



**Sinai College**  
**Parent Handbook**  
**2024**

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for choosing Sinai College for your child. A parent's choice in school for their child is amongst the most personal, and pivotal of decisions. For some the decision is based on academic success, or extra-curricular offering. For others, it is based around religious or cultural preference. For many, the decision is one based on shared values. I am confident that your decision to trust us with your child, and their education will be a fruitful one

Sinai College embraces diversity, fostering individual achievement and community spirit. We value rigorous, life-long learning, creativity, community service and self-confidence, which we instil through active role modelling and through a firm Jewish ethos underpinning all that we do. The staff at Sinai create a loving, nurturing, and supportive environment where students can feel both free and supported to develop spiritually and academically.

Students at Sinai College receive modern instruction utilising the ACARA Australian Curriculum across all subject areas. This is complimented with traditional religious studies and embedded culture.

Sinai College remains proud of our small school status, boasting some of the best student: teacher ratios in the country. This means your child is not battling for attention or slipping between the cracks; each child gets the time, energy, and attention they need to thrive.

One of the cornerstones of any quality school is the relationship between the school and parents, and a shared trust in processes and expectations. For this reason, we have published this handbook, alongside our various policy and procedure documents which can be found on the College website or at Administration. I encourage you to take the time to understand the processes, procedures, governing principles, and practices of the College and to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely,

***Christine Harman***  
***College Principal***

## OUR SCHOOL

Sinai College was established in 1990, as a Jewish Community initiative aimed at developing a comprehensive secular and Jewish education for children of the southeast region of Queensland. The site for the school was established in the grounds of the Jewish Communal Centre in Burbank, and purpose-built buildings were established to cater for the ever-growing demands on the school and its resources.

Situated on a twelve-acre site, located within twenty minutes of the Brisbane Central Business District, the school continues to grow and prosper within the context of Brisbane's dispersed Jewish population.

The facilities include modern classrooms, library, a swimming pool with change rooms, tennis courts, basketball courts, playground, sports oval, and access to a kosher kitchen.

Our dedicated team of highly trained and motivated teachers are committed to creating an environment where students receive the individual attention they need to develop intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

## PHILOSOPHY

Sinai College is a small school with a big future. Here at Sinai College, we foster creativity, academic rigor, personal achievement, and community service. The teaching and learning environment of Sinai College is optimal to foster this creativity and individual scholarship. Sinai College boasts **a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face (Ref: Alice Springs Education Declaration -2019)**. The holistic education offered at Sinai College fosters independence, spiritual development, community connections and personal growth for each and every student.

Sinai College provides a learning environment that draws upon the individual strengths of each child, providing learning opportunities catered to their needs, whilst at the same time challenging each student to explore their own potential. Sinai College acts as a natural extension of the home environment, placing the social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs of each child first, with an understanding that a child cannot learn until they feel safe and loved. Sinai College encourages children to be curious about their world, and to take charge of their own learning through questioning and investigation.

We recognize our obligation to build a strong foundation in our learners, particularly our youngest students, that will support their learning throughout their schooling

and beyond. We know that at the heart of lifelong learning is a love of learning, which is fostered through the pedagogical approach in each classroom.

Sinai College is proud of its international, culturally diverse, and indigenous tapestry and embraces this diversity through explicit selection and teaching of curriculum, but also through the inclusive pedagogy practiced at the College. Every Sinai student is encouraged to not only be proud of the culture, religion, and heritage, but to embrace and share it.

The children of Sinai College have the opportunity to engage in a rich variety of learning experiences, specifically designed for a multi-age classroom. We embrace the challenges set by composite classes, ensuring children learn in a genuine, multi-age learning community, lead, and guided by experienced education staff. Children are assessed authentically, using student folios that the children themselves help to curate, taking personal ownership over their learning journey.

As the only Jewish day school in Queensland, Sinai College takes its responsibility for the religious and cultural development of our students very seriously, whilst maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all students. Sinai College works to embed Jewish culture and faith throughout the curriculum and daily life at the College, as well as providing explicit teaching in these areas

## **MISSION**

Sinai College is an independent, Jewish day school, enrolling students from Prep to Year 6. Through a program that balances and integrates both the secular and Judaic activities as well as the curricular and non-curricular activities, students are encouraged to develop spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. The school is dedicated to creating a caring environment in which students can grow to their fullest potential and strive for academic excellence, and as responsible and dedicated members of the Jewish people and of the wider Australian community.

