

Learning, Respect, Community and Faith

ST RITA'S SCHOOL
BABINDA



7-13 Church St
Babinda QLD 4861

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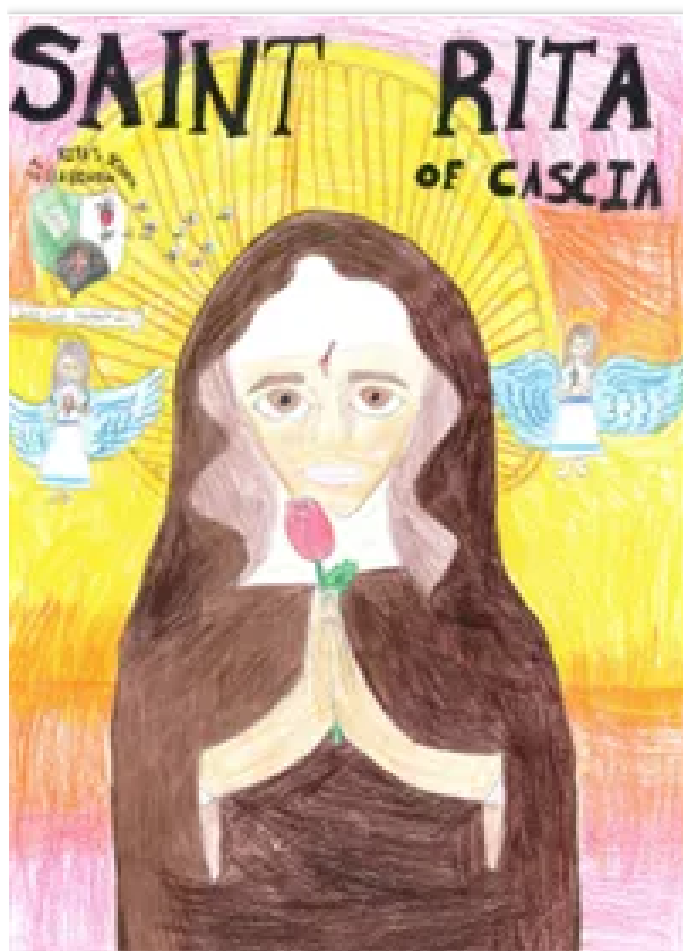


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2 April 2026

VISION STATEMENT



St Rita's school is a dynamic learning community strengthened by our Mercy heritage and inspired through the teachings of Jesus Christ. We are connected and compassionate to the needs of our community and are proud of our local Wanyurr-Majay culture. We engage our learners through relevant and hands-on experiences, bringing joy and confidence to learning.



Dear Parents and Carers,

"Merciful Lord, help me to see people as you see them. Amen."

This was a prayer I saw once, and it resonated with me so deeply that it is now on the wall in my office as a constant prayer and personal challenge.

So how does God see us?

Psalm 145 8:9 tell us –

*The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.*

For me, that is a huge relief. I have a God that is rich in Mercy, which I no doubt need as a flawed and imperfect human. That is not to say I'm off the

hook though, while he is a forgiving God, he is also a God of Justice.

In fact, there are numerous times in the New Testament narrative where Jesus himself stresses the need to repent. One famous example is the woman who was caught in adultery in John 8. Jesus saved her from being stoned to death by telling the angry crowd, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." Once they all dispersed he looked up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again."

As a Catholic/Christian, this is a great challenge for me. To not judge, to empathise, to forgive, and to set a good example, not just with people that share similar values, but all people. After all we are told in Luke 5;

the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Bek and I recently enjoyed a rare date to the movies to see the latest Elvis film. For reasons unbeknown to me, I have for as long as I can remember been a fan of Elvis. Bek does not share this affection for the late singer and entertainer.

Bek told me she couldn't enjoy the movie because of her distaste for Elvis the person. She felt he had poor character, was a bad father and husband, was extremely vain, full of self-importance, and treated women as mere objects. All valid criticisms.

I stuck up for the King of Rock 'n' Roll however and explained about his extreme generosity, his kindness with strangers, his dedication to his craft and his ability to bring Gospel music to the masses. Bek immediately could see my perspective.

