

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to 2021. A new year with new beginnings. A very special welcome to our 75 Foundation students and their parents. We also welcome eleven new families with children in years 1 - 6. This is a very exciting time for your families and we really look forward to walking with you on your child's journey.

Even though 2020 was one year we would like to forget there were many silver linings we can be grateful for. We will never take human connection for granted again. While we spent more time with our immediate family, we spent less time with other family members and friends and less time in our school.

To begin this school year, we will focus on 'connecting'. We will focus on connecting with ourselves, each other and our environment. We are really looking forward to connecting with each child, getting to know them and celebrating their strengths. We look forward to connecting with parents - both existing and new. We want every person in our learning community of Emmaus to feel they belong. Belonging is essential to our wellbeing. When we feel we belong we can be our best selves and do our best learning. We want both our existing students and their families, our new students and their families to feel they belong in our wonderful school community.

**Due to continued COVID restrictions we still have limitations.**

**School starts at 8.45 on Monday 1st February, gates open at 8.30am.** When all children return to school on this day, parents may walk their children to their classrooms, wave them off and leave the school grounds quickly. It is purely and 'in and out' exercise. As much as we would love our families to stand around and have a chat we are unable to do so on school grounds at the moment. We will still need to maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres. If we are unable to maintain the physical distance we will need to wear masks so please carry them with you. Parents will be unable to visit the classrooms. If you need the teacher to know something please leave a message at the office or email them. Teachers are unable to respond to emails until after school as they are teaching.

Many children built amazing independence skills throughout the last term of last year and were able to leave their parents at the gate or at the car and walk in with their friends or on their own. Their growth was incredible and of course independence is a skill we want to instil in our children. We will continue to have teachers at each of the gates to support your children every morning. We understand Foundation parents will want to drop their children at their classrooms. You are most welcome to do so.

Students will continue to have access to four drop off areas from 8.30 in the morning:

- The front gate
- The car park - Kiss and Drop
- The Church gate
- Pecks Road gate 13.

These gates will not be opened until 8.30am each morning. The sliding doors at the office area will remain closed until 8.30am. Children cannot be dropped off in the car park early, as they will be unsupervised. Teacher supervision begins at 8.30am each morning. **If your child needs to be at school earlier than this they will need to attend before school care.** When dropping your children off to before school care, please ring the bell a staff member will be out to welcome you.

At afternoon dismissal, parents will be permitted to enter the school grounds just before the end of the day.

Teachers will bring their students out of their classrooms and line up in a designated area. We ask parents to stand away from the children so they can line up and have an opportunity to look out for you.

The children will then walk to their parents or carers when the bell goes. Children can only be dismissed on the sound of the bell. Children must be accompanied by a parent or carer when leaving the school grounds. Students can not walk to the carpark or Church gate unaccompanied. Our car park will be busy - we will all need to be patient so our children are safe. Parents will be able to exit the school grounds via the Church Gate, the front gate or the car park with their children.

If you would like your children to walk to Pecks Road we will provide a 'Walking Bus' across the oval and to the gate on Pecks Road. They will line up together at the end of the day and a teacher will walk them to the gate. This is the same gate they can be dropped off at in the morning. Parents can wait at Pecks road for the children to arrive.

If your child is attending after school care your child will walk to the school hall where they will be checked in by Kelly Club staff.

Please remind your child who they will be going home with or where they are going after school. This saves children feeling anxious at the end of the day. If your circumstances change during the day or if you are running late, please phone the office and we will get a message to your child's teacher and your child.

If your child is walking home, riding home, catching a bus or walking to the station or to Watergardens could you please write a note giving your child permission to do so. Please email this information to [secretary@emsydenham.catholic.edu.au](mailto:secretary@emsydenham.catholic.edu.au) until you get your child's teacher's email address.

**School finishes at:**

**3.15pm - Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and**

**3.00pm - Wednesday and Friday.**

Children are required to be picked up no later than 3.30 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and 3.15 Wednesday and Friday. As teachers are required to attend after school meetings we will not have teachers supervising students after this time. If your child is left after this time they will be taken to after school care in the hall at your cost. We understand unforeseen events can occur from time to time and ask if you are running late that you call the office and let the administration staff know how long you will be.

If you can, please take photos at home before you leave for school. This gives you more time to get the perfect shot. You may also take them at the school gates before entering. This will enable you to move in and out of the school quickly.

Please read through this letter carefully to take it all in so we can have a smooth transition on the first day when our whole school attends. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

It will be lovely to see you all soon,

Jackie Byrne

PRINCIPAL