



12 February 2021

**“Together, Be the Open Arms of Jesus”**

School Theme 2021

**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.”

## CONGRATULATIONS EVERYONE ON A SMOOTH TRANSITION

Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome to what promises to be (despite COVID) another exciting school year filled with great promise, hope and endless possibilities for our children and our SPA school community.

A special welcome is extended to our new preppies, other children new to the school, their families and our new staff members. With a sense of anticipation, sprinkled with a little trepidation, our new Preppies (and a number of new students in other Year Levels), continue to explore their new environment and adjust to a very different learning culture.

Parents, grandparents and families (along with their dedicated Pre-school and Child-Care teachers for our Preps) should take a well-deserved pat on the back for preparing the children so well for the new school year. I'm pleased to report that our school year has commenced very smoothly with the children quickly settling into life and immersing themselves into our Cultures of Thinking here at SPA. This was most evident with their focus and curiosity when they attended our school and Level assemblies and our Opening of the School Year Mass celebration on Friday.

In a true sense of partnership and a shared vision for our children, the staff have meticulously planned to provide our children and community with a number of memorable and innovative learning experiences and countless opportunities to grow and shine this year.

I thank the staff for meeting throughout their holidays to ensure this smooth transition. Particular thanks should be passed on to our staff who once again warmly welcomed the children to the new school year by planning our SWELL Week (Student Wellbeing) activities. This allowed the children to develop a sense of belonging through their engagement in our SWELL Week activities.

# COVID19 UPDATE – SNAP LOCKDOWN

As all Victorians are by now aware, the Victorian Government unexpectedly announced a SNAP LOCKDOWN to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) across our entire state.

As a result, in line with the directions issued from Victoria's Chief Health Officer, the CECV (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria) informed us yesterday afternoon that our all Victorian Catholic schools will move to a period of remote and flexible provision from **Monday 15 February to Wednesday 17 February** inclusive.

## Essential Workers – Parents Intention Form

Considering the short notice and the snap lock-down period which brought confusion and frustration to many Victorians, our school will provide On-site supervision *"for children whose parents are considered essential workers as listed, cannot work from home and where no other supervision arrangements can be made."*

**NB: A Parents' Intention form for Essential Workers** will be sent home to families this afternoon via School Stream to enable families with current permits to access the on-site supervision during the three days.

## Remote Learning

Like many families, we were taken by surprise and in disbelief with the Premier's announcement of the snap lockdown period yesterday, which left many businesses, schools and our community scrambling to make sense of the implications by the close of business yesterday. The short notice impacted on the provision of learning for our children at home for the three school days.

As this is only three days absent from on-site school, children are expected to **continue daily reading and creative play at home**. Parents may wish to discuss our school theme for 2021, "Together Be the Open Arms of Jesus" with their children, learn more about the Italian language as well as revisiting our learner dispositions (Responsible, Collaborative, Respectful, Inquiry, Resilient and this year's new learner disposition Inclusive) to gauge their understanding and to extend their thinking.

## SPA School Website - Remote Learning Link

SPA families are also invited to visit our **School Website** ([www.spadoreen.catholic.edu.au](http://www.spadoreen.catholic.edu.au)) during Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and familiarise yourself with our **Remote Learning link** on the Home page.

This will enable families to explore the variety of engaged purposeful learning opportunities planned for the children during the previous lockdowns last year. There are many interactive tools and new learning opportunities for the children to engage in over the three days before they return to school on Thursday (restrictions permitting). At the same time, when our staff are not rostered on for on-site supervision, they will be developing new learning opportunities to upload onto their Remote Learning page for 2021 in the event that an extended lockdown period becomes a reality.

## Cultures of Thinking Implications

As a contemporary school, well-known for our Cultures of Thinking approaches, we remain firmly committed to designing learning that will engage the children, stimulate their curiosity and love of learning and provide them with opportunities to develop resilience and to experience success. Therefore, we will continue to refrain from providing an over-abundance of repetitive worksheets for the children as our young learners are not familiar with this style of learning.

## Camp Australia will still Operate Before and After School

I was pleased to be informed by Camp Australia that they were resourced and ready to continue to provide OSHC service as planned. Camp Australia has already communicated this to our families who are registered users of the program and children of essential workers.

Additionally, current booking levels for Monday 15 February to Wednesday 17 February do not accurately reflect the need for care and, in order to comply with government direction, **Camp Australia has cancelled all previously made bookings for these days.**

Should families meet the above eligibility criteria and still require Outside School Hours Care, **they must visit the Parent Portal on the Camp Australia website ([www.campaustralia.com.au](http://www.campaustralia.com.au)) to register their priority status and rebook their care as they need it.**

## **School Hours: 8.55am – 3.25pm**

Parents are reminded that children are welcome to enter our school environment when gates open from **8.40am** (from 8.30am during COVID) and families may enter into the classroom learning spaces from **8.40am**, giving them ample time to unpack and settle in before sitting around the prayer cloth at **8.55am** sharp. To ensure that the children are calm and focused before the 8.55am bell, **ball games and the Adventure playground are not permitted before school.**

## **Absences and Late Arrivals (After 8.55am)**

**In compliance with our Child Safety Policies**, we follow Government Legislative requirements and Catholic Education Melbourne directives and therefore **children who arrive after 9.00am will be marked on our electronic roll as absent.** Parents will then be notified electronically alerting them that their child is absent and are required to provide an explanation to be formally recorded.

