SEPTEMBER 2026

THE RITA REPORT

ISSUE 9

LEARNING | RESPECT | COMMUNITY | FAITH

ST RITA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BABINDA NEWSLETTER

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 enagage our learners through relevant and hands-on experiences, bringing joy and confidence to learning.



THE FIRST INFLUENCERS



Father's Day has come and gone for another year and, to be honest, it is not something I usually dwell on too much.
This was my 14th Father's Day as a dad. It also marked 19 years since I last got to say "Happy Father's Day" to my own father, with the 20th anniversary of his passing approaching in November.
Dad died after a period of illness when I was 19 years old and my younger brother was 16. His death was not sudden, but it was no less heartbreaking.
Dad was far from perfect, but he was loved nonetheless.

While we shared some physical features, particularly the eyebrows and nose, we were largely opposites in many ways. Dad was short and stocky, a smoker with a short fuse, who loved a beer and being the life of the party. He enjoyed fishing and earned his living as an auto-electrician and milkman.

Apart from our love of AFL, we did not have much in common, and even then we supported different teams.

As I have grown older, however, I have realised that superficial similarities were never the point. I count myself fortunate to have had a present and engaged father for the first 19 years of my life. Sadly, many people cannot say the same.

The primary role of a father is to provide safety, support and guidance through life's inevitable highs and lows. Above all else, it is about being present and consistent.

Over the past week there have been a number of media reports discussing the so-called "manosphere", a loose collective of online male influencers who critics argue are contributing to misogynistic attitudes and, in some cases, encouraging harmful behaviour among young men.







Without question, there are young boys who feel unheard, unloved and lacking a sense of purpose.

My question is this: why are we allowing our children to be shaped more by the opinions of strangers on a screen than by the people who love them most?

This is where parenthood, and specifically fatherhood, must play its most important role. It is fair to say that my father was not the chief disciplinarian in our household. That responsibility largely fell to Mum. However, there were some non-negotiables that Dad was passionate about and deliberately instilled in his children.

I was taught:

- Never to raise a hand to, or physically intimidate, a woman.
- Always to speak to our mother and grandparents with kindness and respect.
- To take responsibility for our actions, no matter how difficult or embarrassing it might be to apologise or admit a mistake.
- To treat everyone with the same respect, regardless of their position, background or beliefs.
- To show kindness, even when it is not returned.
- To notice the person nobody else notices and make them feel seen, heard and valued.

Dad was determined that his children would not repeat the mistakes he believed he had made. Smoking was strictly off limits. Leaving school early was not an option. We were expected to honour our commitments, no matter how big or small, and we were encouraged to work hard to achieve our goals.

When I was growing up in the early 2000s, there was no such thing as an influencer. My influencers were my parents, and it was their approval that mattered most.

Now, as a father myself, I face many of the same challenges as contemporary parents. If I am honest, there are days when the easiest way to keep children occupied is to place them in front of a screen.







But I remind myself that fatherhood is the most important role I will ever have, and I only get one opportunity to do it well.

The values that matter most to me must be intentionally passed on to my children so that they grow into capable, compassionate and responsible adults, people who contribute positively to society and who, one day, may become outstanding parents themselves.

I certainly do not want to outsource the moral formation of my children to strangers online, particularly people whose values and motives I know nothing about. That responsibility belongs to me, and it is one that must be taken seriously.

As parents, let us strive to be the number one influencers in the lives of our children. Let us model the values we hope to see in them and become the kind of people they can be proud of.

"Children learn more by the eye than by the ear. Let your life be their book."
St Francis de Sales

Blessings,
Michael

FATHERS DAY BREAKFAST

What a wonderful morning we shared at St Rita's for our annual Father's Day Breakfast!
It was fantastic to see so many members of our school community come together to celebrate the dads, grandfathers and special father figures who play such an important role in the lives of our children.

The atmosphere was filled with laughter, conversation and community spirit as families gathered to start the day together.

Our guests were treated to delicious bacon, egg and hash brown burgers, which were greatly appreciated by all. A sincere thank you to Matt and Angela Owens and Deb Kurucz for their generosity, hospitality and outstanding efforts in preparing and serving breakfast. Their contribution helped make the morning such a memorable occasion.

CONTINUED...