I then asked myself if I would apply the same logic to her favourite musicians. Am I willing to see the good in Kesha, Britney, Rhianna, and Beyonce?

I can see how hard this might be and how my bias might affect this.

From a school perspective, I find this easier with students. I am also inspired to do this everyday by our brilliant staff, who seem to have endless mercy and compassion.

Every child that walks through the gates of our school is treated with the highest dignity. When they make mistakes, as we all do, they are treated with fairness, kindness, compassion, mercy and justice, which admittedly can be challenging at times.

However, challenging it is, we as a staff understand that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. It is our duty as Christians to have unconditional, positive regard for them all and treat them accordingly.

If we see each person how God sees them, how can we not be anything but kind and loving towards them?

How blessed we are to have a school community enriched and enlivened by these Gospel values.

Christians are sometimes called resurrection people. Let us bask in the resurrection this Sunday, count our blessings, and be joy-filled, positive people each day.

Wishing you all a safe, happy and Holy Easter break.

P&F Report

Our most recent meeting was held on 9/3/2026.

The following 2026 dates and events were agreed upon:

Term 1

- Easter Raffle – Drawn Wednesday 1/4

Term 2

- Mother's Day Afternoon Tea – Friday 8th May
- Barn Dance – Friday 5th June

Term 3

- Harvest Festival, Trivia Night 9th September and Float 12th September
- Father's Day Celebration – TBC

Term 4

- Centenary Celebration – 23rd and 24th October

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday the 22nd of April**. All welcome.

NAPLAN

Earlier this term, our Year 3 and Year 5 students completed their NAPLAN testing. This can be a challenging time for students, but they all gave it their best effort and persisted through the four tests.

Parents will be notified of results, usually by mid-August.

I would like to congratulate our students for their effort this year. Please read Ms Benvenuti's article in this newsletter for further thoughts and information on this nationwide test.

SPORTS REPORT

Cross Country

For the first time, our whole school was involved in the Small Schools Cross-Country event at Mirriwinni SS in Week 8.

I was incredibly impressed by the determination, grit, and positive attitude our students displayed on the day.

Congratulations to Abel, Michael, Madeline, and Teddy, who finished first in their respective races.

Other placegetters were:

- **2nd:** Ruby, Charlie, Daniel & Samuel
- **3rd:** Sylie, Matilda, Levi, Alex & Danny

Some of our older students have now qualified for the Cassowary Coast Cross Country in Innisfail on the 8th of May. More information about this will be provided next term.

AFL

Last Monday, Abel travelled to Cairns to compete in the AFL Peninsula Trials. Approximately 80 students from across the region participated.

Despite being a bottom-aged player, Abel performed exceptionally well and was named as a **shadow player** for the final team of 20. This means he will train with the team and may be called up if there is an injury or unavailability. Well done, Abel!

Chef Ayden

It has been a wonderful initiative to have a pop-up tuckshop operating at our school this term. Chef Ayden, under the guidance of MasterChef Miss Jenni, has prepared some delicious meals that our students have thoroughly enjoyed.

Thank you to everyone who supported this initiative, with funds raised going towards Ayden's next cooking project.

Special thanks to Miss Jenni and Mrs Masina for getting this off the ground, and Chef Ayden for his masterful creations. We look forward to more pop-up tuckshops in the future.

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL



Understanding NAPLAN as One Snapshot in Time

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we move through the school year and reflect on our students' progress, it's timely to acknowledge the role of NAPLAN within our broader approach to teaching and learning. Each year, NAPLAN provides us with a *snapshot*—a brief moment captured in a much bigger story. It offers useful information, but it is not, and never has been, the complete picture of a child's learning journey.

Just like a photograph, NAPLAN freezes a single point in time. It shows us how students responded on one particular day, in one particular setting, to one particular type of assessment. It can highlight trends at a cohort level, help us identify strengths, and point us toward areas where students may need additional support. When used well, it assists in refining our practice and informing whole-school planning.

But NAPLAN is just one lens. And learning, real authentic learning requires many.

