



GUIDELINES and PROCEDURES

Student Attendance

Schools may vary student attendance of the gazetted school dates for the purpose of Student Free Days and other reasons that require a School Closure Day as approved by the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate.

Attendance for Foundation (Prep) Students

To accommodate local circumstances, principals may make adjustments regarding the attendance requirements for Foundation students in Term 1 that must not exceed 25% of a normal school week.

To make these adjustments to attendance times, the principal must:

- Include details of the arrangement in Form One Request for Student Free Days and Notification of School Closure Days (DOBCEL Schools)
- develop a comprehensive communication strategy with parents

Variations to Gazetted Dates

Schools will vary gazetted dates for the school year, based on substantial and consistent reasons and rationales, in congruence with the School's Improvement Priorities. These variations include School Closure Days and Student Free Days and must be approved by the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate. The School Advisory Council and school community are to be advised of any such variations to gazetted dates.

Student Free Days

The first and last day of the school year will be Student Free Days. In addition to the two days as listed, schools have the opportunity to plan for an additional four days that are designated Student Free Days. The principal will make a request to the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate, regarding the scheduling of the four student-free days each year to meet local school needs, primarily based on the school's annual school improvement plan.

One Student Free Day each year must be dedicated to a Catholic School Culture theme *e.g. Spirituality, Faith Development, Theology, Catholic Identity or Religious Education*.

The Principal will communicate to the School Advisory Council and the School Community on the scheduling of Student Free Days. Student Free Days should be set in the previous year so that parents/carers can make suitable arrangements. Where possible, schools are encouraged to co-ordinate activities with other local schools to promote co-operative professional development and planning and maximise the use of available resources.

In exceptional circumstances additional days beyond the normal six Student Free Days, can be approved by the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate.

Principals must register Student Free Days with Catholic Education Ballarat, preferably by the end of the preceding year.

Schools must record Student Free Days on the Student Activity Locator, to facilitate State emergency management protocols.

Approval will not be given for half a Student Free Day.

Schools should not plan Student Free Days close after holiday periods unless the Student Free Day is “attached” to the holiday period e.g. the first or last day of term 2 or term 3. It is noted that on some occasions schools are required to work around the availability of guest presenters which may impact the timing of Student Free Days.

Term Dates

End of Term

- Students may be dismissed from 2.30pm (or as required by local school bus schedules) on the gazetted last day of Term 1,2 and 3 and on the last approved day of Term 4.
- Unless approval has been provided by the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate, schools should adhere to the gazetted term dates in Victorian except in the case of the last gazetted day of the school year falling on a Tuesday. In this case, schools will conclude for students at the close of business on the preceding Friday. Student Free Days will be allocated for the Monday and Tuesday in this instance.

School Closure Days and Public Holidays

The Principal will inform the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate, regarding the scheduling of the designated LGA Public Holiday. School Closure Days are recorded for all Gazetted Public Holidays in Victoria as shown below. These holidays must be taken on the gazetted day(s).

- New Year’s Day
- Australia Day
- Labour Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- ANZAC Day
- Grand Final Public Holiday
- King’s Birthday
- Christmas Day and
- Boxing Day

A School Closure Day may also need to be implemented in other exceptional circumstances, usually with an element of emergency associated with them e.g. Emergency Management Plan on a Code Red day, weather conditions preventing transport, gas leak, fire, flood, major accidents or fatalities. The Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat would need to approve such a closure day. In the event that the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat is unable to be contacted, the Principal, after consulting the Educational Consultant and/or Deputy Director of Catholic Education Ballarat, is able to approve a School Closure in the event of an emergency.

It is important for schools to respond pastorally and to develop protocols for situations of bereavement and tragedy that may occur. The spirit of the protocol should be to keep the school open, if possible; however, there may be occasions where the death of a community member may require the pastoral response of closing the school. The Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate should approve such a closure.