## **VISION**

At Sinai College, we aim to teach our students to become lifelong learners inspired by a love of learning through a comprehensive program of secular and Judaic studies which places a priority on creative thought and expression and to understand and appreciate the wisdom, spiritual depth, ethical guidance, and practical application of Judaism.

## **VALUES**

In our values we recognize all members of our learning community, including our students, staff, and parents. We value the relationship between learning and teaching. Our values and virtues are underpinned by the Jewish ethos.

<b>Quality learning</b>	Providing a high quality and inclusive education.
<b>Creativity</b>	Develop high levels of creativity through the usage of innovative and interactive teaching methods.
<b>Self – confidence</b> through	Develop self-confidence and assurance in students  closer teacher-student relationships and participation in extra-  curricular activities organised internally and externally.
<b>Respect</b> surroundings	Instilling respect for parents, teachers, elders,  and environment as well as to differences in opinions and  cultures.
<b>Integrity</b>	Create a culture of mutual trust, honesty, transparency, forthrightness, and ethical behaviour in all aspects of life.

## **THE JEWISH ETHOS**

Sinai College is a Faith-Based College with a Jewish ethos, supported by all members of the community. Through this unique ethos we aim to nurture our young learners into become confident, caring and community minded individuals, with a strong sense of purpose and a genuine care for others. We aim to support our students through their learning, spiritual and personal growth journey to becoming happy, productive, reflective, and confident citizens, capable of making their mark.

Alongside the Australian National Curriculum, we provide Hebrew, and Jewish studies, and all aspects of the curriculum are permeated with our ethos. Each day begins with Davening, a Jewish-themed assembly and reading from the Torah. We place emphasis on marking notable Jewish events and observances through lessons, assemblies, or extra-curricular days. On these occasions, we welcome all members of the community, be they Jewish or otherwise as a way to bring unity to our larger community.

Nestled within the academic teaching of Sinai College are the traditional Jewish values, or Middot. While these values are taught explicitly during Jewish studies, more importantly, these values permeate each and every lesson, teachable moment and learning experience offered to the children. Our teaching and non-teaching staff embrace the College values and instil them in our students through express modelling for life.

### **THE ALICE SPRINGS (MPARNTWE) DECLARATION**

The vision of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration (Dec 2019) is for young Australians to experience ‘a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face’ (p3).

In order to achieve the vision of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration, two goals were set:

- Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity
- Goal 2: All young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.

Both goals while distinct are connected and when attained are central to Australia’s social and economic prosperity, positioning young people to be of benefit to the wider Australian communities and nations by living fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.

Sinai College acknowledges the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration and strives to achieve the vision set out in the declaration found here: [The Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration - Department of Education, Australian Government](#)

## **BEHAVIOUR**

At Sinai College we recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication and that children will, from time to time, need help and guidance to modify their behaviours. We recognise that every student has the right to learn and engage without infringement from others, and teachers have the right to teach without undue interference.

Sinai College distinguishes problematic behaviour in two ways

1. Behaviour that is impacting or affecting only the student themselves
2. Behaviour that is impacting on others

Where a child's behaviour is negatively impacting on only themselves, intervention, including redirection and remedial approaches will be used, as well as working with parents to get the child back on track. Where a child's behaviour is impacting on other's right to learn and teach, a more direct approach is taken to protect the rights of all involved.

Sinai College takes a preventative, system's approach to behaviour management, setting children up for success in predictable spaces with reliable routines and realistic expectations.

Where intervention is necessary, Sinai College staff are trained that children learn best from natural, logical consequences, not arbitrary punishment.

Teachers set high, but achievable expectations at the very beginning of the year. Where possible, these are negotiated and decided upon with the children so that they have ownership over these classroom norms.

In the rare instances where a child's behaviour continues to be problematic, or becomes a danger, parents will be called in to discuss the issues and how we can work toward a resolution.