At St Rita's, we value a rich tapestry of evidence: classroom observations, students' writing samples, reading behaviours, hands-on tasks, teacher judgment, conversations with students, and everyday engagement in learning. These forms of evidence help us understand *how* a child learns, *what* motivates them, and the thinking strategies they draw upon. They reveal growth that may never be visible in a standardised test.

Most importantly, NAPLAN does not measure the heart of what we see daily in classrooms:

- the joy on a student's face when they finally crack a tricky concept.
- the persistence they show as they revise a draft or practise a new skill.
- the pride in sharing their thinking with peers.
- the spark that ignites when curiosity takes over.
- the voice and agency students exercise when they make choices about their learning.

These human elements, creativity, collaboration, resilience, imagination—are the moments that remind us why we teach. They are the parts of learn-

ing that can't be bubbled in, compared on a scale, or captured in a report. Yet these are the moments that matter most.

As educators, our greatest joy comes from watching students grow into confident, capable learners who know how to think deeply, communicate clearly, and make meaningful contributions. This growth unfolds across the year, shaped by thousands of interactions, questions, challenges, and celebrations. No single assessment can ever summarise that.

So, as we engage with NAPLAN data later in the year, we will do so thoughtfully—drawing insights where appropriate but always keeping it in perspective. We will continue to honour each learner's unique story and ensure their strengths, interests, and voices remain at the centre of our practice.

What This Means for Me as a Mum

When I think about NAPLAN not just as an educator, but as a mum of two boys, the conversation shifts. It becomes less about data points and more about the little humans behind them.

Like any parent, I want my boys to feel confident, capable, and proud of who they are as learners. I want them to walk into school feeling safe, curious, and excited—not worried about a test or defined by a number that can never capture their whole story.

NAPLAN doesn't measure the things I see in them every day:

- their humour,
- their creativity,
- their kindness,
- the way they problem-solve when something doesn't go their way,
- the quiet bravery it takes to keep trying,

- or the spark in their eyes when they understand something for the first time.

It doesn't measure the way they talk about the world, the questions they ask at the dinner table, or the steady growth that happens slowly and subtly through the year.

As a mum, I'm reminded that children learn in wiggly lines, not straight ones. They have good days and bad days. They surprise us one moment and stumble the next. And that's all part of learning.

So while NAPLAN offers useful information, I never want it to overshadow the bigger picture. What truly matters is how they feel about learning, the relationships they build with their teachers, the confidence they grow over time, and the sense of agency they carry—knowing their ideas matter.

NAPLAN can't measure their voice, their passions, or the joy they find in discovering something new. But I can see those things every day. And as a mum, that will always be the most important evidence of progress.

Thank you for the passion, expertise, and care you bring to our classrooms every day. It is *your* work that shapes the learning experiences our students remember, not a test, not a number, but the relationships, encouragement, and purposeful teaching that transform lives.

Together, we remain committed to a rich, joyful, and empowering learning environment—one where every child is seen, heard, and able to thrive.

Exploring Practice, Wellbeing & Capability at St Rita's Babinda

This year, alongside my role in leading Learning and Teaching, I am undertaking an action research project that connects deeply with my studies at Griffith University and with the aspirations we hold for students and staff at St Rita's Babinda.

As I complete my final two subjects—

Understanding Research and Positive

Psychology—I have the opportunity to bring academic thinking directly into our school context. My research is grounded in improving practice from both a systems level and a classroom level, ensuring that what we do each day empowers students and supports teachers with clarity, purpose, and wellbeing.

My Research Focus: My literature review and action research explore the question:

How do school-level expectations influence how primary teachers implement the Personal and Social Capability in the Australian Curriculum v9?

This question sits at the intersection of curriculum intent, school leadership, teacher decision-making, and the lived experiences of students. It asks us to reflect on how whole-school expectations shape what teachers prioritise, how they interpret the curriculum, and ultimately how students develop skills in:

- self-regulation
- collaboration
- relationship-building
- engagement and personal wellbeing

These capabilities are essential for learning—and for life.