A highlight of the event was the drawing of our Father's Day Raffle. Congratulations to our lucky winners:

1st Prize
Sandra Heinrich - ARB Portable Fridge/Freezer

2nd Prize
Kasey Sharpe - Prize Pack featuring a variety of vouchers and goodies

We also drew the winners of our Hundreds Board:
$250 Winner: Brenda
$100 Winner: Carol

Congratulations to all of our prize winners. Many thanks to those who sold and bought raffle tickets, especially Angela, Samantha, Nellie and the Owens girls who sold many in front of Spar last Saturday morning.

Most importantly, thank you to our wonderful St Rita's community for your support and participation. Events such as these are a great reminder of the strong partnerships that exist between our families and school.

We are grateful to everyone who attended and helped us celebrate the special men who make such a positive difference in the lives of our children.

SCHOOL OFFICERS DAY

At St Rita's, we are blessed with an outstanding team of School Officers who make an invaluable contribution to the life of our school each and every day.

Their dedication, care, positivity and hard work support our students, staff and families in countless ways, often behind the scenes and always with a spirit of service.

Whether they are providing learning support, offering a helping hand, sharing a smile or simply being a reassuring presence, our School Officers help make St Rita's the welcoming and nurturing community that it is.

Last month, we proudly celebrated and acknowledged these wonderful members of our team:

Sunni brings boundless enthusiasm, kindness and goodwill to every interaction. Her positivity is infectious, and she brightens the day of everyone she meets.

Diviniti is positive, friendly and highly efficient, always willing to assist with a smile and a can-do attitude.

Jenni is wise, nurturing and caring, providing support, encouragement and guidance to students and colleagues alike.

Jonathon is cheerful, energetic and engaging, bringing fun, warmth and joy wherever he goes.

Georgi is creative, patient and joyful, approaching every task with thoughtfulness, care and a genuine commitment to helping others.

Debbie is known for her exceptional work ethic and is consistently friendly, organised and dependable in everything she does.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Sunni, Diviniti, Jenni, Jonathon, Georgi and Debbie for the dedication, professionalism and compassion they bring to St Rita's each day.

Your contributions make a lasting difference to the lives of our students and enrich our entire school community.

Thank you for all that you do. St Rita's is a better place because of each of you.

NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

Our students enjoyed a tremendous afternoon of scientific discovery and exploration as part of our Science Week celebrations in week 6.

A highlight of the event was the opportunity for our young scientists to showcase a range of extraordinary experiments.

Students confidently demonstrated their scientific knowledge and skills, keeping their audience captivated with exciting reactions, engaging demonstrations and fascinating discoveries.

It was wonderful to see so much enthusiasm, curiosity and creativity on display.

Science Week provided a valuable opportunity for students to develop their understanding of the world around them while fostering critical thinking, problem-solving and inquiry skills. Most importantly, it reminded us that science is all around us and can be both educational and great fun.

A sincere thank you to Mrs Masina for her dedication and organisation in bringing this fantastic event to life.

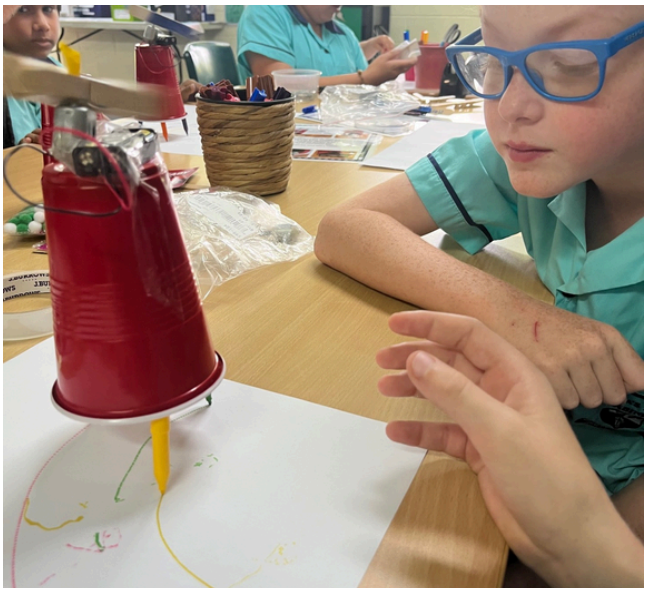
Her efforts ensured that students had a fun, interactive and memorable experience while learning more about the wonders of science.

Well done to all of our budding scientists for their enthusiasm, participation and outstanding presentations.

We look forward to seeing where your scientific curiosity takes you next!

national science week







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BOOK WEEK 2026

On Thursday, 27 August, St Rita's came alive with colour, creativity and a love of reading as we celebrated Book Week.

We were delighted to welcome our friends from Babinda Kindergarten to join us for the festivities. The morning began with our annual Book Week Parade, where students proudly showcased an amazing array of book-themed costumes.

From classic storybook characters to modern literary favourites, the creativity and effort that went into the costumes were truly impressive. It was wonderful to see students embracing their love of books and bringing their favourite characters to life.

Following the parade, students participated in a variety of engaging literacy activities, providing opportunities to share stories, explore their imaginations and celebrate the joy of reading together. These activities highlighted the important role that books play in developing language, creativity and a lifelong love of learning.

To conclude the morning's celebrations, students and staff enjoyed sharing a special Book Week cake, a fitting way to mark such a successful and enjoyable event.

A sincere thank you to everyone who helped make the day such a memorable occasion, particularly our staff, families and the children from Babinda Kindergarten who joined us in celebrating the magic of books.



BULLYING. NO WAY!

On Friday, 21 August, St Rita's proudly participated in Bullying. No Way! Week, joining schools across Australia in promoting kindness, respect and inclusion.

We were privileged to welcome officers from the Queensland Police Service, who visited our school to support students in understanding the importance of positive relationships and respectful behaviour. Their involvement helped reinforce the message that everyone has a role to play in creating safe and supportive communities.

At St Rita's, we are committed to ensuring that every student feels valued, respected and connected. Bullying has no place in our school, and we continue to work together to foster an environment where all members of our community feel safe to learn, grow and thrive.

The visit provided an excellent opportunity for students to reflect on how their words and actions can positively impact others and how small acts of kindness can make a significant difference.

We extend our sincere thanks to our local Queensland Police Service officers for taking the time to visit and share this important message with our students. Their support is greatly appreciated and helps strengthen the strong partnership between our school and the wider community.

Together, we can ensure that St Rita's remains a place where every child feels accepted, supported and empowered to be their very best.



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HARVEST FESTIVAL

This week, our community comes together to celebrate one of Babinda's most cherished annual events, the Babinda Harvest Festival.

It is wonderful to hear that so many of our St Rita's students will be taking part in the parade and representing our school with pride. Events such as the Harvest Festival provide a fantastic opportunity for our students to connect with the wider community and celebrate the unique spirit of our town.

A special thank you to Angela and our P&F team, who have been busily preparing our school float. Their time, creativity and hard work are greatly appreciated and help ensure that St Rita's is well represented on the day.

A reminder to families that participating students are asked to meet at Cootharinga Gardens at 1:30pm on Saturday, 12 September. This will allow students time to get into costume and prepare for the parade before its official commencement at 2:00pm.

I am looking forward to seeing our students proudly representing St Rita's, along with the many other community groups, organisations and businesses that make this event such a wonderful celebration of Babinda.

Thank you to everyone involved in helping bring this community event to life. We wish all participants a fun and enjoyable afternoon and look forward to a successful Harvest Festival.



PARENT/TEACHER/ STUDENT INTERVIEWS

As we approach the end of the term, our Parent, Student and Teacher Interviews will be held during Week 10.

These interviews provide a valuable opportunity for students, parents and teachers to come together to discuss learning progress, celebrate achievements and identify goals for continued growth.

At St Rita's, we strongly value the partnership between home and school, and these conversations play an important role in supporting each child's academic, social and emotional development.

Teachers will contact families shortly with their available interview times and information regarding the booking process.

We encourage all families to take advantage of this opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions about their child's learning journey.

END OF TERM

A reminder to families that the last day of Term 3 will be Friday, 18 September. School will conclude at the normal time of 2:55pm.

We are already looking forward to an exciting Term 4, with highlights including our Senior Camp and the much-anticipated St Rita's Centenary Celebrations.

These special events will provide wonderful opportunities for students, families, past and present staff, and the wider community to come together and celebrate the rich history and bright future of our school.

Wishing all families a happy and restful holiday break.

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL



On Tuesday, our future Prep students participated in another engaging Pre Prep session, and it was wonderful to see their confidence continue to grow.

As the children become more familiar with the school environment, routines, teachers, and their peers, they are developing a strong sense of belonging and excitement about starting school.

Throughout the session, students enthusiastically participated in a variety of learning experiences that supported their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

Children practised listening and following instructions, taking turns, working cooperatively with others, and developing their independence through play-based learning opportunities. These experiences are all important components of school readiness and help children feel confident and capable as they prepare for their first year of formal schooling.