Principals must register all School Closure Days with the Catholic Education Ballarat, preferably by the end of the preceding year,

Schools must record all School Closure Days on the Student Activity Locator to facilitate State emergency management protocols.

Term Four Dismissals

The Principal will make a request to the Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate, regarding the scheduling of last day of school (primary) and the last day of school for different Year levels in the school (secondary). All students from Foundation and up to and including Year 6, will attend until the end of the gazetted school year or other date as approved by Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate. Other students may be excused from attending school at the end of the year:

Students	May finish school
<i>in Years 7- 10</i>	<i>from the first Friday in December, not more than two weeks before the end of the year.</i>
<i>in Year 11</i>	<i>after completing final exams, but not before the close of the school day on the last Friday in November.</i>
<i>in Year 12</i>	<i>from the last day of scheduled class for Yr 12 students or alternative as approved by Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat or delegate.</i>

Important: Principals may require attendance of these students at any time up to the last gazetted day of the school year.

Principals must register the final day of school for the various Year levels with Catholic Education Ballarat, preferably by the end of the preceding year, and also record them on the Student Activity Locator, to facilitate State emergency management protocols.

Communication - School Community

Principals must inform parents/carers and the broader school community of the scheduling arrangements for Student Free Days, School Closure Days (where applicable), Public Holidays, and Term dates. Where possible schools should provide a minimum of one term's written prior notice of Student Free Day(s) to parents.

Schools should use a variety of communication strategies to inform their school community of Student Free Day arrangements. These strategies may include notices in school newsletters, social media, on-line communication apps e.g. PAM or SIMON, school website, signage outside the school, and letters to parents/carers.

Catholic Education Ballarat must be notified of all variations of days for students.

Schools serviced by Department of Transport or Department school bus services must advise their service providers of their student-free day arrangements. It is noted that all Department of Transport school bus services run each day of the gazetted school year.

Appendices

Appendix 1. School Term Dates 2025-2028

Appendix 2. Public Holidays and Term Dates 2025 – 2028

Appendix One

School Term Dates

Victorian School and kindergarten term dates - 2025 to 2028

2025

Term 1: 28 January (school teachers start) to 4 April *

Term 2: 22 April to 4 July

Term 3: 21 July to 19 September

Term 4: 6 October to 19 December

2026

Term 1: 27 January (school teachers start) to 13 March *

Term 2: 30 March to 19 June

Term 3: 6 July to 18 September

Term 4: 5 October to 18 December

2027

Term 1: 27 January (school teachers start) to 25 March *

Term 2: 12 April to 25 June

Term 3: 12 July to 17 September

Term 4: 4 October to 17 December

2028

Term 1: 27 January (school teachers start) to 31 March *

Term 2: 18 April to 30 June

Term 3: 17 July to 22 September

Term 4: 9 October to 21 December

Public holidays when schools in Victoria are not open are:

- 1 January (New Year's Day) or substitute day
- 26 January (Australia Day) or substitute day
- second Monday in March (Labour Day)
- Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday
- 25 April (Anzac Day)
- second Monday in June (observance of the King's birthday)
- first Tuesday in November (Melbourne Cup Day) or such other day as is appointed under section 8 of the Public Holidays Act 1993
Note: Non-metropolitan councils may request that another day be appointed in lieu of Melbourne Cup Day and if approved, have it declared in the Victorian Government Gazette.
- 25 December (Christmas Day) or substitute day
- 26 December (Boxing Day) or substitute day.

