

Wednesday 20 May, 2020

# ST. MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## *Staying Connected... Update 7*

Dear Parents/Carers,

It looks like life is beginning to resume some sense of normality! I am noticing more traffic on the road and petrol prices are going up again! More shops are opening and I certainly look forward to restaurants and my 'local' opening again soon! It's good reconnecting with people from various facets of my life again. I am sure you might be enjoying that aspect of life again too.

Of course, my absolute pleasure was visiting my grandchildren in Ocean Grove on Saturday. They were pleased to see Pappy and they were very happy to receive all the treats I brought them! My son often comments that I didn't buy him lots of treats when he was young. But these are my grandchildren and I can buy them what I want! What are grandparents for!

**HOWEVER**, despite the relaxing of restrictions, the virus is still very much within our community. The Premier, Mr. Andrews is still asking us to be careful. We must, as far as practical:

- Practice good hygiene
- Wash our hands with soap and water regularly
- Sneeze and cough into our elbow
- Keep at least 1.5 metres from other adults.

## SCHOOL IS BACK!

**Students in Prep, Grade 1 and Grade 2, will return to school from Tuesday 26 May.**

**Students in Years 3-6 will continue learning from home and return to school from Tuesday 9 June.**

The school will continue to supervise, the students in Year 3-6 who need to come to school.

**The school will be closed for all students and for Remote Learning this Friday 22 May and the coming Monday 25 May.**

We have been notified that the 'venue density rule' of no more than one person per four square metres is not appropriate or practical in classrooms or corridors, nor is maintaining 1.5 metres between students during classroom activities. Therefore, the previously established ratio of 10 students per class is no longer required in schools.

Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not always be practical in education settings.

**Physical distancing is most important between adults.**

The Department of Education, together with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria has made the following recommendations, which St. Mary MacKillop Primary School is adopting. We believe we are best to follow the advice of the Health Department, under the Chief Medical Health Officer.

**The main transmission of COVID-19 is between adults.**

**I have a duty of care to protect my staff in the workplace to the best of my ability. I also have a duty of care to the children and to you the parents, therefore we will enact the following to minimise the chance of transmission.**

- **All unwell staff and students must stay home. If we determine a child is unwell we will contact the parents or emergency contact and you will be expected to collect your child from school immediately.**
- Parents/carers of a student with complex medical needs (including those with compromised immune systems) will be encouraged to seek advice from the student's medical practitioner to support decision-making about whether onsite education is suitable, noting that this advice may change depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria.
- **PARENTS (ADULTS) WILL NOT BE PERMITTED ONSITE**
- **Visitors to school grounds will be limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations (e.g. student health and wellbeing services, PSG meetings, maintenance workers).**
- Parents and additional staff will not be attending school at this time. Activities dependent on and involving parents (e.g. specialist programs, PMP, 1:1 reading) will be cancelled.
- **Parent-teacher meetings and interviews, if absolutely necessary, will meet physical distancing requirements of 1.5 metres between adults, or else be replaced with virtual alternatives.**
- Activities that involve onsite attendance by students from different educational institutions (e.g. interschool sport) will not take place.

- **School assemblies, Masses, sacraments, excursions, camps and other non-essential large gatherings will be postponed or cancelled.**
- All external gates will be locked at 9:00am. There is now an intercom buzzer and camera installed at the main front gate (black gate). This gate can be released from reception.
- **A temporary fence is being installed to limit access from the rear car park.**

**I am determined to keep our workplace as safe as possible. We know that the main risk of introducing COVID-19 to the school environment is from adults, so therefore I am discouraging parents and other adults from coming onsite.**

#### **To this end:**

- Staff and parents are encouraged to observe physical distancing by not congregating in areas inside or around the school.
- Staggered drop off and pick up times will be introduced to reduce the number of adults at the school gate or outside classrooms
- Parents will only be permitted to enter school grounds when essential to do so.
- Parents will be encouraged to contact the school by phone or email.

