

“Live as children of the light”

Ephesians 5 verse 8



HANDBOOK



‘LIVE AS CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT’

“Live as children of the light”

Ephesians 5 verse 8

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2011



Sunshine Christian School

A school of the Lutheran Church of Australia

CELEBRATING 28 YEARS

OF

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1983 – 2011

“Live as children of the light”

Ephesians 5 verse 8

SUNSHINE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
CORNER OF
WARWICK AND WESTMORELAND ROADS
NORTH SUNSHINE VICTORIA 3020

*The Sunshine Christian School began in 1983
initiated by a group of committed Christians
who had prayed and worked towards providing
a Christian choice in education in the Western suburbs.*

PHONE:

(03) 93121253

(03) 93127 513

MOBILE:

0432 009 360

FAX:

(03) 93101280

EMAIL:

admin@scs.vic.edu.au

PRINCIPAL:

MS REBECCA HEINJUS



In 2004 the school became a member of the Lutheran Education System.

Our sponsoring church is St. Matthews, Footscray with Pastor Cecil Schmalkuche, as School Pastor.

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

The family of Sunshine Christian School extends to you an extremely warm welcome. Together we look forward to many blessings through your association with our family. We seek to enable the children of our school to learn and grow spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically while they journey with us. We trust that when they leave us they will go on in life with God, through his son, Jesus Christ, as their Lord and their Saviour. We accept the opportunity to share with you the joint responsibility for developing your child's abilities and interests.

It is only with clear communication and close liaison, between school and home, that your child's school life will be a happy and rewarding one. We welcome you as an essential member of the partnership we actively encourage. We look to Jesus Christ, also, to be part of this partnership, knowing that when we walk with him we will be truly blessed.

During these formative years of life your child develops lasting attitudes to learning. Your choice of primary school is therefore of great importance. We recognize that encouragement to use gifts and talents, to share learning experiences with others, and to think through and evaluate solutions to daily situations are essential characteristics of learning. We encourage children to trust in Jesus and to learn from him in their daily life situations also.

Learning should be enjoyable. Our students are encouraged to talk through their experiences – the good and the not-so-good – and we encourage you, their parents, to share, to challenge, and to support them also. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you need any assistance.

LUTHERAN IDENTITY

As central to our mission and ministry, Lutheran schools seek to nurture individuals, who are aware of their humanity, open to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and growing in and living according to a cohesive worldview.

OUR MISSION

The Sunshine Christian Primary School seeks to enable its students to grow to be people of faith in God as revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to the best of our abilities to develop the full potential of each individual; spiritually, academically, physically, creatively and emotionally.

VISION STATEMENT

Sunshine Christian School is a Primary School of the Lutheran Church and its aims are based on the Christian faith, applied in a day school environment. The school encourages the development of a faith in God as revealed in Christ Jesus and provides a link between the home and the church.

Our aim is to have a school which exhibits and exercises a caring concern for each student and teacher: a school that has a happy and stimulating atmosphere, in which each student is encouraged to develop as a whole person and to give of their best in academic study, social skills, cultural interests and human relationships.

The school is concerned to present the wholeness of life to students in such a way that they can make a perceptive and wholehearted response. On this basis the student may work, question, think, ask, discover, learn, create, serve, and worship in ways which will bring them gradually to responsible maturity.

The school offers a comprehensive education to all students. The curriculum emphasises the skills of communication, literacy and numeracy, the ability to think logically, to make decisions, learn of the physical world, and participate in creative activities, physical education, and Christian education. Teachers are lovingly concerned with the spiritual, intellectual, physical, creative, emotional, social, and ethical development, and growth of all the children, whatever their gifts and abilities.

WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ALL STUDENTS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO:

- Live in community reflecting characteristics of God through love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality and appreciation.
- Develop their potential in creative and personal areas as well as academic pursuits.
- Achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Have an appreciation of their own capabilities and willingness to apply them.
- Make the best contribution that they can, in terms of service and leadership, to the school, their families and the community.
- Live in community with integrity, tolerance, and concern for the welfare of others.
- Develop a desire to pursue self-development in appropriate fields of study, community service, work and leisure.
- Be able to cope with the demands placed upon them by their peers in contemporary society.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Families are important to everyone at Sunshine Christian School. We provide a supportive learning environment with extra support for individual needs.