Appendix Two:

Public Holidays and Term Dates 2025-2028

2025 School Year – Victoria

	Start of term	Student Free days	Public Holidays	Finish of term	Number Weeks
Term One	Tuesday 28 January	Planning Day Tues 28 Jan	Labour Day- Mon 10 March	Friday 4 April	10
Vacation	Monday 7 April		Good Friday- Fri 18 April Easter Sunday- Sun 20 April Easter Monday – Mon 21 April	Monday 21 April	2
Term Two	Tuesday 23 April		ANZAC Day –Thur 25 April King's Birthday –Mon 09 June	Friday 4 July	11
Vacation	Monday 7 July			Friday 18 July	2
Term Three	Monday 21 July			Friday 19 September	9
Vacation	Monday 22 September			Friday 3 October	2
Term Four	Monday 6 October	Planning Day Fri 19 Dec		Friday 19 December	11
Vacation	Monday 22 December		Christmas Day- Thur 25 Dec Boxing Day- Fri 26 Dec New Year's Day – Thur 1 Jan Aust. Day- Mon 26 Jan	Monday 26 January	5

2026 School Year – Victoria

	Start of term	Student Free days	Public Holidays	Finish of term	Number Weeks
Term One	Tuesday 27 January	Planning Day Tues 27 Jan	Labour Day- Mon 9 March	Friday 13 March	7
Vacation	Monday 16 March			Friday 28 March	2
Term Two	Monday 30 March		Good Friday- Fri 3 April Easter Sunday- Sun 5 April Easter Monday – Mon 6 April ANZAC Day –Sat 25 April King's Birthday –Mon 8 June	Friday 19 June	12
Vacation	Monday 22 June			Friday 3 July	2
Term Three	Monday 6 July			Friday 18 September	11
Vacation	Monday 21 September			Friday 2 October	2
Term Four	Monday 5 October	Planning Day Fri 18 Dec		Friday 18 December	11
Vacation	Monday 21 December		Christmas Day- Fri 25 Dec Boxing Day- Sat 26 Dec New Year's Day – Fri 1 Jan Australia Day- Tues 26 Jan	Tuesday 26 January	5

2027 School Year – Victoria

	Start of term	Student Free days	Public Holidays	Finish of term	Number Weeks
Term One	Wednesday 27 January	Planning Day Wed 27 Jan	Labor Day- Mon 8 March	Thursday 25 March	9
Vacation	Friday 26 March		Good Friday- Fri 26 March Easter Sunday- Sun 28 March Easter Monday – Mon 29 March	Friday 9 April	2
Term Two	Monday 12 April		ANZAC Day –Sun 25 April King's Birthday –Mon 14 June	Friday 25 June	11
Vacation	Monday 28 June			Friday 9 July	2
Term Three	Monday 12 July			Friday 17 September	10
Vacation	Monday 20 September			Friday 1 October	2
Term Four	Monday 4 October	Planning Day Fri 17 Dec		Friday 17 December	11
Vacation	Monday 20 December		Christmas Day- Sat 25 Dec (27 Dec) Boxing Day- Sun 26 Dec (28 Dec) New Year's Day – Sat 1 Jan (3 Jan) Australia Day- Tue 26 Jan	Wednesday 27 January	5

2028 School Year – Victoria

	Start of term	Student Free days	Public Holidays	Finish of term	Number Weeks
Term One	Thursday 27 January	Planning Day Thur 27 Jan	Labor Day- Mon 13 March	Friday 31 March	10
Vacation	Monday 03 April		Good Friday- Fri 14 April Easter Sunday- Sun 16 April Easter Monday – Mon 17 April	Monday 17 April	2
Term Two	Tuesday 18 April		ANZAC Day –Sun 25 April King's Birthday –Mon 12 June	Friday 30 June	11
Vacation	Monday 3 July			Friday 14 July	2
Term Three	Monday 17 July			Friday 22 September	10
Vacation	Monday 19 September			Friday 30 September	2
Term Four	Monday 09 October	Planning Day Wed 20 Dec		Thursday 21 December	11
Vacation	Friday 22 December		Christmas Day- Sat 25 Dec (27 Dec) Boxing Day- Sun 26 Dec (28 Dec) New Year's Day – Sat 1 Jan (3 Jan) Australia Day- Wed 26 Jan	Thursday 27 January	5