#### **SCHOOL ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE**

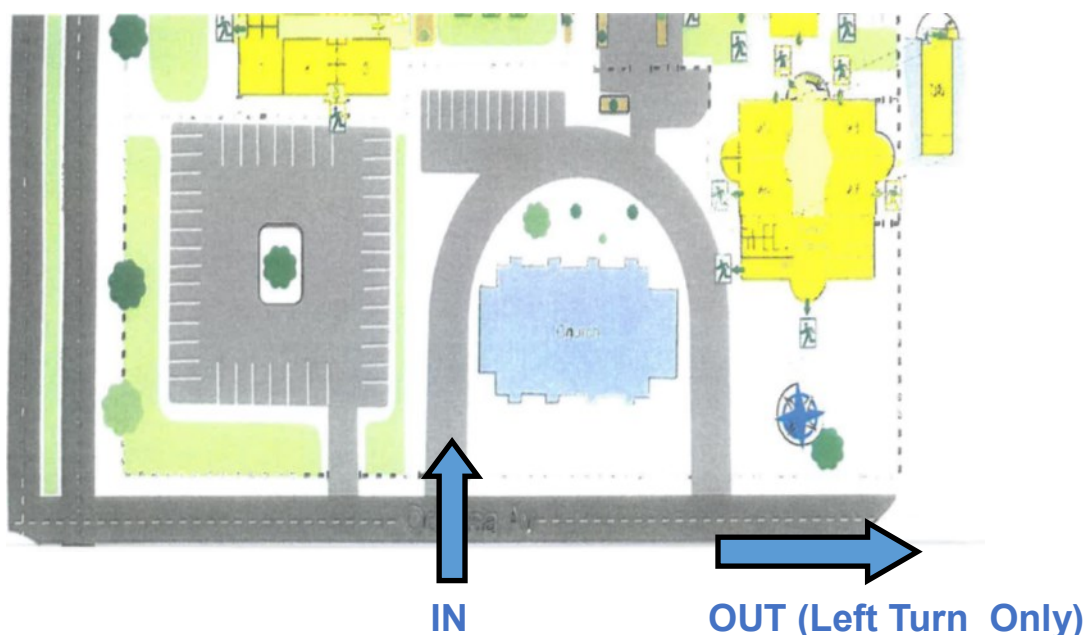
##### **Staggering Drop-Off/Pick Up Times**

**We have been directed to Stagger Drop-Off and Pick-up Times.**

**Parents will be able to drop off their children in the back car park or front car park.**

**I will allow parents to drop off at nominated points, if safe to do so and the driver does not have to leave the car. (This includes leaving the car to unbuckle seat belts.) The nominated points being:**

- **front 'drive thru' open in the morning for drop-off. The 'drive thru' is around the side of the church.**



If the 'drive-thru' is full please do not wait on Odessa Avenue. Keep driving. We do not want to block the traffic on Sunshine Avenue.

- **rear car park; drop-off at crossing.** A staff member will be present to direct and assist.

If parking, parents can choose to walk their child to a gate on the school ground. There will be a gate open out the back in the temporary fence and gates open out the front. This will reduce congestion.

**PARENTS and ADULTS ARE NOT PERMITTED ON SITE**

**Week 7 and 8 (Tuesday 26 May to Friday 5 June)**

#### **DROP-OFF**

**8:30 am - 8:50 am: Families who need to get to work and families with multiple children in different year levels**

**8:50 am - 9:10 am: Years 1 and 2 children**

**9:10 am - 9:30 am: Prep children**

**PICK UP - Prep to Year 2 children and any other children at school to assemble in the area facing the rear car park. All children to be collected between 2.40pm—3.00pm. As of this week from the rear car park.**

**Please try your best to adhere to the staggered drop off and pick up times.**

I appreciate some of you may be concerned regarding your child's transition back to school and particularly so, simply dropping them off.

Please have a read of the following article. It's got some great advice about transitioning back to school.

<https://www.abc.net.au/life/helping-kids-with-the-transition-back-to-school/12247052>

At 8:30am, all non-classroom teachers and LSOs will be rostered at the gates to support children and take them to their classroom if necessary. It will be an 'all hands on deck' approach of staff available.

All classroom teachers will be in their classrooms by 8:30am.

I appreciate this is a massive amount of information, but these structures are being put in place to protect staff, parents and children from COVID-19.

I will publish arrangements for Week 9, 10 and 11. This is when all children have returned to school. I simply need to see how the next two weeks pan out and make changes if necessary.

The success of these initiatives will solely rely on the goodwill of you the parents to follow these instructions. You have shown immense goodwill and patience over the past weeks, during this unrepresented crisis. I am forever grateful and appreciative. Thank you!

On the 20 May 1873, St. Mary MacKillop said.

*"I cannot feel sufficiently grateful to our good God."*

I know how St Mary MacKillop felt!

Keep well and Keep safe everybody... and I look forward to resuming 'normal' school life soon!



**Anthony McCluskey**

**Principal**