One area of development we place a significant emphasis on during Pre Prep is the growth of both fine motor and gross motor skills.

Why Are Fine Motor Skills Important?
Fine motor skills involve the small muscles in the hands, fingers, and wrists. These skills are essential for many everyday classroom tasks such as holding a pencil correctly, cutting with scissors, drawing, colouring, writing, opening lunch containers, manipulating learning materials, and using technology. Strong fine motor skills help children become independent learners and allow them to focus on learning rather than struggling with the physical demands of a task.

During Pre Prep, children strengthen these skills through activities such as drawing, threading, playdough, construction, cutting and pasting, puzzles, and sensory play.

Why Are Gross Motor Skills Important?
Gross motor skills involve the large muscles of the body used for movement, balance, coordination, and posture. These skills are the foundation for sitting upright during learning, moving safely around the school, participating in physical activities, carrying a school bag, and maintaining concentration throughout the day.
Children with well-developed gross motor skills often find it easier to maintain good posture while writing, engage confidently in playground activities, and participate successfully in sports and games.

Building Strong Bodies Through PMP
As part of our Pre Prep program, students participate in our Perceptual Motor Program (PMP). PMP provides children with opportunities to develop balance, coordination, body awareness, spatial awareness, agility, strength, and confidence through a range of carefully designed movement activities. During PMP sessions, children may:

- *Balance on beams and stepping stones.*
- *Crawl through tunnels.*
- *Jump, hop, and skip between stations.*
- *Throw and catch balls.*
- *Climb and navigate obstacle courses.*
- *Work collaboratively with peers to complete challenges.*

These activities may look like play, but they are building important foundations for future learning. Research shows that physical development supports children's ability to concentrate, regulate emotions, develop confidence, and engage successfully in classroom learning. PMP helps children develop the physical skills they need to become successful learners while also fostering resilience, persistence, and a positive attitude towards challenges.

How Parents Can Support Development at Home

Families can play an important role in strengthening both fine and gross motor skills through simple everyday experiences.



Fine Motor Activities

- *Play with playdough or modelling clay.*
- *Encourage drawing, colouring, and painting.*
- *Use child-safe scissors for cutting activities.*
- *Complete puzzles together.*
- *Thread beads or pasta onto string.*
- *Build with blocks, LEGO, or construction materials.*

Gross Motor Activities

- *Visit local parks and playgrounds.*
- *Practise balancing on lines, logs, or curbs.*
- *Play catch using different-sized balls.*
- *Ride bikes, scooters, or trikes.*
- *Create simple obstacle courses in the backyard.*
- *Encourage running, jumping, hopping, and skipping games.*

Most importantly, allow children opportunities to explore, challenge themselves, and celebrate their efforts. Developing these skills takes time and practice, and every child progresses at their own pace. We are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm, growth, and resilience our Pre Prep students are demonstrating each week. We look forward to continuing to nurture their confidence, curiosity, and independence as they prepare for an exciting transition to school next year.

Looking Ahead to Next Term

We are excited to announce that our Pre Prep Program will continue next term, providing even more opportunities for our future students to build confidence, develop friendships, and strengthen the skills needed for a successful transition to school.

We warmly welcome all families with children commencing Prep in 2027 to join us. Whether your child has attended previous sessions or is joining us for the first time, the program offers a supportive and engaging environment where children can become familiar with school routines, meet staff and peers, and develop a sense of belonging within our St Rita's community.

We encourage families to spread the word to friends and neighbours who may be considering enrolment.

We look forward to welcoming both returning and new families as we continue this exciting journey towards Prep. Together, we are helping our youngest learners develop the confidence, independence, and enthusiasm they need to thrive as they begin their school adventure.

Kind regards,
Sam Benvenuti









COUNSELLORS CORNER



Working with schools on school refusal

The best way to get your child back to school is by working as a team with your child's school. It's a good idea to start by talking with your child's classroom teacher, home-room teacher or year coordinator.

Here are things you could cover:

· Explain why your child is refusing to go to school – for example, bullying, learning difficulties, mental health problems.

· If your child is experiencing bullying, talk about how this is affecting your child. Ask the school about their strategies to manage and prevent bullying.

Working on school refusal at home: practical strategies

Here are practical things you can do at home to encourage your child to go to school.

Talking to your child

· Show your child you understand. For example, say, 'I can see you're worried about going to school. I know it's hard, but it's good for you to go. Your teacher and I will help you'.

