schools with much-needed funding to also assist in meeting rising school costs. However, the Victorian Labor Government has refused to commit to continuing these arrangements.

Recently, Catholic school parent Garry Herbert was featured in the *Herald Sun*, highlighting the importance of keeping Catholic education accessible and calling for current recurrent funding arrangements to be maintained. To date, only the Liberal-National Coalition has provided this commitment.

Supporting Your Child Through Assessment and Exam Time

As the school year draws to a close, many students are facing assessments and exams. For some, it's a chance to show what they've learned. For others, revision, deadlines and worries about results can make this a stressful time.

As parents and carers, it can be hard to know how much to step in. Do we encourage another hour of study? Help make a timetable? Suggest a break? Or simply give them some space?

There is no one right approach, but we're here to offer a few simple tips that may help you and your child navigate assessment and exam time.

Avoid too much Pressure

A little stress at assessment and exam time is normal and can help with motivation and concentration. Too much pressure, however, can have the opposite effect.

Young people can put enormous expectations on themselves, particularly when they're thinking about results, university, apprenticeships or what comes next.

Remind your child that while assessments and exams are important, they are only one part of their education. As Carolyn Watts, Manager of Vocational Programs at headspace, reminds young people: *"Exam results do not determine your future."* Sometimes our children simply need to hear that from us too.

Work in Partnership with Your Child's School

If you're unsure how your child is going, or they seem particularly anxious or overwhelmed, reach out to their teacher or wellbeing staff.

A quick phone call or email can help put your mind at ease and make sure everyone is on the same page. It also gives you and the school an opportunity to put strategies in place early if needed.

Strong partnerships between families and schools are especially important during busy or stressful times. Keeping the conversation open helps everyone feel supported.

Be Supportive



Every young person is different. Some will appreciate practical help, while others might need encouragement, a quiet space or someone to listen.

Try asking:

> *"What would be most helpful from me right now?"*

A family calendar with assessment and exam dates can help everyone know what's coming up. Encourage your child to use a study planner and break larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps.

It's also worth encouraging the basics: regular meals, enough sleep, physical activity and some time away from study to relax and recharge.

And When the Assessment or Exam Is Over...

Whatever the result, acknowledge the effort your child has put in and take the time to celebrate reaching the end of a busy period.

For some students, finishing their final exams will also mark the end of their school years and the beginning of an exciting new chapter.

CSPV wishes all students the very best with their upcoming assessments and exams.

References

- headspace. (2022). *A young person's guide to managing stress at exam time – and what we can all do to support them*. headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation.

Thriving Kids Initiative

You may have heard about Thriving Kids, particularly in relation to changes to the NDIS. For families whose children may need additional help with their development, communication, behaviour or wellbeing, these changes are particularly important. Understandably, parents may be wondering what Thriving Kids will mean for their child and the services available to them.

Thriving Kids is a new program that sits separately from the NDIS and is being progressively introduced across Australia. In Victoria, the first stage began on 1 October 2026, with further services to be introduced during 2027 and 2028.

Thriving Kids and the NDIS. What is the difference?

Thriving kids is designed for children eight and under with developmental delay and/or autism and low to moderate support needs. It aims to provide families with information, early support and connections to services closer to where children live, learn and play. (www.health.gov.au/thrivingkids) Thriving Kids differs from the NDIS, as it will not provide families with an individual budget to spend on services. Instead under Thriving Kids supports and services will be funded directly or delivered by governments and providers.

The NDIS will continue to support children with permanent and significant disability and higher support needs, including children with developmental delay and/or autism. There are no changes for children currently on NDIS until January 1, 2028. (www.health.gov.au/thrivingkids)

What is available in Victoria from 1 October 2026?

Victorian families can already access several services as part of the first stage of the Thriving Kids rollout.

Here is a summary of services and these are also listed at www.cspv.catholic.edu.au

Support Service	Explanation	Access
Strengthening Parent Support Program	The expanded program supports parents and carers of children aged 0–18 with disability or developmental delay.	https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/strengthening-parent-support-program

The Association for Children with a Disability Support Line	The service can help families understand Thriving Kids as well as their child's rights and school support.	Ph: 03 9880 7000 Rh: 1800 654 013 (regional families) Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm.| Interpreters are available.
Additional Autism Assessments	Additional autism assessments through OTARC for low income families, first nation families or those who live in areas where services are limited.	Talk to GP or Maternal Health Nurse. Contact OTARC Ph: (03) 9479 2497
Thriving Kids Information and Resources Hub	A resource available to families is the Thriving Kids Information & Resources Hub, developed by the Raising Children Network	https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/thriving-kids
Thriving Kids National Phoneline	Families can also access the Thriving Kids National Phoneline, where maternal and child health nurses provide advice about child development and behaviour.	**Thriving Kids National Phoneline:** 1800 882 436 7am–midnight (AEST), 7 days a week. **Thriving Kids Autism Helpline:** 1300 654 789 8am–7pm (AEST), Monday–Friday
Thriving Kids Survey	The Centre for Child and Community Health are asking kids to tell us what they think. Using real data to inform Thriving Kids implementation thinking across the country.	Complete the Survey https://www.ccch.org.au/resource-hub/policy-brief/childrens-voices-on-thriving-kids/

We encourage you to check out the Thriving Kids Victoria website to learn more about the program.

What about school support?

It is important to note that Thriving Kids does not replace the support that schools provide.

Schools continue to support students to participate in education, including reasonable adjustments and educational supports for children with a disability through the NCCD.

If you have concerns about your child's learning, communication, behaviour or participation at school talk to your child's teacher or school. You do not have to wait for a Thriving Kids assessment or service. Schools can work with families and other professionals to identify strategies and supports that can help your child. (www.vic.gov.au).



You don't have to navigate this alone

CSPV will continue to follow the Thriving Kids rollout in Victoria and share updates with our parent community as further services and information become available.

References

- Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. *Thriving Kids*. https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/thriving-kids?language=en
- Victorian Government Department of Education. *Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability: NCCD and Disability Inclusion*. https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/nccd-students-with-disability/guidance/nccd-and-disability-inclusion