



**28 August 2024**

## **Response to Government Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools**

This submission addresses the particular areas of (b) and (d) of the term of reference:

(b) inquire into and report upon the measures necessary to prevent and remedy discrimination and bullying in Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff

(d) examine and recommend what efforts are being made and should be made towards meeting those obligations by Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff

St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery caters for around 60 students from Kinder – Year 6. At St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery we value the students, family and staff and seek to support them in their ongoing educational, emotional, and spiritual development. We welcome families who seek a Catholic faith-based education. Families at our school come from all walks of life.

We have students from at least seven different cultures and countries, from a variety of religions, and family dynamics. We welcome them and their families with open arms, creating a supportive family environment. We welcome families from the margins and offer fee assistance for families in need through concessions and hardship schemes where needed. Families at St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery are often highly transient, moving in and out of town to work at the mine.

Our school is a safe place for students and parents/guardians have commented on the family feel our school provides. One parent stated that she was appreciative of the school for providing a stable environment for her children after a recent, traumatic family upheaval. She said her boys had settled quickly into the school and had become calmer at home as well.

Another parent with three children at St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery has shared how her children are completely different since starting at our school. The eldest has significantly less behavioural issues and is not being bullied. Her middle child is no longer non-verbal and participates fully in class due to feeling safe at school. The youngest is less anxious and loves coming to school. She has said this is the first school they've attended where the teachers care about her children as individuals.

We have zero tolerance for bullying and have had students transfer to our school due to the amount of bullying at their previous school. They have expressed that they have not experienced bullying with us. To encourage respect, courtesy, and consideration for others, we use Footprint rewards where students are recognised for making positive choices.

St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery follows the School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning with the focus on being safe, respectful learners. Each week teachers are provided with a targeted explicit lesson which they teach to the children. Topics are selected according to areas of need or upcoming events. Some focus areas have included: arrival and departure routines, break behaviours, resolving conflict, Church behaviours, and respecting property.

We believe that student well-being comes from being accepted and welcomed, and from experiencing success in learning. All our education programs are aimed at these goals. We have implemented The Resilience Project since 2022 which teaches children how to be resilient, but also to be grateful, empathetic, and mindful in their daily lives. This project also allows parents and staff to access resources to help build their own resilience.

Students, through our Religious Education program, learn about God's plan for our happiness and the importance of every person. They learn through The Good News for Living supported by Making Jesus Real, liturgies and Mass with the Parish Priest. Each Mass has a focus and Father ensures his homily is age-appropriate and engaging. Themes for Mass have included forgiveness, kindness, helping others and family.

We support pastoral care in our school by providing the Good Start breakfast program two mornings a week during Terms 2 and 3. This allows students to start the day feeling full and positive. Students are also offered a hot lunch twice a week, funded by MMG and supplied by Loaves and Fishes. This is an important time where students sit as a class around a central table, sharing in a meal, learning table manners and social skills as led by the teacher. Students have been more likely to try new foods in this situation. For some of our students, these are the most consistent meals they will receive each week. We also run our Setup for Success program for children birth – 5 years of age. This allows any family from Rosebery and surrounds to come and make connections with other families while their children play. In a remote community, these connections are essential for these families.

Students in Kinder to Year 6 at St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery provided the following responses:

We like St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery because:

- We see our teachers and friends every day
- The playground is big
- It is a safe place and is helpful for learning
- We get hot lunches twice a week

The best thing about St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery is:

- Footprint rewards
- Activities including reading books, show and tell, access to technology and playing with friends
- The kindness

The teachers at St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery:

- Are lovely, caring, helpful, funny and kind
- Let us have fun
- Are very good at teaching

I feel happy at St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery because:

- I have friends
- I like learning
- It is fun and safe
- The teachers make us happy
- We get to see performances by other people

I feel safe at St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery because:

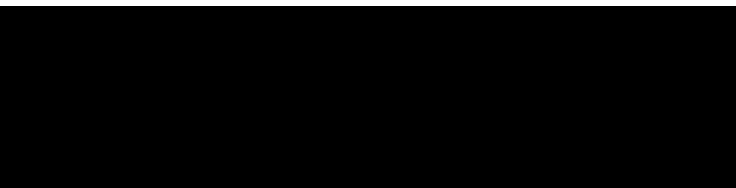
- There are no dogs
- We have teachers that care and are there for us every day
- There are rules including 'no hands on'
- We have security cameras and safety measures, and we know what to do in lockdowns and things.

At St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery we are kind to each other because:

- Kindness spreads, but being mean is not good and hurts feelings
- They are my friends, we are all friends
- We treat people how we want to be treated
- We are taught to be kind and forgiving people is important
- I want to and I am a decent person

The staff at St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery works hard to ensure each member of our school community feels accepted, safe and respected. We welcome people from all walks of life, especially those who are marginalised. We will continue to build the faith of our community and to provide a broader family environment to those who wish to join us.

Kind regards,



Jessinda Jones  
Principal  
St Joseph's Catholic School, Rosebery

*TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE*