



A Historic Milestone: Founding Principal Announced & School Site Secured

A school taking shape in Melbourne's West

We are thrilled to announce that **Dr Anne-Marie Irwin** has been appointed as the Founding Principal of the new Independent Catholic school. Anne-Marie brings a wealth of experience to this role and will lead the school's mission of integrating academic excellence with strong character and lived faith.

We are also delighted to share that settlement of the school's permanent home at **178-202 Highett Road, Melton** was completed on 12 December, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

What began as an idea shared among families is now becoming a school with land, leadership, and a growing community behind it. With these foundations in place, the work of shaping the school now begins.

For all inquiries:



info@ffe.org.au



+61 434 636 719
Tara Sciberras

Expressions of Interest Now Open

As the project moves into this next stage, we are now inviting families to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the future school.

Submitting an EOI is not an enrolment and does not commit your family. It simply helps us understand anticipated demand across year levels and supports planning as we prepare for a 2027 opening, with over 80 EOIs received to date.

[SUBMIT EOI HERE](#)



tinyurl.com/FamiliesEdEOI

*"Parents are the first
educators, not the only
educators, of their children."
Compendium of the Social
Doctrine of the Church*

Organisational Progress

We are pleased to share that Paul Casanova has been contracted as the school's Project Manager, overseeing the planning, approvals, and delivery of the project as it moves into this next phase. Current priorities include:

- **Master Planning:** Early campus layout and building design work.
- **Land Use Approvals:** Progressing planning permits for the site.
- **School Registration:** Preparing policies and procedures for registration approval with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

This work is supported by the Board of Directors and a number of working sub-committees.

Upcoming Events

Ideals in Teaching 2026 For Parents and Teachers



Dr Anne-Marie Irwin
Founding Principal

The SALT Approach

Date: Sunday, 15th March

Time: 2pm - 4pm

Location: The Club, Caroline Springs

[REGISTER HERE](https://trybooking.com/DIJKF)

<https://trybooking.com/DIJKF>

We are honoured to welcome Dr Anne-Marie Irwin, Founding Principal and co-developer of the SALT (Scripture and Liturgy Teaching) approach, for the first Ideals in Teaching afternoon of the year.

Dr Irwin will share a practical, child-centred way of helping children encounter Scripture and the sacraments through wonder, hands-on activities, and prayerful reflection. Drawing on the Church's rich catechetical tradition, parents and educators are invited to discover how faith can be nurtured naturally within the life of the family, parish, and school.

Highlights from Previous Events

Mentoring – Shaping Tomorrow, Today

The final Ideals in Teaching evening of 2025, with Trent Thomas, brought our community together for a thoughtful reflection on the power of mentoring.

Trent shared how strong partnerships between parents and teachers help ensure each child is personally known, guided, and supported to grow in character, faith, and responsibility. The evening highlighted mentoring as a distinctive approach that strengthens family-school relationships and supports the holistic formation of young people.



PROJECT INFORMATION SESSION

2025 JOURNEY

FAMILIES
FOR EDUCATION



We held an online Project Information Session on Monday 24th of November, bringing together nearly 100 parents and supporters. The evening provided a clear overview of the Independent School West project, including our journey to date, governance and leadership, spiritual formation, educational vision, founding principal, school location, and the key steps ahead.

The strong attendance and thoughtful questions reflected the growing interest and shared commitment to establishing a school that partners closely with families in the formation of young people in faith and character, an interest also evident in over 80 Expressions of Interest submitted for children across year levels.

How Teaching and Learning Take Shape

- SALT
- The Spalding Method®

The school we are building will be intentional in how we approach the academic, spiritual, and personal formation of each child, in strong partnership with parents. Teaching approaches are chosen carefully to help students develop deep understanding, strong foundations, and the formation of the whole child. Two examples of this approach are outlined in this section.

SALT Scripture and Liturgy Teaching Approach



A Prayerful Encounter with Scripture

SALT will form an important part of how faith is lived and experienced in the school. Rather than treating faith as a subject to be rushed through, SALT creates time and space for children to encounter Scripture in a way that is calm, attentive, and deeply respectful of their stage of development. The approach is Montessori-informed, using prepared environments and hands-on materials to invite wonder and reflection.

Through guided storytelling, moments of silence, and hands-on materials, children are invited to listen, wonder, and reflect. This approach recognizes that faith grows not through constant instruction, but through meaningful encounters that allow children to respond freely and personally.

Supporting Faith at Home, School, and Parish

SALT also supports families by helping faith to be integrated naturally into daily life. What children experience at school is intended to resonate with the rhythm of parish life and the values lived at home, strengthening continuity between family, school, and parish.

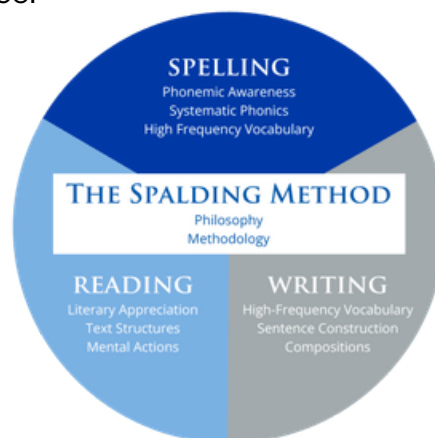
In this way, SALT contributes to a school culture where prayer, reflection, and reverence are woven quietly and consistently into the life of the classroom, supporting children to grow in understanding, attentiveness, and love of God.

Strong Foundations in Literacy: The Spalding Method®

Clear and Structured Learning

Strong literacy skills are among the most important foundations of a child's education. For this reason, the school will adopt the Spalding Method®, a structured and integrated approach that teaches spelling, reading, and writing together helping children see how language fits together as a whole.

Rather than treating literacy as separate skills, this approach supports children to make sense of words, sounds, and meaning at the same time. As understanding grows, confidence follows, allowing children to read more fluently, write more clearly, and express themselves with increasing independence.



Building Confidence and Fluency

A strong grounding in literacy supports learning across every subject. When children feel confident with language, they are better able to engage with ideas, ask questions, and express their thinking clearly. The Spalding Method supports this growth by helping each child build strong, lasting habits in reading and writing that will serve them throughout their schooling and beyond.



Your Role in this Mission

With the land secured and the next steps underway, your support remains vital. We invite you to stay involved — through prayer, attending our events, and helping us share this vision with other families who value faith and character in education.

If you have a desire to help, we'd love for you to be part of this mission — whether by offering expert advice, connecting us with professionals or benefactors, or contributing financially to support this next stage.

This project has been built through the generosity of many, not only through financial support, but also through the time, effort, and expertise freely shared by members of our community.

Each contribution, whether practical or spiritual, plays an essential role in bringing this vision to life.



Learn more and
[join the mailing list!](#)



[Submit an EOI for
enrolment](#)