

Information Booklet

St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

*"Be who you were created to be
and you will set the world on
fire" St Catherine of Siena*

Please Note: While every effort is made to ensure the information in this booklet is accurate and up-to-date at the time of printing, programs, policies, and schedules are subject to change without notice. We recommend checking with our office staff or visiting our website for the most current information



**ST CATHERINE
OF SIENA**

Catholic Primary School
Armstrong Creek

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Child Safety

St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people. The care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. At St Catherine of Siena we want all children in our care to feel safe, happy and empowered.

St Catherine of Siena school is committed to strengthened practice for the protection of children and their fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and safeguarded by all. In accordance with requirements of the Victorian Government Child Safety reforms and Ministerial Order 870, St Catherine of Siena school promotes an absolute commitment to child safety and in meeting its obligations and responsibilities in Child Safety Standards.



Our Vision

St. Catherine of Siena is a learning community which engages children, enlightens all in Gospel values, energises high expectations and empowers each child to set the world on fire. Together we enrich each other's journey in an ecological manner and strive for excellence. Children engaged in their learning and empowered to be who God created them to be, will excel as global community citizens and set the world on fire.

Our School Expectations

We are Respectful
We are Learners
We are Safe

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About our School

St Catherine of Siena School is a Catholic co-educational primary school in Armstrong Creek. Our school doors opened for the first time in January 2020 with 129 students enrolled from Grade Prep to Grade 5. In subsequent years, our school has grown steadily and we expect an enrolment of over 550 students in 2026.

St Catherine of Siena is a welcoming and inclusive learning environment open to all Catholic and non-Catholic families who are supportive of the Catholic mission and traditions of Catholic education. Our school is enlightened by Gospel values, modelling Catholic Social Teaching and embracing Catholic tradition. We rejoice in diversity, knowing all children can learn.

Wellbeing is at the heart of our school practices. We strive to be a thriving, safe school of learners and emphasise the building of positive relationships with self and others. We work hard to implement explicit programs and strategies to support the wellbeing of all in our community.

We aim for excellence in learning and teaching and set high expectations for our learners, especially in the core learning areas of Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Students experience daily explicit teaching at their next stage of learning and we ensure that appropriate support and extension opportunities are provided to enable all students to make progress.

At St Catherine of Siena we want all students to discover their passions through an enriching and stimulating curriculum. Our specialist programs are highly regarded in our community and provide opportunities for our students to develop their skills and shine across The Arts, Physical Education, Languages, STEM and Outdoor Learning. We cultivate active and engaged learners that work collaboratively, express themselves respectfully, and enable each other to excel spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally and physically.

St Catherine of Siena has developed as a dynamic school community steeped in a sustainable learning style, respectful of our country's Indigenous heritage. We are stewards of creation and journey in harmony with God's creation to be ecological and respectful in all learning experiences.

St Catherine of Siena School, through living the Gospel values in words and action, supports all in growing in faith as part of the Nazareth Parish community. Our school provides a nourishing education, journeying in faith with Jesus, informing, forming and transforming each child to enable them to 'be who they were created to be' and set the world on fire.

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Key Dates

School Term Dates for students for St Catherine of Siena

For term dates please refer to the below link as a guide and stay up to date with School Closure dates on the fortnightly school Newsletter

<https://www.vic.gov.au/school-term-dates-and-holidays-victoria>

Official Public Holidays

Labour Day, Good Friday, Anzac Day, Kings's Birthday, Friday before Grand Final, and Melbourne Cup Day.

Special Events & Important Dates

Special dates will be confirmed throughout the year, such as; School Sports, and whole school social events, such as St Catherine of Siena Feast day, Grandparent's day, Spanish Day, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day. Please keep an eye on our school's social media platforms, Skoolbag and SeeSaw once school commences.








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Communication

At St Catherine of Siena, we see parent engagement as essential and promote regular communication between home and school. We have various forms of school communication and each has a particular purpose. We attempt to be as paper-free as possible.