If your child is absent, please inform the school office in writing, emails, in person or through our school's Flexi-buzz App. **For late arrivals after 9.00am, a parent or carer must accompany the child to the school office, sign them in and collect a late pass.**

## **SWELL WEEK**

**SWELL Week (Student Wellbeing Week)** was introduced here at SPA in our first year (2015) and now occurs in the first full week of each school year and the first day of each term. Our children and staff have been engaged in a variety of challenging and enjoyable learning activities aimed at helping them to assimilate into their new learning environment.

Throughout SWELL Week, our children and staff have had the opportunity to share their own personal stories, explore their hopes and dreams for their classroom and learning environment (Class Memorandum) and develop their shared expectations for the way people learn and play and treat each other. **The Class Memorandum** includes a joint summary of what the children sharing what they **VALUE, STAND FOR and BELIEVE** in.

**We believe that SWELL Week builds resilience, promotes wellbeing and inclusiveness and provides the platform for a successful year of learning.** I thank the teachers, staff and Student Wellbeing Team (led by Jenny McCormack - Student Wellbeing Leader and School Counsellor) for planning this very effective transition program.

## **“Together Be the Open Arms of Jesus”** School Theme 2021

Throughout SWELL Week, the children in each Year Level have used the a variety of **thinking routines** including the **Chalk Talk** (a conversation on paper without speaking), or the **3 Y's** (Why does it matter to me, our community and the world) to unpack and deepen their understanding about our school theme for 2021, **“Together Be the Open Arms of Jesus”**.

This enabled them to make connections with the previous school themes and to strengthen their understanding about living out the gospel values and Jesus' commandment to love one another by helping, being inclusive and welcoming others.

This theme builds upon our previous themes

“Be the Hands, Heart and Voice of Jesus” 2020, “Love One Another As I Have Loved You” 2019, “We Are Called To Be More” 2018 and “We Walk Together As One” 2017.

As part of SWELL WEEK, we reflected on our school theme and used the **3Y's thinking routine** to unpack our understanding by considering personal, local and global connections. We were given the opportunity to respond and share our thoughts on three questions:

- Why might this theme matter to me?
- Why might this theme matter to our community?
- Why might this theme matter to our world?

## **Making our Expectations Visible**

To further enhance our learning culture here at SPA and with an emphasis on safety and wellbeing, each class also selected an area around the school environment highlighting the behaviours and attitudes expected within these areas. The school photographic displays and captions placed at strategic locations around the schools such as the toilets, kiss and drop and welcome court etc., and visited by each class, remind us of the expectations when passing through and using these areas.

## **Ash Wednesday – Wednesday 17 February**

**Ash Wednesday** (a Holy Day of Obligation on the Church's calendar) will be celebrated this Wednesday however our school Mass will not take place due to COVID. The children and staff will now receive their ashes during a prayer liturgy on Thursday.

**The blessing with ashes** (burnt remnants from the palms blessed at Palm Sunday last year) placed on the forehead, symbolically expresses our repentance and our desire to, "Turn away from sin, to be faithful to the Good News of the Gospel and to turn back to God."

**Lent is the most important season on the Church's calendar, held over forty days leading to the death and resurrection of Jesus in Holy Week.** During Lent, we can deepen our relationship with God and the church and prepare ourselves to celebrate Easter by living out the Good News of God's love and His promise of salvation. The staff will continue to support parents by helping the children to focus on ways they can embrace the Season of Lent and Easter in the coming weeks.

## **Important Health Alert – Your Attention Please**

In Prep this year, we have a child with a compromised immune system due to medical treatment they are receiving. Therefore, it is crucial that we have adequate infection control and reduce the likelihood of the child becoming unwell. We have highlighted some points below:

- If your child or anyone in your immediate family becomes infected with a contagious disease, the school is to be notified immediately. Please keep your child at home until they are well again.
- If your child is vomiting and/or has diarrhoea, please keep them at home until 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.
- If your child has green discharge from their nose, please do not send them to school as children often wipe their nose with their hand / sleeve and this then comes into contact with our equipment, which spreads the germs further.

## **Allergies Alert – No Sharing of Food**

I request your support regarding a number of very important health matters here at SPA Doreen which have been discussed with the children and staff during our SWELL Week activities and via our school and Year Level assemblies.

Within our school community we have a growing number of children who have diagnosed Food Allergies and Intolerance to **Eggs, Nuts, Dairy, Lactose, Kiwi and Wheat** (as well as dust, fish and shell fish). Chocolate bars, cereals, lollies, muesli bars and the like can contain many of the allergen derivatives.

