



No 10: 21 May 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,

Health & Safety Remains our Top Priority

With health and safety remaining our top priority, we have devoted much time to carefully consider every aspect of our day to day school operations and practices over the past few weeks to ensure that we are providing a safe learning environment for our children and staff.

We understand that some families may feel anxious about this move back to classroom teaching and learning. I can assure you that this decision has been taken on the basis of the best health advice available to our state and we can't wait to welcome you back to SPA Doreen.

Years Prep, One & Two – Return This Tuesday 26 May

In a staggered approach, children in Years Prep, One and Two (and Years 11 & 12) will be permitted to return to school and end their remote learning on Tuesday 26 May.

Years Three, Four, Five & Six – Return Tuesday 9 June

Remote and flexible learning will continue for all students in Years Three – Six (and Years 7 to 10) until Monday 8 June (Queen's Birthday Public Holiday) and then return to SPA on Tuesday 9 June.

All Children are Expected to Attend School When Permitted

All children who are able to go to school are expected to attend. The Victorian Government and CECV have stated that teachers are expected to teach face to face in their classrooms each day and **will not be providing remote schooling** for parents who want to keep their children at home.

Children with compromised immunity or those families with health issues will need to make separate arrangements with the school.

What About Their Siblings in Years Three to Six?

It is expected that the children in Years Three to Six continue their learning from home until Tuesday 9 June unless they are unable to be supervised at home due to their parents' work commitments, compromised immunity in their family or being deemed as vulnerable. Parents are still required to fill-in the online Parents' Intention form each time.

Special Exemption: Years Three, Four, Five & Six Children of Teachers

In adhering to Victorian Government directives, Victorian teachers and staff who have school children who aren't in Years Prep, One & Two are permitted to send their children to their respective schools from Tuesday 26 May to ensure that all teachers are available in their place of employment.

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.

Return to School Protocols for SPA Doreen

Restrictions on Access to the School site

For anyone other than immediate school staff and students, they will need to restrain from entering the school site for before and after school drop-off and pick-up times unless there have been separate arrangements made with the school office.

If arrangements cannot be made through phone calls, emails and zoom, parents and visitors will be permitted onsite during school hours for appointments to visit the school office.

These parents and visitors will be screened and need to sign the register on entering the school site to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of our school community. There will also need to be adjustments to the way we conduct parent meetings and interviews until further notice.

Staggered Starting and Finishing Times

Schools have been directed to manage drop-off and pick-up times to minimise the risk of congregation at school entry and exit points.

Therefore to minimise congestion there will be new arrangements for drop-off and pick-up, including staggered school starting and finishing times.

NEW Staggered Drop Off and Pick Up Times:

- **Before School:** 8:30am to 8:44am - Single SPA child family only
8:45am to 9.00am - Multiple SPA children families
- **After School:** 3:15pm to 3:29pm - Single SPA child family only
3:30pm to 3:45pm - Multiple SPA children families

NB: Of course there will be some families who due to other pressing commitments may not be able to adopt the staggered times which we can appreciate. However if the vast majority of our families can comply, this will ensure the continued health and safety of our community.

Parents asked to watch their children enter the school gates from a distance

To lessen the impact of COVID19 and to adhere to social distancing, parents and guardians are requested **not to walk their children to nor congregate at the school gate** before and after school. Staff will be outside to help welcome the children and to direct them to their waiting parents across the road or in their cars after school.

Anxious Children Returning to School

Returning to school especially during COVID19 Remote Schooling from home can be an anxious time for our children, many of whom might be a little apprehensive returning to school with its routines while leaving the safety and comfort of home.

For some of our **children who can't be coaxed into the school grounds** on their return, parents are requested should to **remain with their children outside the school grounds until 9.00am** when the staff will assist you during this initial phase.

Wellbeing Resources for Families

SchoolTV has generously shared two special video reports as part of its **coronavirus series**. In these special reports, parents/carers are provided with information on how to support the wellbeing and mental health of their children.

If parents or carers have any concerns about the wellbeing of their child, they should contact their school for further information. For immediate assistance, seek medical or professional help.

Special Report 1: Wellbeing Checklist for Primary: Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

While most children are resilient and seem to be demonstrating a remarkable capacity to manage during this challenging time, others are not faring as well. Some are experiencing a variety of emotions ranging from fear to anxiety, all of which are considered normal or natural responses to the current situation. It's important for parents/carers to remain vigilant for any signs of unusual distress or behaviour, even if their child may not have any prior history of a mental health disorder.

Special Report 2: Wellbeing Checklist for Secondary: Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

Research shows there are specific risk factors that increase the likelihood of teenagers developing a mental health problem. Adolescents are considered to be more at risk of anxiety and depression disorders which may affect their mood, thinking and behaviour. These can impact their ability to function and perform normal activities. Early intervention, diagnosis and treatment are more important than ever in the current climate.

Children are Not Required to Maintain Physical Distancing

While the Chief Health Officer has advised that students will not be required to maintain physical distancing at school, there will be a number of important changes to our school operations, consistent with health advice to all schools. These will apply until further notice.

Using our mobile furniture and flexible open spaces, our classrooms and learning areas will be re-arranged to limit close physical interaction between the children and also the staff occurring unnecessarily. **NB: If your child is ill or is feeling unwell, they must not attend school.** They must remain home and seek medical advice.

Staff and Visitors are Required to Maintain Physical Distancing

To ensure that we maintain social distancing restrictions, there will be three staff areas allocated for Morning Tea and Lunch. Even as we return to school, it remains important that physical distancing for adults and strict hygiene measures continue to be observed.

Adjustments will be made to teaching and learning environments, including maintaining distance of 1.5 metres between adults where possible, maximising airflow, using outdoor spaces and implementing different play areas.