Families Communication Summary (reviewed March 2026)

 <p>simon (received by parents as email)</p>	 <p>Seesaw</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Permission Notes ● All information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Excursions ○ Incursions ○ Sports events ○ Sacraments ○ Camps ○ School Events ○ Year Level Events (eg. dress up day) ● Information and invitations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whole school prayer/liturgy ○ School events ○ Learning Showcases ● Termly Curriculum Overviews (also posted to family documents on SIMON) ● Requests from specialists (eg. for materials) ● Reminders of happenings at the school ● First aid notifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Journal Posts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment Samples and Feedback ○ Student work samples ○ 'Snapshots' of learning or events ○ Online learning activities ● Announcements/Messages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student-based communication with families (or email) ○ Informing families of assembly awards (or email) ○ Personalised homework tasks ● Weekly Year Level Learning Summary (short summary of a learning area with associated pictures) <p>Whilst parents and teachers can message each other on Seesaw, we encourage teachers to redirect parents to SIMON regarding school events and whole-school communication.</p>
 <p>Direct Email</p>	 <p>Social Media</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student-based communication with families (or via Seesaw message) ● Link to newsletter (published on website) ● All PLP / PSG documentation via Adobe (LDL action list) ● All intervention permissions/ acknowledgments via Adobe (LDL action list) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly family 'What's On' (also posted to SIMON) ● Highlights of school events and learning foci <div data-bbox="967 1615 1094 1756" style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Text Message</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time sensitive information (eg. bus is late) ● Emergency information ● Final reminders for fundraisers

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Other Information

Before and After Care Program

We have an out-of-school-hours care service that provides before and after school care from 6.30 am - 8.45am and/or 3.30 - 6.30pm. Our provider is **Their Care** and all enrolments and attendance is organised via Their Care <https://theircare.com.au/>

School Times:

Gates open and supervision from 8.30am

School commences 8:45am

Morning Break 11:00am to 11.30am

Lunch (eating time) 11.30am to 11.40am

Snack Break 1.30pm to 1.40 pm

Afternoon Break 1.40 pm to 2.20 pm

Dismissal 3:20 pm



Safety Crossing and School Drop Off

We have a supervised school crossing on Warralily Boulevard. Children can only cross the road with adult supervision. There is also a very safe 'Pick up and Drop off' zone for families to utilise and we ask all families not to park their car in this space. Families can also park and access the gates on Mandalay Avenue and Tyntynder Close for drop off and pick up.

Lunches, Fruit and Vegetable Snack

As part of their lunch, children are required to bring one small fruit or vegetable snack each day, which they can eat at a designated fruit snack time. Children should have fresh fruit or vegetables that can be easily eaten without mess or cutlery (eg. carrot sticks, grapes, strawberries, cucumber pieces, mandarin pieces, banana).

We are a water-only school and do not permit other drinks. We are a lolly-free school and we ask that lolly treats do not come to school and are kept for eating at home. We encourage lunches to be rubbish and plastic free. These actions support our wellbeing and sustainability goals. We do not permit lolly bags or gifts to be handed out for children's birthdays.

School Canteen

We engage an external canteen provider each Thursday. Families order and pay online.

Spanish

The children learn Spanish as their Language other than English through the Autonomous Language Learners approach. Our Spanish Language Specialist teaches each class for 10 to 15 minutes in multiple sessions across each week. All staff learn Spanish with the students as co-learners.

