
Thursday 02 September 2021.

ST. MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Staying Connected No. 23. 2021.

Hello Everyone,

Lockdown and restrictions drag on and on and on, with little reprieve in sight. I appreciate it is difficult on a personal level, as we worry about the ramifications for ourselves and our families. Perhaps you are worried about income, reduced hours, your business suffering or job losses. I know we are all concerned for our families. Maybe its elderly parents, relatives or friends you are unable to visit. In my case, it's grandchildren I cannot visit in person. And of course, we are all concerned for our children and their education. Whilst I am absolutely proud of the work the educators at SMMPS are doing to provide for your children. It's only so much they can do. The children are missing their social connections and all the wonderful learning they do at school in collaboration with each other. We pray to God that this will all end soon and we resume some sense of normality in our lives.

I am currently working from home. I have been directed by the Department of Health to isolate for 14 days after having attended a Tier 1 site, on school business, in Keilor Central. Apparently, I was a close primary contact of a person with Covid. Despite my immense frustration at being stuck at home and the constant 'check-ins' from the Department, I am thankful I have tested negative. I am also relieved that I have received two doses of AstraZeneca. I cannot stress enough, how important it is that we all receive a vaccination when we are eligible and when available.

We must listen to the health advice. Vaccination is the only way out of lockdown and restrictions and I am confident as we move forward, people who have received two vaccinations will have more freedoms to live life as close to normal as possible.

MY MESSAGE IS GET VACCINATED!

On the upside of this inconvenience in my life, we have discovered Coles-online, so we have everything we need! I also appreciate the wonderful generosity of family, neighbours and friends who drop treats at our front door, ring the doorbell and then run! I have also discovered if I walk around my garden in a circle (of sorts) x 60 times, I cover 6,000 steps! That walk is very necessary after sitting at my desk in my study for 8 hours of the day!

I also have a greater appreciation of what our educators and children are feeling after sitting in front of a screen for many hours each day. It is not easy and does have an effect on one's mental health and physical health too.

Encourage your kids to talk about what they are feeling, encourage them and support them. In this way you can support them in building their resilience. Get them outside in the fresh air doing active things. Walk, run, ride a bike. Build something or play in the backyard and come Friday, take them to the park again!

And most of all, look after yourself. You are no good to your kids, if you are no good!

CONNECTING WITH KIDS

Whilst our educators are doing a great job connecting with their class each day, many of the school leaders are connecting with the classes also, so as to support the children's connection with the school as a school community.

I join a Class Google Meet each morning, on invitation. In fact, it is a great 'eye-opener' to me and I 'take my hat off' to the marvellous work our educators are doing.

I also doing Faith and Life Coaching with the Year 6 children on a Thursday. I do this during 'normal' time and have continued doing so during remote learning.

I know our Wellbeing Leader works alongside me and has also worked with class groups as requested. Our Religious Education Leader posts videos regularly. I also know that a number of leaders, myself included, have recorded themselves reading story books. We have adopted these strategies as a simple way to connect.

Our school leaders are onsite each day, supporting staff, children and families.

Our educators here at school, are working with determination to keep the children engaged who need to attend onsite learning for whatever reason. They have a different set of demands, as they support children who struggle to connect with their online classes and feel isolated from their usual friends who are not at school. These educators are also dealing with the fact that they are out and about as opposed to being home, avoiding possible contact with the virus.

I take my hat off to all of my staff, whether onsite or online. They are the ultimate professionals and do their absolute best for our kids.

And of course, I can only begin to imagine what it's like for you as parents at home! I know of the challenges on a personal level after speaking with family and friends. Please, I reiterate, look after yourself too!

ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

I am currently collaborating with Jennie Monaghan, our Wellbeing Leader, to source materials that might support staff and children with online behaviour etiquette. When we have gathered the most appropriate and relevant advice for our school community, we will share it with you.

We are doing this because we have become aware of some inappropriate behaviour from a number of children in senior classes. Anthony D'Amico and I are directly following up these issues.

However, for now, I am directing:

- **All camera's must be on during Google Meets.**
- **No photos of Google Meets are to be taken or shared by any person, educators excepted.**

I am well aware that the majority of our students are working in an open space where parents can provide some supervision and support. I also know that some children are working in isolated spaces (e.g. a bedroom) with minimal supervision. I request that parents or carer, even a responsible older

brother or sister, might occasional check in on the how their children are going.

FATHER'S DAY

I wish each father and grandfather a Happy Father's Day.

It's tough his year, as once again, like last year, a lot of you will not see your fathers or grandfathers. I will not get to see my adult children, their partners or my grandchildren, so I understand.

Still, with those around you, enjoy the day!



Keep well everyone and in line with public health advice, please get vaccinated when you can.

Go well everyone and keep safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony McCluskey".

Anthony McCluskey

Principal

TEETH ON WHEELS

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They will be onsite from **Monday 18 October to Friday 22 October, 2021.**

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<https://teethonwheels.com.au/consent-forms/consent-eform/>



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