All employees and school council members at Sunshine Christian School are practising Christians. The staff comes from a range of denominational backgrounds bringing diversity and experience to the school's operations. The Christian teaching is Bible based, as are all the policies and curriculum documents. The School Council includes St. Matthews, Lutheran system, and staff representation.

The school curriculum is based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and supported by the Victorian Education CSF (curriculum standards framework) model 2. Curriculum and policy are written and assessed from a Christian perspective with provision made for the diversity of abilities, cultures, and interests of the children who attend the school. The children participate in a wide range of learning experiences, enjoy leadership opportunities and public performances.

Teachers at Sunshine Christian School value outdoor education as well as classroom learning. Excursions build strengths in the children from a knowledge and personal growth level that greatly enhances their classroom learning.

All aspects of modern learning are incorporated in the learning process. All classrooms are well resourced including computers in each room. There is access to the internet available for the children but always under supervision at this stage of their education.

We believe that God gave us imaginations. At school learning can involve make-believe, fantasy, and creative activities. However as a Christian School we do not promote the notion of magic or witchcraft.

The fee structure enables many families to avail themselves of Christian education. Fees are set at realistic levels and increase with the Educational CPI annually. The finance committee does assist families who may find the payment of fees at times difficult.



STAFF / PARENTS: RESPONSIBILITIES TO EACH OTHER

Staff:

The participation of parents in the life of the school is valued and important. The staff is willing and available to communicate with parents when the need arises. We seek always to work with you for the development of your child. We appreciate your greetings and smiles and trust that you feel welcome and involved, and comfortable to speak with any of us.

Parents:

Parent help in the classroom is very valuable and we encourage parents to talk to the teachers outside class time and arrange mutual times for helping in the classroom.

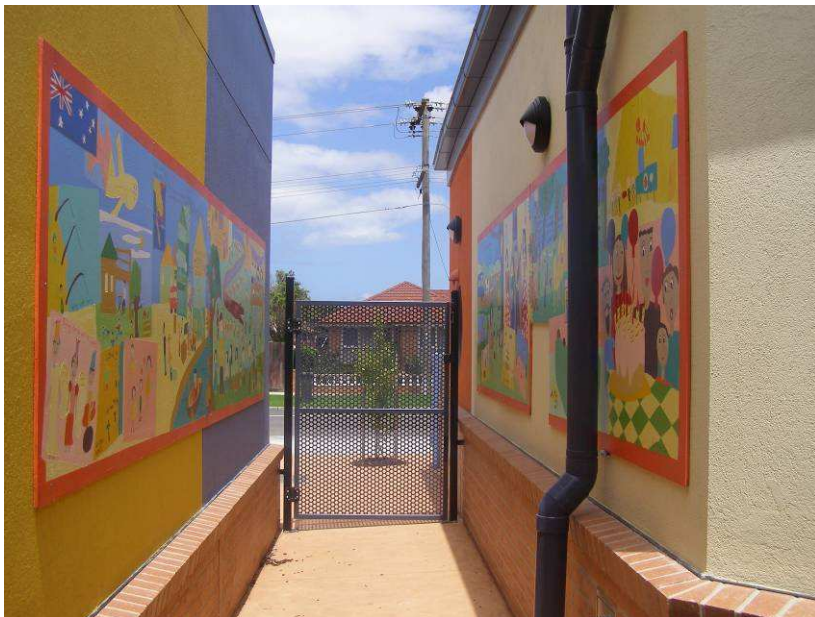
When helping in the classroom it is important to assist all children and not just your own. This allows for the best parent help and lets your child develop independence even though you are close by. It is very important not to discuss the progress or behaviour of other children in the class, so that harmony is maintained among the parents and the children. Confidentiality is a ‘must’.

All regular volunteers and parents who go on camps or excursions MUST hold a ‘Working With Children’ card. Applications for this card are available at all Post Offices.

Interviews:

Parents and teachers are encouraged to talk regularly and discuss the progress of the children. This can be incidental: before or after school. If serious issues need discussing appointments must be organized either with the teacher or through the school office. It is very important to talk to teachers if you have any concerns, even if they appear small or insignificant. Issues are best dealt with before they become too large and possibly hurtful.

Formal Parent/teacher interviews are offered once a year; at the start of Term 2. Optional interviews may also occur after the semester reports are sent home in June and December.



Culturally and linguistically diverse celebration mural

Program support meetings (PSG’s) are held twice a year with parents whose children receive Australian Government funding to support their learning. At this meeting specific learning programs are discussed.