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Curriculum

St Catherine of Siena follows the Victorian Curriculum Guidelines in the teaching of:

- English and Language Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science
- Technologies
- Humanities
- Health and Physical Education
- The Arts
- Languages (Spanish)
- Personal & Social Capability
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Intercultural Capability
- Ethical Capability

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) guidelines are followed in the teaching of:

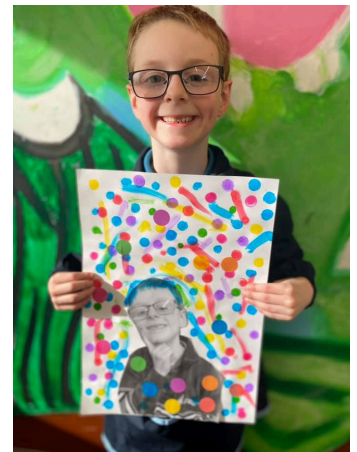
- Religious Education

Students have daily lessons in English/Literacy and Mathematics. Each week they will also have lessons that focus on Wellbeing, Religious Education and The Humanities, Health or Sciences.

Specialist Classes

Each week, students also have an opportunities to learn with our expert Specialist team in:

- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts
- Physical Education
- STEM (Science, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics)
- Outdoor Learning P-2 and Outdoor Learning/Kitchen Garden 3-6
- Spanish (daily short 15 minute lessons)



We also offer Private Music Lessons by an external provider throughout the week lessons are organised.

Extra- Curricula Opportunities

Students have opportunities to extend their interests and passions at lunchtimes by joining in our lunchtime 'clubs' including Visual Arts Club, Choir, Chess, Craft and Gardening.

Events and Showcases

We have a variety of events over the course of each year that showcase and celebrate our students' talents, skills and achievements across our different learning areas. Families are invited to come and support their children.



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Other Information

School Uniform

Our school uniform can be purchased from PSW Grovedale or you can purchase [online](#). There is a second hand uniform Facebook group where families sell items privately "St Catherine of Siena Second Hand Uniform".

Black school shoes with no colour are compulsory and sports shoes/runners can be worn on the days students have Physical Education. All students must use the school bag and hat. Students can wear any combination of uniform they are most comfortable learning in.

All hair shoulder length or below must be tied back as per our school uniform policy.

Library

Each week, students visit the library with their class for a literature appreciation session and to borrow books. They will need their book bag with them to borrow, and these books must be returned before new ones are borrowed. Students are permitted to borrow two items.

Assemblies

Assemblies are held fortnightly. Assemblies are informative and include presentations of class awards. All families are very welcome to attend in person.

No HAT no PLAY

All children are expected to wear sunhats from September until April. Sunscreen is available in each classroom for the children to apply. If your child does not have a hat, they need to play in the shade under the COLA. Please clearly name your child's hat, so we can return them if misplaced. We do have minimal stock available to purchase from the office.

Classroom Helpers and Volunteers

We encourage parents/carers and grandparents to volunteer at St Catherine's and support our students' learning. This can look like helping in the classroom with Literacy sessions, helping students in Outdoor Learning/Bush School or Kitchen Garden, or supporting on excursions or special activities. In order to assist with such support, we conduct a 'Classroom Helpers' program early in Term One to prepare assistants prior to helping in the classroom and all volunteers must complete the [online Volunteer form](#). Further information will be available at the beginning of the year. All Classroom Assistants MUST have a current "Working with Children" (WWCC) check and agree to our Child Safe code of conduct to assist in classrooms or participate in excursions.

Mobile devices

All students are required to leave any mobile devices that they bring to school at the School Office on arrival and then collect these items as they leave school at the end of the day. This includes network connected 'phone' watches, such as 'Space Talk' watches. Our 4-6 students are permitted to put these devices in a class 'lock box' at the beginning of the day.



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Transition Programs

Transition to school from kindergarten

As a school, we know the importance of preparing children for the next exciting stage in their lives. Our Prep Transition Program is conducted at the end of the year and provides an opportunity for children to meet their teachers and make new friends before they begin their new life at St Catherine of Siena Primary school. The program involves three sessions at school where children can become familiar with the Prep rooms, get to know the teachers and participate in several activities that will assist them in preparation for their first year of school. A Parent Information Session is held in November where families can find out more about getting ready for school at St Catherine of Siena.