## **STUDENT ENROLMENT**

**Student Enrolment:** New students may be enrolled at any time, however as an independent College all enrolment applications must be submitted for consideration by the principal. The enrolment application should be submitted as early as practical and should include

1. A copy of the child's birth certificate
2. Emergency telephone number and contact details
3. Former school address and the most recent report card
4. Information on medical conditions

The decision to accept or decline an application sits with the principal and is made in line with all relevant legislation and College policies.

**Change of Enrolment information or Transfer:** If a parent anticipates a transfer or a change in address or contact details or any other enrolment information, he/she must notify the office as soon as possible. All school obligations must be met (such as returning library books, paying outstanding fees owed, returning access fobs, and returning Hebrew readers, etc.).

## **ATTENDANCE**

**School Hours:** The normal school hours for students are from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. Students can be dropped at school from 7:45am

**Absences:** When a child is absent from school, parents should notify the school by email as soon as is practical. We ask that this is before 9am on the first day of absence. Parents should provide a reason, if possible so that the absence can be accurately documented.

Planned absences, for example for a family holiday should be applied for through the principal. The College has an obligation to ensure enrolled students are present and accounted for and therefore we discourage families from taking extended absences during the school term. Where a child is taken out of school for an extended, or unapproved reason, the College will do what is reasonable to support the students, but cannot guarantee the provision of work or assignments, particularly for extended absences.

**Late Arrival:** If you are aware that your child will be late, please email school admin and the classroom teacher as soon as is practical and walk your child in to sign them in upon arrival.

**Early Departures:** If a child must leave school before 3 p.m., he/she must be signed out by an authorised adult at the office. An email regarding an early departure must be sent to the school admin and classroom teacher. No one, other than the parents or those listed on the emergency information, may take a child out of the school grounds without written permission from the parents or legal guardians.

## **SECURITY and PARENT ACCESS**

Sinai College prides itself on having a safe and secure campus where you can feel confident that your child is safe. As part of this commitment, we have a number of electronically controlled access points, accessible only by staff and parents of the college. Upon enrolment, parents will be issued with a pin-code that will give them access to the College car park. Access to the inner grounds is via the school pedestrian gate, unlocked via an intercom system.



## **EMERGENCIES & ILLNESS**

**Emergency & Medical Information:** The emergency and medical information on the enrolment form is extremely important. This enables school personnel to properly care for the child's needs while at school, including special health needs, illness, or accidents. It also enables us to contact parents quickly.

**Should there be any health/medical change during the school year please advise the school office immediately.**

**First Aid:** The school is equipped to render only simple first aid. Where first aid is provided, a log is kept and, in most cases, parents will be notified. If the injury requires anything more than simple first aid, parents or an ambulance will be called.

**Illness:** Where a child becomes unwell at school, they may be brought to the sick bay to receive first aid or have a small rest. If the illness persists, or becomes worse, parents will be called to collect their child.

**Medication:** Staff cannot give over-the-counter or prescription medication at school without specific written permission from a parent/guardian or physician. Medication must be kept in the original container. **Do not give any medication to a student to leave in their backpack or desk.**

**School Emergency Procedures:** Regular school Evacuation and Lock-Down Drills are carried out throughout the year, so that we are prepared to deal with emergency situations.

**Infectious Diseases:** Where a child has contracted a communicable illness or disease, we ask that they be kept home for a minimum of 48 hours, or until a medical clearance is issued by a doctor.

### **Disease Exclusion Period**

- Gastroenteritis- 48 hours after symptoms cease
- COVID-19 – 7 days after first symptoms or after testing negative
- Chicken Pox - until all lesions have crusted.
- Infectious Hepatitis - until a medical certificate of recovery is produced or once symptoms have subsided.
- Measles - 7 days from the appearance of the rash.
- Mumps - 9 days from the onset of the symptoms or until the swelling goes down.
- Rubella (German Measles) - 7 days from the appearance of the rash.
- Scarlet Fever - until a medical certificate of recovery is given.
- Whooping Cough - 3 weeks unless medical certificate of recovery is produced.
- Head Lice or Scabies - until day after appropriate treatment commenced.