Why This Research Matters to Our School

At St Rita's, we are committed to a whole-child approach. We celebrate growth, voice, agency, and positive learning behaviours. The **Personal and Social Capability** (PSC) in the Australian Curriculum speaks to these same values. However, how PSC is implemented can vary widely across classrooms and schools.

This research will help us explore:

- What expectations do we set—explicitly or implicitly—about social-emotional learning?
- How do teachers interpret PSC and weave it into daily practice?
- Where are we strong? Where might we refine, align, or strengthen our whole-school approach?

The goal is not to add more. It is to **clarify, streamline, and empower**—so teachers feel confident and students benefit from consistent, thoughtful practice.

What Informs My Approach: Systems Thinking & Inclusive Education

My **Masters of Inclusive Education** has shaped how I see schools as dynamic systems. Every decision—policy, timetable structure, wellbeing initiative, learning routine—interacts with teacher workload, student experiences, and classroom culture.

Systems thinking invites us to look at both:

- **Macro-level structures:** school-wide expectations, leadership messages, procedures, culture.
- **Micro-level practice:** the moment-to-moment decisions teachers make with students.

This lens helps me ask questions such as:

- Are our expectations coherent and supportive?
- Do our systems enable teachers or unintentionally add complexity?
- How do we strengthen alignment between what we believe and what happens daily?

Ultimately, systems thinking keeps the focus on collective clarity and shared

A Small but Important Influence: My Year

Studying Social Work

In 2020, I completed a year of Social Work studies where I engaged deeply with contemporary social work theory. Although I didn't finish the degree, this experience sharpened my understanding of:

- trauma-informed practice
- ecological and systems models
- family-school-community dynamics
- the importance of relational, preventative approaches

It also highlighted something that still feels important: **there is a gap in education where more employment of social workers could profoundly support students, staff, and families.** Their skillset complements teaching—removing barriers, supporting wellbeing, and strengthening early intervention. This belief continues to shape how I view student support and whole-school wellbeing structures.

Connecting My University Studies

My two final subjects at Griffith University deeply inform this project:

Understanding Research

This subject supports me to design a rigorous, ethical, and meaningful action research cycle—gathering evidence in ways that respect teachers' voices and honour the complexity of school settings.

Positive Psychology

This allows me to connect wellbeing science with classroom practice. Concepts such as strengths-based teaching, optimism, growth mindsets, and relational safety all sit beautifully within PSC and our school vision.

Timeline for My Action Research

Term 1 & 2 – Literature Review & Data Planning

- Explore key literature across the four themes:

1. **Curriculum and Policy Context** (ACARA v9, General Capabilities, school priorities)
2. **Teacher Decision-Making** (interpretation, reflective practice, strategies, PL)
3. **School & Classroom Context** (culture, routines, collaborative planning)
4. **Student Outcomes** (engagement, collaboration, self-regulation)

Finalise research tools (surveys, interviews, observation templates).

Term 2 & 3 – Data Collection

- Gather teacher insights.
- Observe classroom practices connected to PSC.
- Analyse how school-level expectations shape decisions and routines.

Term 2 & 3 – Analysis & Action

- Share findings with staff.
- Identify clear, achievable opportunities for strengthening practice.
- Co-design small changes or refinements based on what teachers say they need.
- Feed outcomes into 2026 planning and whole-school improvement directions.

My Commitment

This research is not an "extra project."

It is part of my commitment to leading with curiosity, integrity, and collaboration.

It aims to:

- honour teacher voice
- strengthen alignment between curriculum and practice
- support staff wellbeing

- improve student capability development in ways that feel authentic and achievable
- build a clearer, more consistent whole-school approach to PSC

Above all, it is grounded in a belief I hold deeply:

Every educator and every student thrives when systems are clear, supportive, and empowering.

Kind regards,

Sam Benvenuti

Deputy Principal

COUNSELLORS CORNER

EFFECTIVE ANGER MANAGEMENT FOR PARENTS

Effective anger management involves recognising early signs of frustration, such as physical tension. Using strategies like taking deep breaths, counting to 10, or temporarily walking away to a quiet space.

