



No 8: 22 April 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.”

Dear Parents and families,

Welcome to the uncharted waters of remote schooling for Term Two.

Since the commencement of Term Two, we have greeted an average of 23 children per day with the number and composition of the children attending varying, depending on the schedule of their parents and carers in essential work. Each child along with a minimal number of our school staff enter through our school gates (minus their parents) with a mandatory temperature check, periodic temperature checks taken throughout the day and adhering to strict social distancing regulations while on our school grounds.

Based on parent responses via the link provided on flexi-buzz, we should have between 20 - 30 children attending (most full-time students but several half days due to their parents' essential work schedule) on any given day from our 340 children enrolled. The majority of these families who require remote schooling at school either work in the essential services including the allied health professions, education, transport, Police and Defence forces, OH&S, food, retail or at homes where both parents cannot work from home.

I sincerely thank our SPA families for complying with the stage three restrictions regarding remote schooling from home even though I'm aware that many children are missing going to school and can't understand why they can't.

Last Thursday, the Education Minister Mr James Merlino stated that *“there should be no confusion over Victoria's return to school for term two... the message has remained clear and consistent: If you can learn from home you must learn from home.”* He went on to say that *“if it was hard or difficult (for parents and children), that wasn't reason enough.”*

In adhering to directives from the Victorian State Government and the CECV (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria) **all students at St Paul the Apostle school commenced Remote Schooling on 15 April 2020 from home and will continue for at least the next four weeks.**

Except for:

- **children of parents who cannot work from home;**
- **children who are not able to be supervised at home and no other arrangements can be made;**
- **vulnerable children.**

On-Site School - Parent Intentions Form.

If you have a valid reason to send your children to school, please register your intention to send your child/children to school on the accompanying **St Paul the Apostle School, Doreen On-Site School - Parent Intentions Form**. This will enable us to ensure that we have sufficient staff on duty to supervise children in attendance.

Remote Schooling at Home

Hopefully you are now into the full swing of assisting your children with their remote schooling from home and that your children are meaningfully engaged in the variety of learning opportunities being provided via our Home School Learning portal. Our staff have continued to update their respective webpages on a regular basis now that the children are familiar in navigating themselves around the different learning areas.

The children attending school have been engaged in the same home learning program as our other children at home and supervised at a distance by a different staff member rostered on for each day. This has provided us with a unique perspective as to how our children from Years Prep to Six have been able to access our Home Learning link and navigate their way around the variety of engaging learning activities designed by their teachers.

We have received positive feedback from our families as they navigate through our Home learning portal which (unlike other schools) we deliberately held back from launching for our school community until after the children enjoyed their school holidays and not been forced into home learning during their two week break. During these past few days of learning from home, families have been able to support their children by assisting them with their learning.

Apart from responding to families via their email, teachers remain committed to making personal contact with each child and their parents each week via a phone call or apps such as Zoom to check-in with them and to discuss their learning to date. During a recent phone chat with a family, a mischievous Year One girl pleaded with her teacher, *"Please save me, my mum doesn't know how to teach me like you."* Teachers are also committed to make an additional call to families where children are registered under the NCCD program.

This morning our Year Five/Six teachers trialed a short weekly catch-up session with their Year Level via Zoom which enabled the children to touch base with each other. Other children were not able to sign on due to their own family circumstances or commitments, the reality of family life during COVID19.

NB: In adherence to our Child Safe Policies and procedures, we (along with the vast majority of Catholic primary schools) are still carefully exploring the use of daily and lengthy Zoom or Google-meet sessions as they pose many potential issues regarding privacy, permissions, connectivity and child safety. It must be re-iterated that, "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."

Home and Onsite School Learning Programs - CECV

In accordance with Victorian State Government directives, the CECV recommends the following daily guidelines to follow and I remind parents that the children should not be expected to spend full-days in remote schooling from home:

Prep to Year Two – Time Allocation:

Schools should provide learning programs that include the following:

Literacy activities that take a total of about 45–60 minutes

Numeracy activities of around 30–45 minutes

Additional learning areas, play-based learning & physical activity about 30–45 minutes.

Year Three to Six – Time Allocation:

For Years 3 to 6 and Years 7 to 10, schools should provide learning programs allocated as follows:

Literacy: 45–60 minutes

Numeracy: 30–45 minutes

Physical activities: 30 minutes

Additional curriculum areas: 90 minutes.