Buddies

Each Prep child is partnered with a senior buddy from Year 5 or 6. This buddy will help make the Prep child's transition into school life smooth by ensuring that they have someone to play with at morning and afternoon break-time. They will help them find their way around the school. Across the year, the children in Prep will join their buddies in various activities to help build their relationships.

Going Up session

Each December the school has a 'Going Up' session where students spend some time in classes with the teacher and classmates they will have for the following school year. Students moving to St Catherine's from other schools join us for this session.

Secondary school transition

A transition to Secondary School Program begins in Year 6. Students in Year 6 are invited by their secondary schools to visit their school as part of the primary/secondary transition program and we undertake a series of explicit transition lessons, designed to ensure our senior students begin secondary school with confidence.

We also support transition across Term 4 by organising sessions for students to work across different class groups and spend time with their new teachers where possible.



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Assessment and Reporting

At St Catherine of Siena we value clear, ongoing reporting processes and we communicate your child's progress to you using a variety of structures.

Learning Conversations

Learning Conversations are conducted twice throughout the year. Our first Learning Conversation, mid-Term 1, is an opportunity for parents/carers to share information with the teacher about their child and to collaboratively set goals for Semester 1. The second Learning Conversation, taking place at the end of Term 2, is an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss the Semester 1 written report and students' learning progress, for students to share their learning achievements with their family, and for collaborative goal setting for Semester 2.

Outside of these interview times, parents/carers are invited to make an appointment at any point of the year if they have concerns or questions or would like to discuss their child's progress.

Ongoing Reporting using Seesaw

Seesaw is a digital portfolio app. Teachers and students use Seesaw to post assessment and learning tasks with accompanying feedback. This enables parents/carers to see what their child is able to do and their improvements over time, the evidence that teachers are using to make judgements against learning standards, and, of course, to celebrate your child's achievements and progress.

Seesaw is also used to provide 'learning snapshots' of activities that take place in the classroom and to communicate weekly with parents about classroom happenings and learning foci.

Written Reports

Formal written reports are prepared and provided to families at the end of Term 2 (June) and the end of Term 4 (December). The written report includes:

- A "grade" that indicates your child's achievement and progress against state-wide standards in different learning areas
- Learning area overviews for classroom and specialist learning
- A written comment from your child's classroom teacher that reflects your child's attitudes to learning, behaviour, and key achievements for the semester
- Written feedback about your child's participation and progress in specialist subjects

Reports are made available online using our student management program SIMON.

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Homework

Homework at St Catherine of Siena involves students reading daily at home some maths fluency tasks (such as multiplication and division facts) and, from time to time, engaging in other short tasks that support the learning that has occurred at school (such as completing a learning task or preparing a 'talk-time'). Research suggests that homework has minimal impact on academic performance in primary schools if it is unrelated to class learning.

We value activities which contribute to the enhancement of each child's wellbeing and to the development of community links in order to enrich our school community. We respect family life and the need for children to participate in family and community happenings. We also recognise the diversity and demands of family life and wish for homework to reinforce learning, whilst not adding undue stress to families.

Health & Medical Info

All medical and contact details will be filled in by parents/carers on SIMON prior to your child beginning school and need to be updated annually or as any details change.

If at any time your child requires medication to be administered at school, please let the school office staff and your child's teacher know. Medication is not allowed to be kept in children's bags to be administered by themselves. For medication to be administered at school, the school requires a Medical Management Plan, completed by an authorised AHPRA registered medical/health practitioner and parents must fill in a Medication Authority Form - this includes occasional medications such as Panadol, anti-histamines or short term over-the-counter medication. All medication must be supplied in the original packaging clearly and handed in to the school office by a parent/carer.

If your child has an Asthma Management Plan, Anaphylaxis Management Plan, Epilepsy Plan, Action Plan for Allergic Reactions or any other specific medical requirements, please ensure that this information is provided to the school office and your child's classroom teacher before school begins.