- Common Skin Infections - ringworms, school sores (impetigo) excluded until effective medical treatment has been carried out.

## **SCHOOL FEES**

Caregivers are billed by the school for all fees at the beginning of each term. The payment of school fees is essential if tuition is to be ongoing for your child. The full Term's fees are paid in advance and are not refundable. Your cooperation is very important to ensure the ongoing financial viability of the school.

Should you experience any difficulty in paying school fees, please contact the College so that we can develop a plan to assist you.

## **TEXTBOOKS AND STATIONERY**

All learning materials are covered in the Resource Levy paid by parents at the beginning of each year. Parents do not need to buy any textbooks or stationery.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, flood, or power failures can disrupt transportation and community services. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of the school facility. In the event that such an emergency occurs during non-working hours, parents will be contacted via telephone or email by administration.

## **CURRICULUM**

Sinai College implements the Australian (ACARA) curriculum as endorsed by NSSAB. The Australian Curriculum is designed to help all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. Presented as a developmental sequence of learning from Foundation - Year 10, the Australian Curriculum describes to teachers, parents, students, and others in the wider community what is to be taught and the quality of learning expected of young people as they progress through school. The Australian Curriculum ensures the same high standard curriculum content is available to every student, regardless of where they live. It reflects the priorities and expectations we hold for our young people and was recently endorsed following an extensive review.

In addition to ACARA, students study the following at Sinai College:

- Jewish Studies
- Hebrew language studies

**Information & Communication Technology (ICT):** ICT is valued and respected as a vital part of the children's education, both as a subject and as a learning and teaching tool. Some features of our ICT program include:

- Networked computers in all classes
- Children have access to a wide variety of applications/programs under teacher supervision
- ICT is incorporated into our learning units wherever possible and practical.
- We also subscribe to several online interactive resources including Mathletics, Mathseeds, Typing Tournament, and Reading Eggs. These are used to develop skills through individual activities set by the classroom teacher.
- Parents also have the opportunity to subscribe to these resources from home for their child's use. Please see your child's teacher for further information.

ICT as a learning tool is integrated slowly, and in an age-appropriate manner at Sinai College. Children in the lower years will have some, but limited access to laptops and tablet devices whereas older students have more ready access to laptops for research and learning purposes.

### **SINAI VALUES FRAMEWORK**

Our Sinai Values Framework introduces and develops the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will assist students to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

This framework underpins all that we do at Sinai College and is a solid base from which we teach.

Values are celebrated weekly with recognition given to students who have shown our Value of the Month in any setting.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Student achievement is assessed in various ways, and at various times across the year. The aim of assessment is not to make a judgment of a child at a point in time, but rather to ascertain distance travelled, and areas of focus

The school conducts diagnostic testing of all students at the beginning and end of the year. Students are tested on sight words (Prep -Year 1 only), reading, spelling (Year 1-6 only), and mathematics. This testing is to identify areas of difficulty for individual students and to monitor progress over the year.

Each year students take part in the Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN testing legislated by the Australian government. The students sit tests on:

- Reading

- Writing
- Language Conventions
- Numeracy

In most cases students develop their own assessment portfolio that contains the work samples they are most proud of, and which encapsulate the skills and knowledge they have learned.

## **REPORTING**

**Parent Teacher Conferences:** Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled in Term 1 and Term 3. However, parents are welcome to make an appointment to see their child's teacher at any time.

**Celebration of Learning:** Parents are invited to attend their child's classroom, usually at the end of the term, to celebrate their child's learning. These are informal sessions where parents can see firsthand their learning journey their child has undertaken.

**Report Cards:** An interim report card is issued at the end of Term 1, while academic report cards are issued at the end of each semester and will be emailed to parents.

## **HOME – SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Frequent and meaningful communication between the home and school is an accepted factor contributing to a successful education for the child.

Communication with parents will be via the school newsletter, which is emailed 3 times/term, as well as through letters and communications emailed.

Teachers take the time to communicate directly with parents regarding their child and will normally respond to emails within 24 hours. We encourage parents to email teachers directly if they have any concerns, or if they would like to communicate any important information to teachers.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an integral part of the instructional program and is used as a means of consolidation and independent practice of skills to determine proficiency. Homework is always *practice* of student learning and is not new learning. Length of time for completing homework will vary between year levels and individual students.

