

FAQs ST PHILIP NERI NORTHBRIDGE

1. Governance

Catholic Schools Broken Bay Limited as Trustee of The Catholic Schools Broken Bay Trust.

Catholic Schools Broken Bay Limited (CSBB Ltd) is an incorporated entity and registered as a charity. As part of Bishop Anthony's vision for the Diocese of Broken Bay, our Shared Mission Principles clearly articulate CSBB's commitment to deliver an authentic, professional Catholic education with care and compassion, helping all to know Christ and love learning.

CSBB Ltd is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Bishop of Broken Bay, who is the legal Member of CSBB Ltd.

The Board is responsible for major policy decisions, approves income and expenditure, and holds the Executive Director and Leadership Team accountable for the management of the school system.

The **Director of Schools** and a team of Workstream Leads ensure our schools and employees are supported and well managed, with all governance requirements met and accounted for.

Our **Principals** lead day-to-day operations at their schools. They provide leadership, mentorship and support to students and staff, and have overall responsibility for their school's teaching and learning, Catholic identity, and other programs.

For more information visit our website [Leadership team | Catholic Schools Broken Bay](#)

For information regarding our Policies and Guidelines visit [Policies and Forms | Catholic Schools Broken Bay](#)

2. What is happening and why?

As part of the new Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) 5-year strategic plan *Shaping Tomorrow, Together in Faith*, there is a plan to renew and strengthen our schools across the diocese to meet the changing needs of our communities.

In the North Shore Precinct, the two Lower North Shore parish schools - St Philip Neri, Northbridge, and St Thomas, Willoughby - will come together as one K-6 school community at the St Thomas Willoughby site from Term 1 2026.

This provides enhanced opportunities for students including:

- A larger school community creating extended peer networks and friendships

- Broader student leadership roles and an expanded range of co-curricular opportunities
- Continuity of relationships with staff transitioning alongside students
- Consistent class sizes aligned with Diocesan standards for optimal learning
- A carefully planned transition program throughout 2025 ensuring students and families feel supported, confident, and excited about this next chapter.

The site of St Philip Neri, Northbridge is being transformed into an Eileen O'Connor School facility to support students with complex learning needs. Further information about the Eileen O'Connor school can be found here [Eileen O'Connor Catholic School](#)

While this marks the end of a much-loved chapter in St Philip Neri's story, it also opens the door to new opportunities for students and families.

3. School Choices for 2026

Our priority now is to support families as they decide the best option for their children — whether that is St Thomas or another school.

All Year Groups

Transfer to St Thomas Catholic Primary School Willoughby

All current St Philip Neri, Northbridge students are guaranteed a place at St Thomas.

If you would like this option, please complete the [Transfer of Enrolment](#) form by **Friday 12 September**.

If you need more time to submit the enrolment transfer form, please contact St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Willoughby stw@dbb.catholic.edu.au or 02 7256 2104.

Confirmation of enrolment at St Thomas for 2026 will be sent by email once the Transfer of Enrolment forms have been received and processed.

Apply at another CSBB School

Families are welcome to apply for enrolment for other CSBB schools. The application process can be followed [HERE](#)

Other Options

Support will be provided to any family who wishes to transfer out of the CSBB System of Schools.

4. Uniform Requirements, Transition, and Support?

To support families every child transferring to St Thomas, Willoughby will receive a **\$300 subsidy at the start of 2026** to assist with the purchase of the St Thomas uniform. Further details on how to access this subsidy will be provided shortly.

A transition period from the St Philip's, Northbridge uniform to the St Thomas uniform will be in place with all children required to wear the St Thomas uniform by the start of the 2028 school year. All new Kindergarten enrolments for 2026 will be required to wear the St Thomas uniform. Consideration is being given to incorporate some elements of the St Philip Neri school uniform into the St Thomas uniform.

Uniforms for St Thomas Catholic School are supplied by Noone. More information is available at this link [St Thomas Catholic Primary School | Noone](#).

5. Can we have a tour of St Thomas' with our child?

School tours can be arranged by contacting St Thomas directly on 7256-2104.

6. Will students from both schools be evenly mixed or kept separate?

Our aim is to thoughtfully blend the two communities. Class groupings will balance existing friendships with opportunities for new connections, and students will be supported throughout the transition.

7. What is the transition and support plan?

We are committed to supporting every student and family through the transition. To ensure this is a positive experience, a year-long Transition Plan will begin in Term 4, 2025. This plan is designed to help students finish the year well, celebrate their achievements, and look forward with confidence to the future.

Key Elements of the Transition Plan

- **Finishing Well:** Helping students find closure by acknowledging emotions, celebrating accomplishments, and sharing in end-of-year community events.
- **Student Wellbeing:** Our staff, wellbeing team and school counselling service will work closely with students and parents to ensure everyone feels supported during this time. When required additional counselling supports will be available.
- **Student Visits and Joint Events:** Opportunities will be created for students from both communities to connect through visits and shared community activities.
- **Parent Involvement:** Parent representatives will be invited to contribute to planning these initiatives, ensuring families remain an important part of the process.
- **Minimising Disruption:** Careful timetabling and strategic planning will keep learning on track, with continued monitoring of student growth and prioritisation and timetabling of Key Learning Areas.