Absences

If your child is absent from school for any reason, please notify the school office via phone or, preferably, use SIMON - Parent Notified Absence.

If your child will be missing a block of school for reasons such as holidays, please notify the office and ensure that your child's classroom teacher is aware of the time your child will be away. Your child's attendance record forms part of the official written reports that the school provides to families.

Early Pick Up and Late Arrivals

Where possible, we encourage families to make appointments and other commitments out of school hours. If your child arrives at school after 8.45am or you collect them before 3.20pm, you will need to sign your child out at the school office. Break times: 11.00am - 11.30am and 1.40pm - 2.20pm we encourage children to be collected before or after the break times.

Learning & Diversity

At St Catherine of Siena, through our curriculum, interpersonal relationships and organisational practices, we implement strategies that consider the diverse abilities, skills and life experiences of each of our students.

We respond to learning diversity so that all students are actively engaged in learning and experience success. We partner with parents throughout the year to support our students. Program Support Group meetings (PSGs) are held regularly to facilitate and strengthen relationships between staff and families in supporting students in our care and to collaborate develop and evaluate learning goals, strategies and adjustments.

We are fortunate to work with a multi-disciplinary allied health team. Our occupational therapist, speech therapist and additional allied health professionals from MACS, are able to undertake a variety of assessments and observations and work alongside our teaching and support staff to develop, implement and monitor adjustments and supports for children identified with additional needs. Working part-time, our occupational therapist and speech therapist are unable to take students for 1:1 long-term therapy and do not replace therapy that your child may receive outside of school. They can, however, work with our teaching and support staff to build expertise and ensure that the school is making reasonable adjustments and supporting your child's speech, regulation, social or NDIS goals as best we can.



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Our Patron Saint St Catherine of Siena

Catherine was a member of the Dominican Third Order. This meant that she chose not to marry, but to devote her life to preaching and doing good deeds as a layperson.

Catherine's major accomplishment was in persuading the Pope to return from Avignon, France to the Vatican in Italy. Turmoil in Rome and conflict with the emperor had forced the popes to retreat to Avignon in southern France. Catherine shared the popular Italian desire to restore the papacy to Rome.

Throughout her life she displayed a strong vision and passion for learning, a desire to bring the love of God into everyone's hearts and the courage to make a difference through her actions.

Catherine died when she was only 33. She was canonized in 1461 and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1970. She is the patron saint of Italy and all of Europe.

St Catherine of Siena's Feast day is held on April, 29th.

We can draw inspiration from her powerful words of wisdom:

***"Be who you were created to
be and you will set the world
on fire"***



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School Community

FAMILY TEAMS

Family teams offer fantastic ways to become involved and contribute to the school community

- Fundraising
- Environment and Grounds
- Pastoral Care
- Community Engagement

School Advisory Committee (SAC)

The School Advisory Committee is an advisory body to the school leadership team and provides a link between the school leadership team and the school community. The SAC also promotes community development, fostering relationships between the parish, the school and the local community. The SAC meets 6 times a year with an annual general meeting typically held in February.

The family teams are always looking for community members to become involved and offer various levels of commitment, from supplying a meal, supporting with fundraising or community events, or helping with working bees. Whether you can attend meetings regularly or assist on a one-off basis, your support and contributions are always welcome and appreciated. If you are interested in becoming involved with the family teams please contact the school office.

Nazareth Parish

As a school we are part of the Nazareth Parish. We look for opportunities to build community with our three other parish schools and our parishioners. Throughout the year, our school community celebrates Mass at Nazareth Church and with parishioners at school. Many students will also participate in school-based Sacramental programs conducted through the Nazareth Parish.

Typically, students will receive the following Sacraments in their primary school years:

Year 3 - Sacrament of Reconciliation

Year 4 - Sacrament of Eucharist

Year 6 - Sacrament of Confirmation



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Starting Prep

Getting ready for school....