Issues of sexual harassment:

The school complies with the Lutheran Church of Australia’s **SAFE PLACE POLICY** to address issues associated with sexual abuse.

There is a free call number for any persons concerned about any issues:
1800 644 628

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

- (a) Following an enquiry an information pack will be forwarded.
- (b) Enrolment forms are returned to the school office.
- (c) All parents / guardians will be required to attend an interview with the Principal before an enrolment application can proceed.

This interview will usually cover:

- The philosophy of Sunshine Christian School
 - The curriculum structure of Sunshine Christian School
 - The governance of Sunshine Christian School Association / Council / Sub-committees
 - An overview of Sunshine Christian School policies such as homework / discipline / uniform etc.
 - The special learning needs of the applicant’s child(ren) including any need for specialist teaching or supportive programs.
 - Fees and fee payment
 - Further enrolment procedures and policies
- (d) Parents are asked to produce all psychological or other assessments re their child at the enrolment interview.
 - (e) Following the interview the Principal will review the enrolment interview and investigate any special learning needs or matters raised during the interview. The Principal, in consultation with the Council will make a decision regarding enrolment.
 - (f) Following the interview, the Principal will notify the Bursar who will confirm with the parent / guardian their preferred option re fee payment prior to the student commencing at Sunshine Christian School. Subsidized places must be processed by the Finance Committee prior to enrolment acceptance.



- (g) A letter confirming the outcome of the application will be forwarded to the parent or guardian.
- (h) Every effort should be made to conduct assessments required by the school before the child commences. This particularly applies to children who will be in receipt of specialist assistance for specific disabilities or speech therapy.

DAILY PROGRAM: MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY

8.00am Staff arrives
8.30am Office open
8.30am Recommended student arrival time

8.45am Bell
Students start their day

8.45am Literacy block

10.45am Recess

11.15am Numeracy block

12.15pm Lunch eating time

12.30pm Lunch playtime

1.00pm Commence Integrated Studies (Information Communication Technology, Studies of Society and Environment, Drama, Health, Daily Physical Exercise)

3.00pm End of student’s day
Parents collect children from their classrooms at 3pm

On Mondays and every second Wednesday whole school assemblies will take place at 8:45am in the school hall.

Monday – Worship assembly

Wednesday – Sharing assembly

French is taught for one hour to each class on Wednesdays.

On Thursdays all classes rotate through a specialist subject program.

Each class experiences one hour of Physical Education, Science, Visual Arts, Music, and Christian Studies

On Friday morning children have their usual Literacy and Numeracy blocks. On Friday afternoons the Years Prep/1 and 1/2 have PMP (Motors skills program) and research development. The Years 3/4 and 5/6 select 2 of the following Performing Arts: Choir, Band, Handbells, and Musical Drama. The school produces a whole school musical production and art show every second year



These programs can alter occasionally. Local excursion permission forms are signed at the beginning of each year and are filed in the school office. Parents are notified of their children’s excursions but only those excursions further away from the area require specific permission forms. The school newsletter is used for informing parents of school activities.

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Teacher aides play a valuable role in the school’s teaching and learning programme.

Aides work across all classes for literacy and numeracy as well as supporting children in specialist subjects. These people provide excellent support to the teachers and mean that the adult to student ratio for key learning times is approximately 1:12 in the older grades and 1:10 in the Prep/1/2 area.



PREP INFORMATION

AGE

Children are required to be 5 years of age by the 31st March in the year of entry to Prep.

ORIENTATION

There are two mornings set aside in Term 4 of the previous year to prep entry for Orientation to the school and the Prep program. A letter containing the dates of these mornings is posted a few weeks prior to the first session. Parents may attend the first mornings and stay with the children. The second morning will be an information session for new parents as well as an orientation morning for all new students.

ASSESSMENT

During the first weeks of the new school each prep child will attend an assessment interview with the class teachers. This interview will take about 1 ½ hours and a parent may also attend.



During this time the Prep teacher will assess the child for English Literacy, Numeracy and language and social development. The information gained is vital for the teacher to prepare the best possible program for the child. Parents will have the opportunity to talk to the teacher about their child's individual needs. If the family speaks a language other than English at home the teacher has a questionnaire for the parent to fill in.

