



Emmaus Catholic Parish Primary School Sydenham

Emmaus Catholic Parish Primary School has a commitment to the care, safety and wellbeing of children.

Monday, April 13, 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Although it was a very different Easter for all of us I hope you were able to spend some treasured time with your family celebrating together.

School starts for students on Wednesday, 15th April. As directed by the Victorian Government and Catholic Education Victoria, children **must** stay at home and continue their learning if they can. It is stated that:

Every child that can stay home from school MUST stay at home.

The only reason your child/children would be attending school is if they are **unable** to be cared for at home because the parent/carer is required to work at their workplace, not from home. This is not a time when you send your children to school to get them out of the house for a while. These are extenuating circumstances. We are being asked by the State Government to stay home to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus and save lives.

I know this has been a very difficult decision for many parents and I thank those that are keeping their children at home. I know this will be a very tricky time for many of our families but know that we will support you anyway we can.

I also want to thank parents who need to send their children to school. I know this has been a very difficult decision for many of you. If you are sending your children to school we understand that **you do not have any other choice** but to go to work. This has been an important adult decision to make and even though many children want to come to school it is not a child decision to make. To stop the spread of the virus we need people to stay at home. Thank you to the families who have emailed me explaining their circumstances or forwarded letters from their employers stating they are 'essential workers.'

On Tuesday, 14th April (tomorrow) teachers will begin back at work. Teachers are 'essential workers' however not all teachers can work on the school premises so will be working from home. There are many reasons for this. They may be immunosuppressant or have direct family members who are immunosuppressant. They may need to stay at home to care for their own children. They may be unwell and unable to be at school. We need to care for our teachers as well during these difficult times. We also need to have a reduced number of staff to reduce the spread of the virus.

We will need to roster teachers who can work on site to supervise the children that attend school each day. We are very grateful to the teachers who have offered to do this. We will need to roster our teaching staff as each teacher will still have their planning, teaching and assessing to do during this time. In order to do this we need to have the correct number of children attending school each day. If you have completed our survey to say your child will be at school you will need to let us know in advance if your child is unable to attend on a particular day. If you have not completed the survey to let us know that your child will be attending school then you will need to do this as soon as you can please.

As mentioned in the letter sent home last week, parents will **not** be able to come into the school grounds. You will be required to drop your children off at the front gate or in the carpark. The children will be checked off on our list when they go through the sliding doors into the yard. At the end of the day we will bring the children out to the front of the school for you to pick your children up. Please do not come to the front gate or get out of your cars until the bell rings. Please maintain social distancing. Parents can visit the office if it is necessary but again please maintain social distancing. A phone call or an email might be a better way of communicating if you have a query. During this time you may receive calls that may appear on your phone as 'No Caller ID' - this may be a teacher or a leader ringing from their mobiles at home.

Students are required to wear their full school uniform if they are attending school. They may wear either their full winter uniform or their full summer uniform. They will need to be at school for normal school hours. The school will not be open for students until 8.30am.

I know there have been many letters to you during this time and there will be more. It is very important that we have open communication during these times. Changes are happening rapidly and we are trying to implement these changes as quickly as we can within the context of Emmaus. There will be times when we make mistakes because of the complexity of the situation and the speed we need to operate within. Please know we are trying to do everything we can to support the teachers, you and your children.

We will be sending home a learning grid tomorrow afternoon with the term 2 overview. This week's grid will have activities relating to last terms work to settle everyone back into their learning after our Easter break.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries. My email address is principal@emsydenham.catholic.edu.au

Stay safe and look after each other.

Jackie Byrne
Principal