For Further Information during School Hours, please contact:

School Office (92162000) office@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Helen Timmons (Learning/Teaching & Literacy Leader) htimmons@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Ivana Desilva (Numeracy Leader) idesilva@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Nadia Montemurro (Languages Leader) nmontemurro@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Jenny McCormack (School Counsellor) jmccormack@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Geraldine Crowe (Wellbeing/Learning Diversity Leader) gcrowe@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Adriana Bownds (Religious Education Leader) abownds@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Frank Fabri (Deputy Principal/Digital Technologies Leader) ffabri@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Phil Doherty principal@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au

Learning through the Thinking Lens – Student Self Efficacy

As a contemporary school, well-known for our Cultures of Thinking approaches re-inforced by the views expressed by one of our senior students on a recent school tour, *“Here they don’t tell us what to think, here they teach us how to think.”* we are significantly different to most other schools in our pedagogical approaches to learning and teaching and in nurturing student self-efficacy. *(Self-efficacy reflects a confidence in the ability to exert control over one’s own motivation, behaviour, and social environment).*

We “know” your children as learners and remain in awe of their thinking, resilience and belief in themselves as collaborative learners within the classroom context. Given that same non-judgemental patient support, parents will now be better able to witness their children as learners through the remote schooling at home. Please try not to fall into the trap of under-estimating your child’s abilities and capacity to think based on their throw-away line of *“I don’t know what to do!”* In response, parents can use a question embedded here at SPA, *“What makes you say that or what makes you think that?”* and then to assist them to alleviate their uncertainty.

Here at SPA, our children value collaboration and in the absence of their teachers and classmates, they rely heavily on sharing their ideas and bouncing off your thoughts which they will then incorporate into their own thinking. As another one of our students stated to families on a recent school tour, *“Here we collaborate because we believe an individual idea is not as powerful as an idea formed through listening to the ideas of others.”*

Therefore we remain firmly committed to designing learning that will engage the children, stimulate their thinking, their curiosity and love of learning and provide them with opportunities to develop resilience and to experience success. We remain determined to refrain from providing an over-abundance of repetitive worksheets for the children to complete as our young learners are not familiar with this style of learning.

On speaking via a Zoom leadership meeting for the Executive of our Zone Principals' Network, each school was providing families with a similar learning portal and providing families with the flexibility to design the learning to fit their lifestyle while working from home. In recognising that home lifestyles were not as conducive as learning in a classroom setting, none of the five schools were teaching explicit lessons to all children daily from 9.00am – 3.30pm.

In the meantime, our teachers have been busily collaborating and reflecting on further ways to assist the children and families at home. Throughout the coming weeks, our teachers will provide new learning for our children via our Home Learning portal coinciding with the introduction of regular contact sessions with individual children and their families and more interactive videos with explicit teaching, mirroring a typical engaging learning and teaching activity provided at school. This respects the varying nature of family life at home and allows for families to access the learning requirements at any time of the day or week, not just limited to a live Zoom session.

We Are A Catholic School NOT A State Government School

As a point of difference and for clarification, St Paul the Apostle Primary School is significantly different from our neighbouring schools as we belong to the Catholic Education System within the Archdiocese of Melbourne and take our direction from the CECV (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria) in consultation with both Federal and State Government bodies.

The Catholic Education System is primarily funded by the Commonwealth Government and up to 25% from the Victorian Government. Schools such as Laurimar PS, Doreen PS, Ashley Park PS and Hazelglen College are Government schools funded entirely by the Victorian Government whereas Plenty Valley Christian College, Ivanhoe Grammar and Gilson College are within the Independent Sector primarily funded by the Commonwealth Government and up to 25% from the Victorian Government.

Victorian Government Pledges

Therefore when families hear of the Victorian Government's pledge to provide 30,000 laptops for their one million students or the hand sanitisers and cleaning products delivered to schools, **this only applies to Government schools** which incidentally have already been distributed to families affected by the bushfires and vulnerable students. Catholic schools along with the well-resourced independent colleges must source their own technology and cleaning products with the rest of the community.

Use of School Devices From Home?

As SPA parents would be most aware via school tours and information home, we view technology as a tool which can be used to enrich the learning experience and not drive it. Therefore we made the deliberate decision for our school to purchase sets of networked devices to be made available throughout the school day to enhance the learning focus and did not request families to lease or purchase a device as other local schools have done.

Our school computers are configured for school use, are owned by the school and cannot be accessed from the home. Our technical support has also been minimised by the unprecedented 'COVID 19 Shut Down' preventing any modification to our school devices for family use. There are other factors to consider such as: Connectivity, Insurance, Internet filtering/security and Management of the device. Therefore we are unable to provide families with a device at this point in time but acknowledge the fact that schools that have BYO devices and other well-resourced neighbouring schools have been able to do so.

To assist those families who are experiencing difficulty with access to devices, we are working with our suppliers to hopefully be able to provide families with a low cost device at Education Prices. This will purely be an option for parents and not a requirement. Please stay tuned.

Friends of SPA???? Facebook Page

During these stressful times, certainly exacerbated by the COVID19 restrictions currently in place, people can use social media platforms such as Facebook to socialise, express their opinions, deepen their understanding or to seek reassurance.