Occasionally Speech Pathology or Educational Psychology assessments will be organised before the child commences Prep. The need for these assessments can be determined by the principal at the enrolment interview or parents may already have involved their child in early intervention programs. It is essential that parents share this information with the school during the enrolment process so that the best possible preparation can be made before the child commences Prep. For instance the Prep teacher will find it invaluable to observe the child at their Kindergarten to gain a greater understanding of their particular needs.

Prep students attend school 4 days per week at the beginning of Term 1. They do not attend on Thursdays being the specialist rotation program until they are settled into normal school routines. This can be a period of up to 6 weeks.

At the beginning of the year Prep children may commence school a few days after the Year 1 to Year 6 students so that the teacher can conduct Prep entry assessments. Parents are notified before the end of the year for the interview times in the new school year.

UNIFORM



The wearing of school uniform is compulsory. Most uniform items are available through the front office.

The uniform requirements are as follows:

Summer – Boys

- Navy blue shorts
- Monogrammed sky-blue polo shirt
- white socks
- Plain Black polishable school shoes
- Navy blue monogrammed windcheater or jacket
- School issued sunhat

Summer – Girls

- Navy/ white check dress
- Or: Navy blue skorts & Monogrammed sky-blue polo shirt
- Plain white ankle socks.
- Plain black school shoes
- Navy blue monogrammed windcheater or jacket
- School issued sunhat

Winter – Boys & girls

- Navy blue slacks
- Monogrammed sky-blue polo shirt (long sleeved option)
- Sky blue skivvy (optional; can be worn under polo shirt)
- Navy blue socks
- Plain black shoes
- Navy blue monogrammed windcheater or jacket (may be worn together)
- navy blue raincoat
(school raincoat available on request)
- Plain navy blue knitted beanie (optional)

Winter – Girls (optional)

- Uniform as for boys
- Navy tunic worn with navy blue tights
- Sky blue skivvy
- Navy blue socks

Sports Uniform – Boys and Girls

- Plain Gold polo (long sleeved optional for winter)
- Gold skivvy (Optional: can be worn under polo shirt)
- Navy sport shorts (Terms 1 and 4)
- Navy track pants (Terms 2 and 3): no logos or extra colours e.g. stripes
- Normal school socks
- Navy blue monogrammed windcheater or jacket
- Black or white runners (these can have small amounts of school colours: blue, gold, black, burgundy)

Summer uniform is worn in Term 1 and Term 4. Winter uniform is worn in Term 2 and Term 3. Weather conditions can determine a late or early change from one uniform to another.

Track pants can be worn in Term 2 and 3 Sports Days ONLY, and on some excursions. The track pants MUST match the navy blue of the school windcheater.

Black or White Runners may be worn all day on Sports Days, some excursions and Thursdays. The wearing of runners on other days is not permitted.

Hair must be worn neatly, and **long hair must be tied back**. Hair ribbons and clips must be in the school colours: blue, black, gold, white, burgundy.

The wearing of jewellery is not permitted unless for medical reasons. For pierced ears only plain studs are to be worn.

Sunscreen must be worn at school and on school outings. Families are to provide children with their own sunscreen for recess and lunch play. Teachers will assist in application if necessary.

Casual or open-toed sandals are not to be worn to school. School shoe sandals with closed-in toes are permitted.

If a child is consistently wearing incorrect uniform a notice will be sent home with the details as correct uniform is a requirement of enrolment.



LIBRARY BAGS

Every child must have a school library bag if they are to borrow books from the school library. These bags have the school logo, reinforced corners, and are made of waterproof fabric.

ILLNESS AND ACCIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In circumstances where a child becomes unwell or suffers an accident during the school day, the school authorities will determine whether the child is well enough to stay at school or whether parents or carers should be contacted and arrangements made for the child to be taken home.

Parents will be notified of any treatment given to a child who remains at school. In the event that a parent or carer cannot be contacted and the child is deemed to require medical attention, the child will be taken to an appropriate medical centre. An ambulance will be called if this is the most appropriate first aid choice.

Up-to-date medical information about conditions a child may have, or medication that must be taken during school hours is required at all times. Medications must be prescribed by a medical practitioner. The medication must show the chemist' or doctors' label with the child's name and prescribed dose clearly stated. No child is to administer their own medication or to keep medications in their possession.

Asthma and allergy medications are the exception. Children should have their asthma medication at school at all times. It is important that children know how to administer their puffers correctly. However asthma medication generally should not be taken without teacher supervision.