To ensure the safety of our staff of 42, we will be altering the way we hold our weekly meeting on site. Staff meetings and Professional Learning Team meetings and Year Level Team Planning meetings will be held in small hubs or remotely as required.

Any member of staff who is unwell must not attend school onsite and following our normal protocols will be sent home if unwell.

Procedures when Entering School through our School Gates

Daily Temperature Checks

Although this is not a mandated requirement for schools, all children, staff and visitors will have temperature taken on arrival in the Welcome Court before proceeding on to their learning areas.

Temperatures will only need to be recorded if they are elevated and require the child or staff to return home and not proceed onto the learning spaces. Temperatures will be taken again in the afternoon and hands will be washed before eating and after recess and lunch.

Washing of Hands

The children will enter the buildings at designated Entry Points where they will be supervised washing their hands using anti-bacterial soap liquid before entering their classrooms.

Cleaning and Hygiene

All wet areas and learning areas will have access to a thermometer, hand sanitiser, gloves, masks (if required) antibacterial liquid hand soap (which is now in all the soap dispensers), paper hand towels and a hospital grade disinfectant spray bottle. We have plenty in supply, allowing for refills as required. Each staff member will also be given their own personal hand sanitiser.

To support the health and wellbeing of all students and staff, our school will continue an enhanced cleaning routine. Following on from normal classroom protocol, wiping down (wearing disposable gloves) of equipment, tables, door handles with hospital grade disinfectant will be conducted throughout the day, especially before and after recess, lunch and end of the day

Drink Fountains Unavailable – Children Asked to Bring their Own Drink Bottle

Children are requested to bring their own drink bottles as our bubble taps will not be available.

Restrictions to Play Areas, Adventure Playgrounds and Slides

From 26 May to 9 June, Recess and Lunch play sessions to be in Area 2 and 3 only as only half of our children will attend. From Tuesday 9 June, Area 1 will also be open but with restrictions.

Although social distancing rules do not apply to children at school, children are encouraged to bring their own equipment, clearly labelled. Sports equipment including balls will also be provided by the school and will be sanitised daily.

Children will not be permitted to use the Adventure Playground including the slides and the slides in Area 2 (beside the staircase) as it will be impractical to thoroughly clean them after each use.

Specialist Classes Will Resume Next Week

Our Specialist classes (Performing Arts, Science and Physical Education) as well as sport will commence next week but the nature of some lessons may need to be modified. Children are to wear their School Sports Uniform (with tracksuit pants) on their designated days.

Student Wellbeing (SWELL) Focus

To support our children and staff as they transition back into school life, SWELL activities will be weaved into the learning week.

Voluntary Testing for all Staff

All school staff have had access to voluntary prioritised coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for a two-week period. Participation in testing will be entirely voluntary, but will be available for all staff, including in the event that any are asymptomatic.

Winter School Uniform Update

With the onset of the colder conditions, children are required to return to school dressed in their Winter School Uniform.

We are aware that due to the COVID19 shutdown, some families (especially the Preps) have been unable to purchase the winter uniform. Families are able to order and purchase the uniform online via our school website allowing Emma and Donna, our School Uniform Coordinators and their team of parent helpers to fill your orders promptly.

NB: Shorts are not permitted to be worn during terms two and three with the only exception - during a specific Phys Ed or Sports lesson. In that case children must wear their shorts under their tracksuit pants during the day. All uniform items should be clearly named. Unnamed items of lost property or those with names that are indistinguishable will be located in the in lost property bin outside the school office.

Earth Works Update

Works to our Hardstand and driveway entering from Eminence Blvd and the compaction of the area designated for our synthetic basketball courts are on track to be completed over the next couple of weeks after contending with six weeks of unpredictable wet weather bringing the heavy machinery to a halt and preventing earthworks from continuing. On a positive note, the finishing touches to our newly laid artificial grass area adjoining the staffroom will be completed over the coming days enabling our children to access further recreation spaces.

Catholic Secondary Here – Preliminary Planning Underway

Over the past couple of months, I have attended a number of zoom meetings and site meetings here at SPA for preliminary discussions with a planning team including Michael Kenny, Principal of Marymede Catholic College (our main Catholic Secondary Feeder school), Fr Martin Ashe our Parish Priest, the Catholic Education Melbourne and the Architects regarding the building of the proposed Catholic Secondary Campus (initially Years Seven – Nine) on the site purchased specifically for our Catholic Education Precinct.

In a spirit of collaboration and partnership and sharing a joint vision for Catholic Education, our SPA children will be able to access the shared recreation spaces, oval and fields and the learning spaces and facilities that a secondary college can offer.

Please stay tuned for further details as our dreams and vision become a reality. This will allow our children enrolled here at SPA and our two neighbouring sister schools, St Joseph's Mernda and St Mary's Whittlesea to have first priority and direct access for enrolment into the proposed Secondary College.

Monday 25 May Pupil Free day – Camp Australia Operating

Camp Australia has been given permission by the State Government to operate their Pupil Free Day program during the **Statewide School Closure Planning Day this Monday 25 May**. If families wish to access the program, they will need to make a booking at www.campaustralia.com.au and new users are required to register online.

SPA Video Conferencing Parent Permission Form

To support our Remote Online School Home Learning our school will be using Google Meet and Zoom in Year Prep to Six to facilitate live video calls. These calls will be scheduled by the teacher and children should check their Year Level Page on the Home School Learning Portal for details, times and dates.

Please visit the link requesting parent permission using the **Flexi-buzz app – Video Conferencing Facility for Home School Learning – Friday 8 May**.

Frank O Fabri – Digital Technologies Leader/Deputy Principal.

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.

Thank you for your continued support and patience during this time and we look forward to welcoming your children back to the classrooms.

Warm regards,



Phil Doherty (Principal)