· Use clear, calm statements to let your child know you expect them to go to school. Say 'when' rather than 'if'. For example, 'When you're at school tomorrow ...' instead of 'If you make it to school tomorrow ...'.

· Show that you believe your child can go to school by saying positive and encouraging things. For example, 'You're showing how brave you are by going to school'. This will build your child's self-confidence.

· Use direct statements or choices that don't give your child the chance to say 'No!' For example, 'It's time to get out of bed' or 'Will you have your breakfast or your shower first?'

At home with your child

· Stay calm. If your child sees you're worried, stressed or frustrated, it can make your child's anxiety worse.

· Plan for a calm start to the day by having morning and evening routines. For example, get uniforms, lunches and school bags ready the night before, get your child to have a shower or bath in the evening, and get your child to bed at a regular time. · Praise your child when they show brave behaviour, like getting ready for school. For example, you could say, 'I know this is hard for you, but I think it's great that you're giving it a go. Well done'.

· Make your home 'boring' during school hours so that you don't accidentally reward your child for not going to school. This means little or no TV or video games and so on. You could think about not letting your child use their phone during school hours.

· Get your child to do work provided by the school while at home. This can help your child keep up.

Getting to school

· Get someone else to drop your child at school, if you can. Children often cope better with separation at home rather than at the school gate.

· Praise your child when they go to school. You could also reward them. For example, if your child goes regularly, they could earn bonus technology time, a special outing with a parent to their favourite park, or their favourite meal for dinner.

Your child needs your love and support to get back to school. Focus on any efforts your child makes to go back, be patient with your child's progress, and try to keep frustration to yourself. This will help your child to build the confidence they need to get back to school regularly.

COUNSELLORS CORNER

Getting professional help for school refusal
Families can get professional help to learn about managing school refusal and to sort out the problems behind it. If your child is saying they feel sick, make an appointment with your GP to check it out. If there are no physical reasons for your child feeling sick, your GP might refer you to a paediatrician, psychiatrist, psychologist or school counsellor.
It's a good idea to ask your child's health professional about any strategies you can use at home to support your child's return to school.
Your child might be able to get Medicare rebates with a mental health professional each calendar year. To get these rebates, your child will need a mental health treatment plan from a GP or a referral from a psychiatrist or paediatrician.

Looking after yourself
School refusal can be a very worrying time. Looking after yourself with healthy food, regular exercise and enough rest is good for your health and wellbeing. And when you're healthy and well, you'll be better able to support your child to go to school. Getting support from a trusted friend or a mental health professional can often be a big help too.
(From Raising Children Network).

Yours in Counselling,

Carmel

DATE CLAIMERS

TERM 3 2026

Wednesday 9th of September	Trivia Night at St Rita's 7pm
Saturday 12th September	Babinda Harvest Festival. Meet at Cootharinga Gardens at 1.30pm
Monday 14th September	Parent/ Teacher/ Student Interviews this week
Thursday 17th September	Jim Graham Cup Rugby League - Innisfail. Samuel, Abel and Flynn.
Friday 18th September	Last Day of Term. End of Term Assembly 2.30pm.

TERM 4 2026

Wednesday 21st - Friday 23rd of October	5/6 Camp Port Douglas
Friday 23rd of October	St Rita's Centenary Gala Ball
Saturday 24th of October	St Rita's Centenary Celebration Day

2026 TERM DATES

TERM 3	Monday 13th July - Friday 18th of September 2026
TERM 4	Tuesday 6th October - Friday 4th of December 2026

Students of the week

WEEK 8

Ruby	Ruby, I have been extremely impressed with your enthusiasm and participation during our phonics lessons. You consistently contribute thoughtful answers, confidently blend and read new words, and demonstrate a strong understanding of the phonics skills we are learning. Keep up the fantastic effort and positive attitude towards your learning.
Olivia	Olivia, I am very impressed with your confidence and understanding of teen numbers and place value. You can accurately identify tens and ones and use this knowledge to solve mathematical tasks with success. Your willingness to participate and share your thinking during maths lessons is fantastic. Keep up the excellent work and positive attitude towards learning.
Samuel	Absolutely an energetic Michael Jackson performance. You had the audience toe-tapping and awesome outfits. Keep up the wonderful effort Sam.
Daniel	It's wonderful to see your confidence shine at this years dance showcase. Well done wearing your amazing Michael Jackson outfit.
Ayden	Fantastic effort Chef Ayden! Book charachter brought to life, your book review was confidently spoken.



QUOTE OF THE WEEK



MUNRO THEATRE

