



No 5: 23 March 2020

## **“Be the Hands, Heart and Voice of Jesus”**

School Theme 2020

### **Our Commitment to Child Safety:**

“At St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel.”

## **Term One Concludes Today – Term Two Commences Tuesday 14 April (Current Government Directive at this point in time)**

Dear Parents and families,

### **Latest COVID19 Update**

Our first priority at St Paul the Apostle School remains the health and safety of our school community and I reassure you that the school is well-prepared for the impact of COVID-19.

**Following on from Prime Minister Morrison’s Address to the Nation yesterday and Premier Daniel Andrews’ briefing today, we have been provided with the latest advice from the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd to ensure that our school practices will continue to keep our school community safe from the outbreak.**

This morning the Premier announced additional steps to combat the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), which included bringing forward the school holidays in Victoria. School holidays will commence tomorrow Tuesday 24 March and school will resume on Tuesday 14 April unless we are directed otherwise as the coronavirus takes hold throughout Australia and the world.

Our staff will use the next four days here at school, continuing to plan and prepare for the likely transition to flexible and remote learning from home.

We will continue to provide you with periodic updates when they become available from the respective Government bodies and the CECV via our flexi-buzz app and school website.

## Camp Australia – Proposed Pupil Free Day Program

Kate Butler, Regional Manager from Camp Australia contacted me today to discuss the possibility of operating a Pupil Free Day Program here at SPA for the remainder of the week to support families who are unable to arrange alternative care for their SPA children. Camp Australia has been deemed an essential service and will continue to operate for the remainder of the week during these exceptional circumstances.

The Pupil Free Day Program (which has operated here on previous school closure days) will be recorded separately within the Camp Australia billing system. Camp Australia will communicate with SPA families who are currently registered users and invite them to consider this offer. A Pupil Free Day Program will only be operated if a minimum number of bookings are received and families will be informed directly if the numbers are reached. I thank Camp Australia for continuing to support our community.

## Extended School Holidays – Home Learning Tasks

Up until today, the school has operated as usual with an average of 90 children absent each day over the past week. After yesterday's announcement there were 167 children absent from school today, representing almost 50% of our school population of 340 children.

School holidays provide our children, surrounded by their families with a chance to relax, so essential at this point in time, *Families can continue to support their child's learning at home with daily reading, daily journal writing, arts and crafts, physical activities, puzzles, mindfulness and games and activities around building resilience – our current school inquiry.*

## Provision for online home learning – if Term Two is delayed

As a result of the Coronavirus issue, schools are implementing an online facility to allow children to keep in touch with their learning. Here at SPA, we have decided to adapt our current student portal to provide a link to the **Home Learning Website** that allows student home learning to occur.

Our approach to Home Learning is a multi-faceted approach. We would like our children to focus on everyday activities that involve Reading, Writing and Mathematics and also to allow our children to extend their learning through research and activities based on their current Inquiry topic or their own home environment. Even though our Home learning is hosted online, the activities will not be dependent on digital devices or access to the internet. Children can use digital devices if available, however in most cases you will only access the Home Learning website for instructions. A printed copy of the Home Learning Tasks can also be requested if you do have access to the internet.

Our Student Online Portal now has a link to **Home Learning** for each Year Level and our specialist teachers. Our teachers are currently developing this web-space to post activities that will complement our current learning and teaching and allow our children to work independently and at their own pace on interest based tasks.

Teachers will post instructions and set up activities to allow the students to work independently and confidently. In Prep and Junior classes we ask that parents can facilitate home learning by reading instructions and explaining activities however Middle and Senior classes are encouraged to work independently. This is a great opportunity for you to engage in your child/children's learning and spend quality time with each other during these unprecedented circumstances.

**Our Home Learning web link instructions and expectations will be announced on Monday 13 April 2020 via Flexibuzz or at [www.spadoreen.catholic.edu.au](http://www.spadoreen.catholic.edu.au).**

We thank you for your assistance with our Home Learning Program. Should you have any questions please contact Frank Fabri (Deputy Principal/Digital Technologies Leader)  
[ffabri@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au](mailto:ffabri@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au)

## Parents play a critical role in your child's coping ability

In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, psychologists have sought to reassure the public by providing advice to help prevent people from becoming overwhelmed.

Australian Psychological Society (ASP) President Ros Knight said it is reasonable and understandable that people are concerned, but panicking is not a helpful way to respond.