In late 2014, a group of parents awaiting the opening of our new school in 2015, established a Friends of SPA Facebook page to enable them to network with other new families and to use the platform to inform each other, disseminate information and to explore ways to support their new, yet to be opened school.

As the years progressed and coinciding with the launching of our school website, information sent home, flexi-buzz and home-school communication, the Friends of SPA Facebook page became less relevant in receiving and disseminating information from our school. Instead it remains an unofficial but convenient platform for some families to ask for volunteers for fundraising efforts or to exchange uniforms, to ask questions and to express their opinions etc., in an unofficial capacity.

However as with any social media platforms, some individuals vent their frustration which may have legal ramifications if they are slanderous and attributed to a person or an organisation. A number of our concerned SPA parents have contacted the school over recent days to express their disappointment and concern with the inflammatory views expressed by some parents who have hijacked the site to vent their anger. Parents are reminded that they should contact the school via the official channels if they have concerns.

It remains imperative for parents to realise that schools reserve the right to pursue action via Facebook or legal channels against an individual making unfounded defamatory comments on social media.

At a meeting of our SPARKLE Parents Team in 2019, this view was supported by the SPARKLE Parents Team and it was recorded in the minutes that they would no longer use the Friends of SPA Facebook page as a communication tool.

Therefore our families are reminded that Friends of SPA Facebook page has never been an official group representing St Paul the Apostle School Doreen and all official news and information is distributed by the school through our official communication channels. If parents are truly supportive of our school and our culture for the sake of their children, I ask you to consider whether you need to use this unofficial Facebook group.

2021 Prep Enrolments Open – Please Spread the Word

Due to the social gathering restrictions in place resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic, our enrolment process has been disrupted. Our Enrolment Information Evenings and all school tours have been postponed which have impacted on families at this very crucial time when families are keen to enrol their children at a school. Families will have the option to arrange for a school tour and to attend a re-scheduled Enrolment Information Night once the COVID19 restrictions have been eased. However in the meantime, we are updating our Enrolment portal on our school website to assist families to familiarise themselves with school life here at SPA Doreen.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL TOUR

Families are invited to explore our school website www.spadoreen.catholic.edu.au and will be able to take a virtual school tour over the coming days to experience our unique contemporary learning culture, based on a Culture of Thinking through a Christian perspective, to view our facilities and hear the opinions (unrehearsed) expressed by some of our children and staff over recent days.

2021 ENROLMENT INFORMATION EVENING – VIDEO link

As our Enrolment Information Evenings scheduled for Wednesday 18 March and Wednesday 29 April were postponed, we are recording an **Enrolment Information Session** from a School Leadership Team Meeting via ZOOM to provide families with the opportunity of meeting and hearing from some of our dynamic school leaders and teachers.

ENROLMENT INTERVIEWS

Fr Martin Ashe, our Parish Priest and I will have the pleasure of interviewing parents of new families who wish to finalise the enrolment process over the coming month. Families will be invited to attend **an online interview** via ZOOM, Facetime etc., We will contact families to arrange for a time. NB: Places are reserved for Preps of current SPA families and an interview is not necessary.

NB: For children who are baptised Catholics or from a Catholic family and live within our Doreen catchment area, a place will be held for your child and confirmed at the interview. Of course we also welcome and encourage enrolments from non-Catholic families as well. If you have any further questions regarding your child's enrolment, please contact our school office team, Kerrie Densley, Jacqui Picone and Maree Power: office@spadoreen.catholic.edu.au (phone 9216 2000)

ANZAC DAY 2020

Around this time of the school term, our children would be learning about the ANZAC spirit and reflecting upon the qualities of courage, mateship and sacrifice. As families and educators it remains incumbent on us to nurture national pride and to pass on our traditions to our future generations of young Australians

ANZAC Day which is celebrated on the 25th April – is an important national occasion in Australia. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. This year it is the 105th Anniversary of the Australian troops landing on the beaches at Gallipoli. The soldiers in those forces quickly became known as ANZACs, and the pride they took in that name continues to this day.

Now ANZAC Day is the day we remember all Australians (and New Zealanders) who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations and the contribution and suffering of all those who have served. The spirit of the ANZACs, with their qualities of courage, mateship, and sacrifice, continues to hold a special meaning for Australians.

On ANZAC Day, we pause to reflect upon the loss of men and women, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, and mates, whose bright futures were cut short, defending our democracy and the values we uphold. It is the responsibility of all of us to continue to seek a greater understanding of the Anzac spirit and ensure it is never lost.

THE ODE

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.

The Ode comes from, "For the Fallen," Laurence Binyon.

Warm regards,



Phil Doherty (Principal)