**The reaction to eating or contact with these allergens can be quite severe and even potentially life threatening.** We believe that it is our responsibility to alert the whole school community to this situation and work together to ensure the safety of these children.

### **No Pets onsite**

Families are also reminded that **PETS (however tame and muzzled) are not permitted on our school site** to avoid to reduce the risk of an unexpected physical encounter with a toddler, child, adult or another pet. Our children at SPA already have the benefit of enjoying the company of our two school pet dogs during the school week who are cared for by Laura V, our Science Specialist teacher and a renowned dog therapist who you can also listen to each Saturday on Radio 3AW.

### **A Severe Allergic Reaction**

**In the event of a severe allergic reaction, our Emergency Management Plan** (in strict accordance with medical advice and guidelines) will be activated and **may include the use of an epi-pen(adrenalin) for children** (with a medical plan) and an ambulance being called.

Each year our staff undertake an accredited First Aid training course which includes dealing with anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and CPR using a defibrillator. **A portable Automated External Defibrillator (AED) which is located in our first aid room** is available to the school community in an emergency.

It is not only the eating of these allergens that is a problem, but also cross contamination: traces left on hands, skin, breath, clothing, furniture and fittings and close contact with others who have eaten these allergens. We are asking you to be mindful of what you provide in your children's lunchbox and encourage you not to include these allergens in any way.

### **Please Refrain from Bringing...**

As an added precaution, **I request families to refrain from bringing food containing nuts (including Nutella to avoid confusion), peanut butter, eggs and kiwi fruit to school.** As I've mentioned to the children, I also enjoy eating these types of food including peanut butter so I eat them at home to avoid the risk of affecting someone's health and well-being.

### **No Sharing Food Policy**

**Within our school there is no sharing of food and no food is to be taken outside.** Please discuss this with your children and also talk to them about the importance of not sharing food. In the SPARKLE Kitchen/Garden Cooking Program, the children use egg-free, nut-free and dairy-free ingredients to minimise risk and to ensure that it is safe for everyone. (Parents of children with severe allergies need to meet with Chef Lisa to discuss their child's particular food allergies).

### **Nude Food School**

Please remember that **as a NUDE FOOD school** we place an emphasis on healthy food, healthy eating habits and sustainability and we insist that all wrappers and packaging are left at home to minimize our carbon footprint by using Tupperware type containers. On the occasion when a child need to bring food in a wrapper, **they are expected to take the wrapper home.** As the children eat their play lunch and lunch in their learning areas under the supervision of staff, **they are not permitted to take their food/snacks outside into the play areas as there are no bins outside.**

### **Birthdays at School**

We understand the importance of celebrating **birthdays and many families bring a special treat for the whole class or sometimes Year Level to enjoy at the end of the school day.**

Some families will invite a select few friends to their **child's birthday party** while others make sure to invite the whole class. **If this is the case and parents wish to send an invitation through the school, please be discreet to ensure that other children don't feel left out.** Most parents ask the classroom teacher to give them to the children with a minimum of fuss and alleviating a fuss.

We ask that if you decide to bring something in to celebrate your child's birthday, please speak to your child's teacher prior to their birthday, so we can discuss the available options, that are safe for everyone. Lollies and treats that are individually wrapped and have ingredients clearly labelled are always a safe option as are non-food items. **Birthday treats for the class will be handed by the teachers out at the end of the day. Children should take these treats home.**

### **Special Food Days at School**

**During special food and treat days at school events such as our monthly lunch order days, School Feast Days and Funfields Annual School Picnic, families will be notified and parents of children with allergies are asked to provide a special treat to be stored in the office.**

### **Please Inform Us**

Should your child have a known allergy or medical condition that the school is not aware of, please contact the School Office immediately. This is most helpful especially during times during the school year when the children will be cooking at school. We can then start the process and have medical plans put into practice within our school community.

Thank you for your cooperation with this serious health and safety matter.

### **Working with Children Check**

As a legal requirement, parents who wish to assist as volunteers throughout 2021 will need to register for and possess a Working With Children Check. Forms are available online: [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) or from the Australia Post. The WWCC will be processed via a Post Office and is free for volunteer parent helpers.

### **Let's Be SunSmart**

The hot weather conditions along with high UV days over summer remind us of how lucky we are to have copious outdoor sheltered areas and each room air conditioned, enabling each class to learn and play in cooler protected environments and to remain indoors when temperature reach over 33 degrees.

As an accredited SunSmart school, children and staff must wear their SPA school Sunsmart hats (which can be purchased from the Uniform Shop and School Office) during the months of September to April. Sunglasses, sunscreen and bottles of water are also strongly encouraged and parents are invited to continue to model appropriate sun-smart behaviours.

### **Please stay tuned for further updates.**

Victorians will learn more on Monday when the Government decides the next course of action based on the COVID data collected over the weekend. We will be sending home further updates via our School Stream App.

Warm regards,

Phil Doherty (Principal)