Asthma attacks must be treated quickly and assistance given by any responsible person will assist as appropriate first aid.

The administration of paracetamol is not permitted unless prescribed for the child by a medical practitioner and clearly labeled as such. All medication is to be left at the school office and will be stored in the first aid area and administered by one of the school's senior first aid officers.

HEAD INJURIES

Any head or neck injury is treated seriously.

It is school policy that if any child receives a head or neck injury parents or carers are notified as soon as possible. It is desirable that parents or carers then collect their children from the school so that close observation can occur. If the injury is deemed serious by the senior first aid officer then professional medical assistance will be sought by the school.

IMMUNISATION

Parents are required to provide evidence of immunisations before enrolment is accepted. If you have conscientious objections to immunisation it is important to understand that the school will adhere to the Victorian Health Department, and all government requirements.

Parents will be notified in writing (e.g. usually through newsletter) of outbreaks of childhood diseases. Parents with un-immunized children will be asked to sign this notice, return it to the school, a copy will be given to the parent and the original stored in the office files according to the Privacy Laws. For further details please talk with the Principal or Secretary.

DISCIPLINE

The school has a set of rules to which the whole school community is expected to comply. The rules are positive and reflect the school’s Christian values. It is acknowledged however that children need to be trained to accept each other and react appropriately to situations. Many children take time to learn to cooperate with their peers, especially if they had much interaction with other children. We seek to teach our students strategies to identify and avoid behaviour that leads to bullying or being bullied. We find that children respond well to open discussion on these issues. The school will involve families in any serious or repetitive issues to assist children to overcome any difficulties that they are causing or experiencing.

Misdemeanors are dealt with in the following way:

- Discussion with children involved to be sure that they understand what is right or wrong.
- Time out: children who are having difficulties working or playing with others can sometimes be separated from their peers for a monitored period of time.
- Repeated misdemeanors will be discussed with the teachers, parents and the child. This may result in ‘internal suspension’, involving removal from the playground and classroom. If it is considered more appropriate a detailed record of the child’s behaviour will be kept. In some cases this will be signed by the student, the teachers, and the parents. This expects accountability and responsibility from the student.
- In cases of extreme difficulty a parent may be contacted and asked to take their child home for the remainder of the day. When this is done it would be because the situation involves distress or possible harm and it is wiser for the child to have time away from school.
- In rare circumstances a student’s enrolment may be terminated. Also in extremely rare situations where staff receive repeated harassment from parents the child’s enrolment may be terminated.

DEALING POSITIVELY WITH BEHAVIOUR

- Children experiencing any difficulties with behaviour will be assisted in every way possible to be the best person that they are able to be. We do not wish our students to know rejection as part of the school experience.
- Children are regularly praised, encouraged and rewarded. They are dealt with consistently. They are talked with and helped at all times to understand any situation and resulting consequence.
- Teachers at Sunshine Christian School pray that the children see the love of God reflected in their school experience. Our experience is that children respond far better to nurturing than punishment.
- The school is a ‘war-toy-free’ zone. We do not allow games where children pretend to hurt somebody else. The children are encouraged to play sensitively and creatively.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Zero tolerance of bullying underpins the policy.

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring Christian environment which fosters respect for others and does not tolerate bullying. Bullying is defined as repeatedly hurting another person. We consider the following behaviour to be bullying.

Physical bullying:

- Hitting, kicking and punching
- Pushing, shoving and spitting
- Making rude signs or gestures at another person
- Taking or damaging something that belongs to someone else
- Forcing someone else to hand over food or money or possessions
- Making someone do something they do not want to do

Verbal bullying:

- Name calling and teasing
- Threatening another person
- Making fun of another person or their actions
- Racist or other discriminatory remarks or gestures.

Other bullying

- Excluding someone from a game or group
- Spreading stories about another person, true or false
- Threatening or insulting body language
- Cyber bullying – insults or abuse spread using internet or mobile phones

At school our responsibility is to:

- Discuss bullying – what it is, how it affects us and what we should do
- Teach children skills to empower them to take responsibilities for their actions – both being a bully and a victim
- Deal with all reported incidents and ensure that children are supervised as thoroughly as is physically possible.
- Create a climate where children feel safe to ‘tell’ without fear of reprisal. This involves creating a safe climate to support and teach children resilience and social skills.
- Watch for signs of bullying and encourage parents to do so: parents also need a safe environment to share their concerns with staff.
- Respond to incidents of bullying with support, mediation, consequences, teaching, evaluating, and reviewing.