The Resilience Project (TRP)

We will continue to use The Resilience Project (TRP) for the remainder of 2025 - an evidence-based wellbeing program already in place at St Philip Neri. TRP is built on the three pillars of:

- Gratitude
- Empathy
- Mindfulness

Aspects of TRP will be woven into the transition activities from Term 4, 2025.

Parent Support

Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) has provided resources to help parents guide conversations with their children and encourage them to embrace the change. Our shared goal is that every student feels welcome, confident, and excited about the opportunities ahead.

Below are some additional links that families may consider utilising to support their child/ren. Additionally, parents may consider revisiting the video shown to the students last week. Here is a link for your reference [Kids Uncomplicated: Coping with Change For Kids!](#)

Raising Children Network – Articles and videos on managing big changes, separation anxiety, and helping children adapt socially and academically.

- [Preparing children and teenagers for moving schools](#)
- [Before moving schools: practical tips](#)
- [After moving schools: helping children and teenagers settle in](#)

Kids Helpline for Parents – Resources and confidential support for parents navigating children's anxiety, friendships, and learning adjustments.

- [Starting a new school: the tips you need to know!](#)

Headspace Parent and Carer Resources – Advice on supporting young people through uncertainty and building resilience.

Books or Activities for Consideration

- *You're Stronger Than You Think* (By Peter Smith) – resilience-building for young people.
- *The Invisible String* (By Patrice Karst) – helpful for younger children to understand connection during change.
- Journaling or "Gratitude Jar" activities – aligned with TRP pillars to keep focus on positive moments throughout the year.

8. What are the school times at St Thomas?

Before school supervision commences at:	8.25am
School commences:	8.50am
Lunch Break:	10.50am - 11.30am
Recess Break:	1.30pm - 2.00pm
Dismissal:	3.05pm

9. Is there before and after-school care at St Thomas?

OSHC will be available at St Thomas for before and after school care. Details on enrolling your child for OSHC will be provided in due course. Consistent with the new strategy, Enrica Bova, the Principal of St Thomas, will have more direct oversight of activities in the OSHC as all OSHC providers will now be required operate to standards set by CSBB System Leaders.

Before-School Care: 7.00am until school time
After-School Care: the end of school until 6.00pm

10. As a parent, how can I be engaged in the life of St Thomas?

At St Thomas parents are partners in the spiritual and educational journey of their children. The school invites parents and carers to enter the school playgrounds before school and prior to dismissal to meet their children.

Parents are invited to attend events such as: Mother's Day, Grandparents Day, Father's Day, Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals.

Parents and carers are invited to attend school educational workshops, excursions and social events. There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer to assist.

11. How many children are at St Thomas?

There are 332 children at St Thomas, Willoughby. The school has capacity to accommodate all students from both schools.

12. What is the school motto?

St Thomas school motto is "Forward in Faith".

13. What is the plan for 2026 Kindergarten Transition

Kindergarten Transition for 2026 will be held early Term 4. Students commencing Kindergarten in 2026 will attend 4 weekly morning sessions while parent workshops are held concurrently.

St Thomas also runs '[Little Stars](#)' playgroup fortnightly on a Wednesday morning. Students commencing school in 2026 are invited to attend 'Little Stars' playgroup.

14. Student Leadership at St Thomas

Students in Year 6 are given opportunities to use their gifts and talents as student leaders. *All Year 6 students share in the student leadership of the school.* Being student leaders involves demonstrating and developing increased leadership skills. Year 6 students are voted by their peers to lead one of the school values. The Year 6 student leaders form Value Teams.

Year 6 students at St Thomas have a combined leadership role; as a value leader and colour house captain.

15. What is the P&F's (or aligned body's) structure?

St Thomas Catholic Primary School is a systemic school within Catholic Schools Broken Bay; we align with and implement CSBB policies and guidelines. Parental engagement promotes partnerships that recognise learning as a shared responsibility, with both parents and teachers having different but important

roles in a child's learning and wellbeing. In supporting effective parental engagement CSBB provides opportunities for parents to be both engaged in their child's learning at home and at school and involved in school-based education, activities and events. In alignment with the above statement the parent leadership team at St Thomas is known as the Parent Engagement Network (PEN), as opposed to Parents & Friends (P & F) which it is often referred to at other schools.

The PEN Executive Committee consists of the following roles: Chair, Treasurer, Secretary & CSP Representative. Parents are also invited to be Team Leads or Members of the Fundraising, Pastoral Care, Community Connections and Parent Engagement Committees.

St Thomas PEN organises Trivia Night, Mother's Day, Grandparents Day, Father's Day, St Thomas Art & Craft Show, pastoral care outreach to our families, parent education workshops and class parents.