In 2024 the Homework Guidelines are as follows:

No homework given in the first and last week of each term.

### **Prep**

Reading- every night  
Phonics/Sight words weekly practice  
Maths- Weekly activities

### **Year 1 – 6**

Mental Mathematics- Linked to classroom unit  
Reading- every night  
Spelling – weekly practice tested at the end of each week

Homework aligns with work covered in class teaching.

### **LIBRARY**

Your child's class will have the opportunity to visit the school's library every week. Books may be checked out for a one-week period. Students may also access the library for research, to play educational games or to read quietly. The library is open before school, after school and at break times.

### **EXCURSIONS and INCURSIONS**

Excursions are an important aspect of inquiry learning. The College aims to provide an excursion each term, as well as for celebrations and festivals. All excursions are related to the instructional program and are designed to make real world connections in the educational experiences of students. Parents are asked to return their excursion permission form at the beginning of the year, with letters informing them of upcoming excursions and incursion being sent home throughout the year.

### **VISITORS and VOLUNTEERS**

If you would like to volunteer, please contact the school principal to discuss what volunteer opportunities are needed.

**While parents volunteering in their own child's classroom are exempt, all other volunteers must have a valid Blue Card (Working with Children clearance)**

All visitors to the school must sign in and out at the office.

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Sinai College runs three limited bus runs each morning and afternoon. Please see the office staff if you would like to inquire about the bus. All Sinai College students are expected to follow school rules when travelling on the school buses and to ensure they listen to all instructions given by the drivers. The same high level of behaviour we expect at Sinai College is always expected on the buses.

## **CAR PARK**

Please ensure that you follow the speed limit in the carpark. Please be vigilant when driving in the carpark. Cars are to be parked in allocated spaces. Children are not allowed in the car park without an adult. Please do not loiter in the carpark.

## **DRESS STANDARDS and UNIFORMS**

Student dress is the responsibility of parents and students. We ask that parents work with the College in ensuring their child is in the correct school uniform daily, that their hair is neat and tidy and that no jewellery or other items are worn to school.

School uniform consists of:

- School polo shirt (must be ordered through the school)
- Navy shorts, skirt or skorts (tights may be worn under skirts only)
- Navy pants (term 2 and 3 only)
- White socks
- Black or white school shoe or sport shoe
- School hat (must be ordered through the school)
- Kippa (boys only)

Hats should be worn outdoors only and **MUST** be worn if the child leaves undercover areas. Sinai College enforces a “no hat, no play” policy, and any student not wearing a hat outdoors will be sent under cover immediately. Students are required to be always wearing covered shoes.

## **PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students are permitted to bring personal electronic devices to school, provided they have the parents’ permission to do so and that they are handed into the office upon arrival. Any device brought into school, or used on a bus is subject to the same standards and should not contain anything violent or inappropriate.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

We will endeavour to celebrate children’s birthdays here at school once a month

If students would like to bring food in on their birthday, please contact the school administration for a list of kosher items which may be sent into the school. Please also contact the class teacher if you will be sending kosher items in so they can make arrangements around the teaching timetable.

## **FOOD**

We recognise that a child’s nutrition is the responsibility of the parent, and we support the nutritional decisions made by each parent for their child. As a faith-

based school, we do ask that parents refrain from sending any pork or shellfish to school. We also discourage the sending in of nuts or nut-containing products. Where a child is identified as having a life-threatening allergy, we will advise parents that the particular allergen should not be sent to school.

Our firm commitment to each parent is that children at Sinai College will not share food. This means that you can be confident that the food you send with your child is all that they will consume and helps ensure the integrity of those children who keep special diets.

### **PARENTS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION**

An integral part of Sinai College is the Parents & Friends Association which we will be working to re-establish in 2024. This group works toward bringing the community and school together. The traditional role of the P&F is the enrichment of school activities, working bees, fundraising, and sponsoring a variety of events.

The P&F has provided support financially, through volunteers, and through endorsement. Parents are invited to participate in the many activities sponsored by this association. The P&F will be in touch with all parents to arrange meeting times.