Practicing self-care, maintaining realistic expectations, and using "I" statements, such as "I feel frustrated when...", can help prevent lashing out.

Here are specific, actionable strategies for managing parental anger:

In-the-Moment Strategies

- **Take a Timeout:** Ensure your child is safe, then leave the room, go outside, or take a warm shower to calm down.
- **Physical Calming Methods:** Practice deep breathing (e.g., inhale for 2 seconds, exhale for 4), run your wrists under cold water, or do quick exercises like jumping jacks to release tension.
- **Use "Pattern Interrupts":** Break the anger cycle by changing your environment, such as switching from a loud room to a quiet one.
- **Count and Breathe:** Slowly count to 10 before responding to your child to prevent immediate, harsh reactions.
- **Positive Self-Talk:** Use mantras like "I can handle this," "This is not an emergency," or "Take a deep breath" to calm your mind.

Preventative and Long-Term Strategies

- **Identify Triggers:** Recognise the early physical signs of anger (eg clenched teeth, pounding heart) to intervene before exploding.
- **Set Realistic Expectations:** Adjust expectations for your child's behaviour to reduce frustration.
- **Use "I" Messages:** Focus on your feelings rather than attacking the child, such as saying "I feel overwhelmed" instead of "You are making me crazy".

- **Prioritise Self-Care:** Reduce overall stress through proper sleep, exercise, and taking personal time, which increases your capacity to stay calm.
- **Establish a Signal System:** Create a system with your children to let them know when you are feeling overwhelmed and need a moment.

After a Conflict

- **Apologise and Repair:** If you lose your temper, take responsibility, apologise to your child, and explain how you wish you had reacted.
- **Reflect on Underlying Issues:** Consider if your anger is caused by hunger, exhaustion, or stress, rather than the child's behaviour.

If anger feels uncontrollable, seeking support from a therapist or joining an anger management class is recommended.

Yours in Counselling,

Kind regards,

Carmel

DATE CLAIMERS

TERM 1 2026

Tuesday 31st March	· Music with Miss Jenni
Wednesday 1st April	· St Rita's P&F Easter raffle drawn
Thursday 2nd April	· Last day of Term 1 · Free dress – gold coin donation for Project Compassion

TERM 2 2026

Monday 20th April	· Term 2 commences
Wednesday 22nd April	· P&F Meeting 3:00pm
Friday 1st May	· Alana VPG – Anxiety and routines challenges 9:15am – 10:30am in our Library · Tennis program begins
Friday 8th May	· Mother's Day afternoon tea 2pm
Sunday 10th May	· Mother's Day
Friday 5th June	· St Rita's P&F Barn Dance

2026 TERM DATES

TERM 1	Wednesday 28 th January – Thursday 2 nd April 2026
TERM 2	Monday 20 th April – Friday 26 th June 2026
TERM 3	Monday 13 th July – Friday 18 th September 2026

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

Assembly	9 th March	
Year 2	Charlie Moody	For showing PERSISTENCE in Math, especially when learning new concepts that are difficult!
Year 5	Flynn Lansdown	For demonstrating outstanding persistence in his learning. He consistently gives every task his best effort and GRIT.c



STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

Assembly	23rd March	
Prep	Stanley Dewis	Stanley, I loved seeing you engaged at the 'Where is the green sheep' performance. You were immersed in the experience and confidently narrated each part!
Year 6	Izaac Shaw	For demonstrating persistence when participating at this year's cross country. You also demonstrated a gentle kindness, when sitting at the tent with the lower year students.



BIRTHDAY WISHES



Congratulations to Alex who recently celebrated his birthday. St Rita's hopes you had a wonderful birthday celebration.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK



COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE TENNISFAIL 13/4/2026



MUNRO THEATRE



WELL WOMEN'S CLINIC – BABINDA HOSPITAL

(This clinic is available to Medicare eligible clients)

Tuesday 14th April 2026.

All services are provided by a specially trained
Women's Health Nurse.

For appointments phone 4067 8200

CASSOWARY COAST TENNIS COACHING



Y/PG Workshop 'Anxiety and Routine challenges'