16. What happens to the Northbridge P&F Funds?

The terms of the P&F Constitution will be applied and there will be consultation with the Northbridge P&F as to how the funds will be used to support the transition and end of year activities for the SPN families. It is anticipated that this will include an end of year concert, *Motiv8* and other activities.

17. Features of St Thomas?

An extensive refurbishment of classrooms occurred during 2022 and 2023. All classrooms have ducted air conditioning, new carpet, new display boards, new large screen TV monitors and new furniture. The classrooms are interconnected and are filled with natural light. St Thomas has 2 playgrounds, one is synthetic turf with handball courts, the second has a large play equipment area and basketball court. Both playgrounds have large waterproof shade shelters. There is a new Library with a new collection of resources. The library is also used as a passive space during breaks.

St Thomas has 15 learning spaces in total, and potential to expand to 17.

18. Class sizes?

Class sizes will follow Diocesan standards.

19. Is there a Canteen at St Thomas?

St Thomas does not have an onsite canteen; lunch orders are delivered daily from 'Sweet Temptations' in Lane Cove. They have a varied menu including hot food. Orders are placed online.

20. What Co-curricular activities are there?

Junior and Senior school choir; Gifted Enrichment classes, including Maths Olympiad & Tournament of the Minds, Junior and Senior Band, individual/small group band instrument tuition, Chess; Drama.

21. What will the school fees be?

Education fees will continue to remain highly competitive for the quality of the Catholic education being provided. The Education Fee for 2026 has been *estimated* at \$5,980. As is usual practice, the fees will be confirmed prior to the end of the year.

22. What social opportunities are there for families?

All grades have class parents who facilitate social catch ups for parents and children during the year. School functions and events coordinated by school and/or PEN also provide opportunities for families to engage socially.

23. What partnership is there with the local parish?

St Thomas Catholic Primary School is the primary parish school for The Catholic Parish of the Lower North Shore. The school collaboratively partners with the Parish. The Sacramental Coordinator, Mrs Jade Tran, is in communication with the school regarding all Sacraments taking place in a calendar year. Staff from St Thomas attend the Sacraments supporting the students and families to celebrate the child's spiritual milestones.

The school's Parent Engagement Coordinator is a close link between the Parish and the school. The school and Parish celebrate the Opening of the school year at a Sunday morning Mass, followed by a BBQ. St Thomas the Apostle's Feast Day is celebrated as a Parish, also followed by a BBQ. The clergy of our Parish visit classes to prepare for their attendance at a weekday Parish Mass. Classes are rostered to attend a weekday Parish Mass each term.

Students from St Thomas are trained as altar servers to assist in school Masses and on the weekend. The same opportunity will be available to students from St Philip Neri.

24. What was the consultation process across the Precinct

In 2024, all parents, staff and clergy were invited to participate in workshops and focus groups to help shape the future of Catholic education across the North Shore. This process included:

2024

- Multiple onsite workshops and focus groups at each school and Parish
- Independent market research about future needs
- Demographic and financial studies
- *Have Your Say* survey
- Opportunity to follow the review on CSBB Website

- Shared main themes emerging from the North Shore Review with school communities
- Visioning Process with School Leaders, School Marketing Officers and Parent Engagement Coordinators

2025

- establishing partnership and pathways with Marist North Shore
- Assessment of North Shore Pastoral Discernment Findings
- Deep dive into individual schools (educational outcomes, staff and community sentiment, enrolments, future capital needs, competitor analysis, marketing analysis, financial analysis, trends and projections)
- The Senior Executive Strategic Delivery, North Shore appointed - Brenda Timp
- May 2025 - Parent and staff workshops focusing on reimagining the Precinct [LINK TO VIDEO SHOWED AT SESSIONS](#) -
- Additional workshop was run at Northbridge for parents unable to attend the previous week at Pymble

July

- Invitations to attend August briefings where it was foreshadowed that changes were on the horizon for our schools, particularly across the North Shore and CSBB was eager to update parents on the direction of the Strategic Plan and the priorities shaping the future.

August

- Invitations to attend August Important Announcement shared with School Community
- Individual Clergy Meetings to discuss the specific plan for their Parish and the communication to the local community
- Announcement of St Philip Neri repurposing and transition support

25. How are the students being prepared for the transition?

CSBB has provided all parents with some resources to support their discussion with their child and encourage them to embrace the change. The shared goal with our parents is to make students feel welcome, confident, and excited about the change.

A transition Steering Committee, which includes parent representatives from both schools, will be established to develop a transition plan to ensure a positive outcome. The plan will include student visits, joint events, and staff and parent collaboration across both communities.

Additional Information can be found here:

- St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Willoughby – [School Prospectus](#)
- [St Philip Neri, Northbridge and St Thomas, Willoughby 'A Tale of Two Schools'](#)
- [Shaping Tomorrow Together in Faith](#)

- [Enrolment Transfer Form](#)

These FAQs will be updated regularly. For additional information about St Thomas enrolment and transition process, please contact St Thomas Catholic School via (02) 7256 2104 stw@dbb.catholic.edu.au