The whole staff must be responsible for ensuring that incidents of bullying are dealt with in a manner consistent with this statement. The Principal must be kept informed of incidents and may be the person directly responsible for the handling of the situation. At the Principal’s discretion parents will be asked to participate in anti-bullying strategies to assist with teaching children more appropriate responses to situations.

All parents are encouraged to support us in this very important area by discussing any issues with the Principal that cause concern. Please feel welcome to discuss even the most minor of issues as this is the best approach for prevention.

HOMEWORK

Homework activities are designed to reinforce, provide practice in and in some cases extend the skills and concepts students are developing in the classroom.

Each class teacher provides home study for their students. Every student from Prep to Year 6 is involved in a home reading program. Students receive other work according to their age, personal need and grade level.

- At Prep homework is mostly informal. One of the most important aspects of home work is the sharing of reading. It is also important to share books in the family’s home language.
- In Year 1 formal home reading is established. Other short homework tasks will be set. In Year 1 children learn the routines of regular homework.
- At Year 2 level children will have regular tasks in addition to their reading. Children at this stage may be asked to complete unfinished class work.
- At Year 3/4/5/6 children are expected to complete more complex tasks in addition to their reading.
- It should be noted that teachers may set the same activities for different levels in a class but will only be expecting the children’s achievement to match their stage of development.
- Parents may request extra homework. This needs to be negotiated with the classroom teacher.

LATE PASSES AND DAY PASSES

Parents or Carers are required to come to the office to fill in the above passes if children are later than 8.45 am or need to be removed from school earlier than 3pm.

TECHNOLOGICAL, EXPENSIVE TOYS, COLLECTOR CARDS, AND MOBILE PHONES



Students are not to bring these items to school.

Our experience has shown that when these items are brought to school the following problems occur:



- Some children’s behaviour becomes obsessive
- Some circumstances can result in control, manipulation and theft
- Some children are excluded from play
- Precious items can be lost or damaged
- Some children experience the distress of wanting items they cannot have for either financial circumstances or family values.

Children will be able to bring special possessions to school for the purpose of ‘show and tell’ if parents or carers come as well and the special items then go home. Sometimes special possessions can be kept in the school office for the day until a parent or carer collects them. Should children bring these items to school without adult knowledge the items will be stored in the office and returned to the adult at the end of the day.



BIRTHDAY INVITATIONS

In a small school children can be very hurt if they are not included in birthday parties. Unless every child in the class or all the boys or all the girls are invited please do not send invitations to school with your child.



SCHOOL FEES

The school receives its operational income from Government funding and school fees. So that we can provide the best educational outcomes for the children we do need parents to make a serious commitment to pay school fees as invoiced and on a regular basis. There are several options for the payment of fees.

The school fees are on two scales: full fee and reduced fee (health care card required). The health care card provides eligibility for the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The EMA is applied for through the school. Unless payment for fees is made within one fortnight of receiving the school fee invoice, Direct Debit or Centrelink payment of fees is a requirement.

A full term's notice is required if you are intending to withdraw your child/children from the school. *If notice is not given a full term's fee will be invoiced and payable.* Extenuating circumstances will be considered. All inquiries and concerns re fees should be addressed to Mrs. Wendy Barnes, the school bursar.

SAFE PLACE POLICY: 'VALUING SAFE COMMUNITIES'

The Lutheran Church of Australia and specifically Sunshine Christian School intend that we live together in harmony and Christian love. The school aims to be a safe place for all members of its community.

Should any member of the community feel that this aim is not being achieved we ask that in the spirit of Matthew 18 verses 15-17 that you approach the person involved and try to come to a caring resolution.

If this is not successful please approach the Principal or Pastor to assist in mediation.

In the case of sexual harassment or abuse a formal complaint can be made by:

Ringling the Toll free number: 1800 644 628

or writing to LCA Safe Place Policy, PO Box 519, Marden, SA 5070

More information about this policy can be found on the Lutheran website:
www.lca.org.au/action/safeplace



Musical Production "Daniel" 2008

The school produces a musical on alternate years, however due to the current building project the next musical is not scheduled until 2011. Every child has a part to play.

A key element of Christian Schooling is the relationship between all adults involved in the development of the child.

Together with Christ we work to
“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 22:6