Starting school is a BIG step in your child's life and they will begin Prep with their own strengths, challenges and individual abilities. As they transition to school, there are a number of things you may like to begin at home to help support their independence.

Encourage your child to...

- Hold a pencil or crayon correctly
- Recognise and write their name
- Count items
- Pack and unpack their own belongings
- Dress themselves
- Identify colours and shapes
- Familiarise your child with lunch routines - how to open their lunch box and unwrap their food.
- Go to the toilet by themselves, including wiping correctly

The first few weeks of school are all about settling into our school routine, making friends and creating an engaging and dynamic classroom where children feel safe and ready to learn.

Teaching during the first few weeks of school is focused on...

- Familiarising the children with the school environment
- Getting to know each other
- Getting to know their teacher
- Playing together, sharing, including others and forming friendships
- Creating classroom expectations and routines
- Getting to know their senior buddy



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Starting Prep

The First Day of Prep...

What an exciting day this will be! The children will no doubt be full of excitement and nerves and we will try to make this special day as enjoyable and stress-free as possible for the children and their families.

On the first day, our parents and carers will be able to take their Prep children to their classrooms from 8.30am. The classrooms will be set up with games and activities to help settle the children. When your child is settled, we invite you to join us for coffee & tea in the garden. We strongly recommend leaving promptly in order to ensure a successful transition to school.

As the term progresses and the children become more familiar with the morning routine, they will learn to change their take-home book, unpack their bag and then move outside for play. Staff supervision begins and gates are unlocked at 8.30 am on the yard. The start of school music sounds at 8.45 am for the children to line up at their classroom door where they will be met by their teacher.

At the beginning of the day, the children will place their bag in their named bag locker near or in their classroom.

The children take the following things into their classroom:

- One fresh fruit snack in named separate container and their water bottle (we are a water-only school).
- School hat
- Library book bag and art smock

At the end of the day, part of the routine as the children prepare to go home will include:

- Time to tidy the classroom and make sure their table is neat and packed up
- Packing their bags, which includes: readers, fruit containers, drink bottles

It is important that the children learn from the beginning of the year that packing and carrying their bag is their responsibility. It may take them a little longer as this is a new skill that they are learning, but allowing them to do so will help them form the necessary habits of their school routine and build independence.



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Starting Prep

A few first day reminders.....

With so many things to think about, here is a checklist of things to remember for the first day...

- St Catherine of Siena school bag, clearly named
- School clothing, clearly named
- Library book bag, clearly named
- Art smock, clearly named
- A box of tissues - To the office
- One fruit snack, cut into small pieces, in a named separate container
- Lunch Box, clearly named – containing a snack, and lunch.
It is helpful if the children know what food is for lunch and for a snack.
Limiting wrappers can make it easier for them to access their food.
- School Hat – clearly named - the school will also name the hat on the outside brim.
- A spare set of socks, underwear and clothes in their school bag in case of accidents (they do not need to be school uniform items)
- A BIG smile.
- Parents/Carers/Grandparents - with a phone camera to capture the special moment.

It does not matter if you forget something!

End of the Day Pick Up

If you are picking your child up from either the Warralily Boulevard entrance or Mandalay Circuit entrance, the children will be supervised by a teacher until collection. The children are asked to stand in a designated area while waiting for their parents/carers, they are not allowed to cross the roads without adult supervision. If you are running late for pick up, please let the school know by phoning the office, and we will let your child know, as this will help avoid unnecessary worry. It is also a good idea to let us know of any change in who may be collecting your child.



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This information booklet is a glimpse of St. Catherine of Siena's learning environment and community.

We encourage you to keep up to date through our newsletters and communication tools.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Email – enquiries@stcatherine.catholic.edu.au

Phone: (03) 52645934

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Armstrong Creek, VIC 3217



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