



## 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 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.
- 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*.
- An additional three days are designated Student Free Days, with the school's nominated foci.
- Two optional collaboration days are offered to schools undertaking collaboration with one or more schools within the diocese.
- Each year 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 and two optional collaboration days to meet local school needs, primarily based on the school's annual school improvement plan.

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.

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

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

### 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 Victoria 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 Years 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 Catholic Education Ballarat.

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

### **Term Four Dismissals (Secondary)**

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 and compliance protocols.

<b>Students</b>	<b>May finish school</b>
<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.*

### **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. To do this, email [execdirector@dobcel.catholic.edu.au](mailto:execdirector@dobcel.catholic.edu.au) and CC the school's Education Consultant.

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 2026-2028

Appendix 2. Public Holidays and Term Dates 2026–2028

## Appendix One

### School Term Dates

#### Victorian School and kindergarten term dates - 2026 to 2028

##### 2026

Term 1: 27 January (school teachers start) to 2 April\*

Term 2: 20 April to 26 June

Term 3: 13 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 2026-2028

## 2026 School Year – Victoria

	Start of term	Student Free days	Public Holidays	Finish of term	# Weeks
<b>Term One</b>	Tuesday 27 January	<b>Planning Day</b> Tues 27 Jan	<b>Labour Day-</b> Mon 9 March	Thursday 2 April	<b>10</b>
<b>Vacation</b>	<b>Friday 3 April</b>		<b>Good Friday-</b> Fri 3 April <b>Easter Sunday-</b> Sun 5 April <b>Easter Monday</b> – Mon 6 April	Friday 17 April	<b>2</b>
<b>Term Two</b>	Monday 20 April		<b>ANZAC Day</b> –Sat 25 April <b>King's Birthday</b> –Mon 8 June	Friday 26 June	<b>10</b>
<b>Vacation</b>	Monday 28 June			Friday 10 July	<b>2</b>
<b>Term Three</b>	Monday 13 July			Friday 18 September	<b>10</b>
<b>Vacation</b>	Monday 21 September			Friday 2 October	<b>2</b>
<b>Term Four</b>	Monday 5 October	<b>Planning Day</b> Fri 18 Dec		Friday 18 December	<b>11</b>
<b>Vacation</b>	Monday 21 December		<b>Christmas Day-</b> Fri 25 Dec <b>Boxing Day-</b> Sat 26 Dec <b>New Year's Day</b> – Fri 1 Jan <b>Australia Day-</b> Tues 26 Jan	Tuesday 27 January	<b>5</b>

## 2027 School Year – Victoria

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

## 2028 School Year – Victoria

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