*“As humans, we are hardwired to be afraid of the unknown and of something that appears random and uncontrollable. If you find yourself becoming anxious about coronavirus, try to remember that medical and scientific experts are following strict protocols to contain the virus and treat those affected.”*

*“Exposing yourself to a constant stream of negative information takes a huge psychological toll. Avoid reading social media posts that warn of an apocalypse and don't get drawn into doomsday discussions. Sticking to the facts and relying on scientific sources for your information is the best way to maintain perspective and manage your feelings positively.”*

*“Remain calm and practical and continue with your usual regime, as much as you can. Observe good hygiene habits, like washing your hands and avoiding close contact with people who are unwell, and, it makes you feel better, wear an appropriate mask in public.”*

*Ms Knight added that parents and caregivers need to be aware that the situation might be having an effect on children. “We know that children absorb information from the news, social media, and discussions adults have around them. Some children have been excluded from school. Parents and caregivers may need to carefully explain to their children why they can't go to school or why one of their friends is not there.”*

*“Research shows that being open and honest with children is the best way to help them cope with serious situations.*

*“Sharing the news will help children to not feel excluded, imagine the situation is worse than it really is or, even, blame themselves. Sharing information shows that you trust and value them, which can enhance their resilience.*

*“Try not to overload children with too many details. Give small amounts of information, wait and then ask if they have any questions,” she said.*

As parents, you have a critical role in helping the school manage this situation:

Talk to children about the situation, as they may be feeling anxious or stressed and perhaps limit the exposure to the Media Hype and Information generated by the coronavirus. You have the key role in helping your children feel prepared and safe and we are committed to supporting you.

In the event of a delay to the start of term two, please encourage your children to be proactive and committed to their school learning when accessing the online home learning portal which will be “live” and available to families in the event of a delayed start, thereby staying connected with the school and their teachers.

## Resources to promote health and wellbeing

A range of key resources, including videos and tips for young people, are available for you to share with your families to help promote ongoing wellbeing & good health across our community:

- [SPECIAL REPORT: Coronavirus](#) – Dr Michael Carr-Gregg developed this video for parents and school staff. Catholic Education Melbourne acknowledges the generosity of **SchoolTV** in making the report accessible to parents and staff in Catholic school communities

- [How to talk to your children about coronavirus – ABC News article](#)
- [Worried about your child getting coronavirus? Here's what you need to know – The Conversation article](#)
- [Talking to children about natural disasters, traumatic events, or worries about the future – This \*\*Emerging Minds\*\* video introduces ways for parents and carers to manage media coverage of traumatic events, and talk to their children about their worries and fears.](#)
- [Traumatic events, the media and your child – This \*\*Emerging Minds\*\* fact sheet provides guidance on how to support and reassure children during ongoing media coverage of COVID-19.](#)

### **Try to maintain a practical and calm approach**

Families and staff are the main source of comfort and information and play a key role in supporting and reassuring children and young people. Familiarity, predictability and stability enhance children's sense of safety and capacity to manage emotional responses.

- the **Australian Psychological Society's** [advice for maintaining positive mental health](#) during the coronavirus outbreak.
- **Beyond Blue's** information about [mental health](#) in relation to the coronavirus, facts about [anxiety](#), and other practical advice and resources at [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)
- the **Royal Children's Hospital** (RCH) Melbourne's [keeping healthy and staying safe](#) video with Infectious Diseases Physician Dr Andrew Daley
- **headspace's** information for young people and [Tips to maintain a healthy headspace](#).

The coronavirus pandemic is without precedent in living memory and as such has created much anxiety within our school and wider communities.

I am aware that this has been a challenging period for you, your families and our staff and I thank you for your support, wisdom and calm for the sake of our children as COVID19 has evolved.

The message of Easter with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus remains one of hope and I wish you a happy and safe holiday with your families and loved ones.

Warm regards,



Phil Doherty (Principal)





# How to audition for the SPA Choir Small Ensemble During the Holidays (Years Two – Six)

## Step 1: Decide what you are going to audition.

- **Singing.** You must be in the SPA Choir and need to sing a song along with a backing track of your choice or acappella (Singing without instrumental accompaniment).
- **Dancing.** You must dance to a song in the background, when recording your performance.
- **Musical instrument.** You must have been playing this instrument for at least two years outside of school and be able to play a whole song from start to finish. You will have had lessons in this instrument and will know how to play that instrument well. I will not be teaching you how to play this instrument in the ensemble during rehearsals.
- **Percussion.** Drums, bucket drums, percussion instruments.

## Step 2: Practise your rehearsal.

Make sure that you are confident with the song you have chosen.

**Step 3: Record your audition at home. Your audition must not be longer than 3-4 minutes. Record as many times as you need before you decide on your best recording to submit.**

**Step 4: Upload this recording to Google Drive and share your files with us through Google Drive.**

epagonis@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au  
ffabri@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au  
pdoherty@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Please do not send your audition directly to these emails. The file must be loaded to the google drive only.

**Step 5: Or if this proves too difficult, save the recording, and save it to a USB memory stick and submit it to us when you return to school next term. NB: This is the preferred option for children from the Junior Level**

We will be considering all auditions and form the Small Ensemble based on your audition. The small ensemble will most likely consist of 10-15 members in total. We will announce who will be in the ensemble once school resumes.

Have fun!

Elly Pagonis (Performing Arts/Choir) Phil Doherty (Principal)