



No 15: 28 July 2020

“Be the Hands, Heart and Voice of Jesus”

School Theme 2020

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.”

Dear Parents and Families,

I hope that you are keeping safe and well and coping with the many restrictions mandated to ensure our safety and wellbeing. Our school routines have also been modified to reflect the current COVID19 restrictions as our staff continue to supervise between 30 – 45 children (predominantly Junior Level) on site each day along with team planning and the provision of remote and flexible learning for our children.

Mid-Year Student Progress Reports – Emailed Home This Friday

As mentioned on 22 June (SPA News Update 12), we took up the option provided by the CECV to send home your child’s Mid-Year Report in Week Three of this Term. This has enabled our staff to gain a clearer understanding of each child’s learning and progress during a semester interrupted by COVID19.

For your convenience, your child’s Mid-Year Report will be emailed to families this Friday and a hard copy will be retained by the school until our children return to on-site learning in the weeks ahead. As our school moved to Remote Learning as a result of COVID-19 there have been countless positive opportunities for new learning, but there have also been challenges for us to resolve both from home and at school which our teachers have noted.

I thank the children for all they have achieved and contributed – they should be proud of their efforts, even in the challenging moments. I also thank parents/carers and families for your encouragement, feedback, patience and willingness to engage with us to support your child’s ongoing wellbeing and learning.

I would ask you to appreciate that the content on which we report is reduced for this semester, as the usual assessments undertaken in the everyday classroom have not been possible this term. The End of the Year Report (December) should provide a more comprehensive view of the year’s learning across all usual curriculum areas (COVID 19 dependent).

I remain confident that parents will use this opportunity to reflect with their children on their report, discuss their progress to date, celebrate their successes, help clarify their goals and to affirm them in the next stage of their development. I thank our teachers for their diligence and efforts in providing you with an insight into your child as a learner throughout semester one.

Mid - Year Child/Parent/Teacher Interviews via Zoom

Having received your child's Mid-year Report this Friday, parents will have the opportunity to join their child and teacher for their **Mid-year Interviews scheduled in the week commencing Monday 10 August**. Parents will be able to select their preferred timeslot from the "School Interviews Online Booking Website" for a 10 -15 minute Zoom video conference due to COVID restrictions.

As with other video facilities used by work places such as Medical Centres, the Zoom facility will now allow working parents to have the flexibility to block out a 10 – 15 minute time block during their working day and join their child irrespective of their location. Details regarding online bookings including a request for families to provide their current email addresses and mobile numbers will be sent home this week and this will allow families and staff to meet from different locations during their designated day.

St Joseph's School Mernda Closed due to a Positive COVID-19 Test

As you many of you may be aware via sources such as the Doreen Community Voice Facebook, I was also informed on Friday night by Marita Richardson (Principal), that St Joseph's School Mernda, our sister school within our Parish of Christ the Light had been closed after a person onsite at the school had tested positive for COVID.

Following COVID19 protocols and support from DHH&S and the CECV, the school has been shut down for a thorough clean and for contact tracing and is scheduled to re-open this Wednesday 29 July for the families requiring on-site remote learning supervision at school.

It's reassuring that Marita, her staff and the children onsite at the time adhered to the strict COVID 19 hygiene protocols with the wearing of masks, strenuous hand washing, regular cleaning and maintaining strict social distancing, thereby minimising the risk of further infections. I passed on our best wishes to Marita and her community and thanked her for taking the time to inform us during this difficult time. Please keep the staff member and the entire St Joseph's school community in your prayers.

NB: We have not had any physical contact between the two schools but this is another valuable reminder that we all need to remain vigilant in our actions to help minimise the spread of COVID 19 within our local and wider community.

Remote & Flexible Learning 2.0

Lessons Learnt Leading to Improved Practices Here At SPA

Recently I received an unexpected email from Gerard Delaney, CEM Media Advisor informing us that we had been one of the two schools selected by the Catholic Education Melbourne to speak with the media on their behalf regarding enhancements to Remote and Flexible Learning 2.0 that we were implementing here at SPA Doreen.

At the conclusion of Remote Learning 1.0, the staff set about gathering data from a variety of sources including their own personal experiences, those from children and families and models of best practice regarding the successes, difficulties and limitations associated with providing remote and flexible learning for our young learners at home. The Teams then spent a great deal of time reflecting on their findings and the new insights gained to reshape the content and delivery of contemporary learning through our unique thinking lens as we commenced Remote and Flexible Learning 2.0

I shared some of our enhancements to our SPA Remote Learning portal with Gerard who then passed this on to a journalist from the Age Newspaper. While we await contact from them, Gerard has produced his own article which he has recently published on the Catholic Education Melbourne News and Events webpage 24 July 2020. I've included his article below and remain extremely thankful of our dedicated staff in their efforts to provide such rich learning for our children within the constraints of learning from home.

Keep safe and well and I will continue to communicate with you as we receive further updates.



Phil Doherty (Principal)

Remote learning 2.0: a culture of thinking

Following staff sharing and feedback from parents and students, principal Phil Doherty says St Paul the Apostle, Doreen, has worked diligently to build on its remote and flexible learning program the second time around.

'Like all schools, remote learning 1.0 for us was largely a leap of faith. While it didn't change our pedagogical approach, and we covered the same concepts as if we were teaching face to face, clearly the way we needed to deliver the learning experience was completely turned on its head.

'Now armed with the experience, and looking at other models of best practice, we've worked to build on 1.0 and plan a more engaging and purposeful remote learning 2.0 experience', said Mr Doherty.

Mr Doherty says remaining true to its 'culture of thinking' lens was important to the school and it has resisted relying on copious worksheets as 'busy work' for children. Instead, worksheets are used to either gauge student understanding or as a template to guide student thinking.

'Our learning portal now includes explicit teaching sessions via Zoom and videos. We've also built significantly on our ability to deliver the wider curriculum, including live weekly cooking lessons and fortnightly Blueearth PE sessions. Our school choir is also progressing full steam ahead via weekly virtual rehearsals and we have formed a virtual choir including children, staff and families.

'We've set a home-based STEM for Humanity challenge requiring students to respond to the problem of modifying their home to make it suitable for a person with a disability. Students will also participate in a medical science virtual unit focusing on the science of health and wellbeing, with the ability for students to ask clinical questions of doctors, learn first aid, and understand things like blood pressure and heart rate.

'For languages, we have introduced a story-time session read entirely in Italian via Zoom and videos.'

Mr Doherty said regular Google Meet or Zoom sessions (up to three per day) will be held with classes for explicit teaching purposes, and to enable teachers to touch-base and nurture student wellbeing. Lessons for children with additional learning needs will also be provided. The Seesaw app has been implemented recently to enhance two-way communication between home and school, and to engage families with their child's learning journey.

'Feedback from our children indicated that they missed the collaborative nature of learning embedded in our thinking culture here at SPA. In response, the teachers in the senior level have implemented the "breakout rooms" function in Zoom to enable collaborative learning to occur naturally, replicating what our students experience and value onsite.

'Weekly student wellbeing sessions and the availability of counselling and psychology sessions with children via Zoom are a further feature of our 2.0 offering', he said.

'I am extremely proud of the way the St Paul the Apostle team has come together and responded to the challenges of remote learning. I'd particularly like to thank our entire SPA staff for their inspirational efforts and collective wisdom, along with our families for their support and engagement.

'These are challenging times for both schools and families, and we must all work together and support each other to ensure the children receive the best educational opportunities possible.

