



17 March, 2020

Dear Parents,

What an extraordinary situation we find ourselves in; such unprecedented times. Please be assured that we are watching, listening and following all advice provided. Your children's health and wellbeing, is of the utmost importance.

Holy Rosary School will stay open until further notice

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) met to consider the issue of school closures in relation to the community transmission of COVID-19.

The decision for Holy Rosary to remain open during this State of Emergency is not a local decision. It is determined by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, via the advice of the Chief Health Officer, Dr Sutton. He stated that 'pre-emptive school closures are not likely to be proportionate or effective as a public health intervention to prevent community transmission of COVID-19 at this time'. Therefore, Holy Rosary School will remain open unless this decision is reconsidered, or the Department of Health and Human Services closes us as a result of a case of Covid-19.

With this said, yesterday several families elected to self isolate and we expect those numbers to increase as the week progresses. This is a family decision which we respect and understand, but we ask you to please advise us of your decision to save the office staff contacting you individually. Please email frontoffice@hrkensington.catholic.edu.au.

Reporting Covid-19 to Holy Rosary

Please report to Holy Rosary If your child is...

- a confirmed case of Covid-19 (or awaiting test results)
- a close contact of a confirmed case of Covid-19 in the past fourteen days.

School Closure in the case of a confirmed case of Covid-19

If we are asked to close the school at short notice on the advice of the Department of Health and Human Services, you will receive a push notification advising you of the need for students to stay home the following day, or to collect your child(ren) as soon as possible. After 24 hours, you will be advised of the length of the closure. This decision rests in the hands of the Department of Health and Human Services; it is **not** a school based decision.

To assist with the possibility of a short notice closure, you are asked to ensure you have access to Skoolbag, and that your contact details are up to date in the office. Please also consider who will collect your children in the case of a short notice closure. In this instance, you will be asked to manually sign your child(ren) out. If we are closed, OSHC will also be unavailable.

Learning in the Case of School Closure

Learning will remain available to students in the event of school closure as part of their entitlement to access the Victorian curriculum. Students will use a variety of methods to access home learning, and will vary according to need and context. We are working on finalising home learning activities at the moment and details will be advised. If your child does not have access to a device or internet please advise your child's class teacher so that we can provide appropriate activities.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, is a renowned Australian psychologist who focuses on mental health and wellbeing, (especially anxiety) in children and youth. He advises that parents should talk to children about Coronavirus; after all they are aware of the situation with all the hype around us- empty supermarket shelves, full pantries, friends away from school, parents working from home, and an overabundance of television and radio reports. Dr Carr-Gregg has an online resource, 'schooltv' and this [special report](#) on Coronavirus may be of interest and provide some reassurance to you.

Events and Activities until the End of the Term

- All excursions and incursions are cancelled, including Regional Swimming
- School photos, Book Fair and Parent Teacher Conversations are postponed
- The Coin Line Challenge will go ahead with one class at a time, and the Lentastic Squad will report to classes over the PA
- Icy pole Day will continue, subject to the availability of the icypoles (\$2 each)
- Casual Clothes Day will continue
- Journey to Jerusalem will continue in Holy Rosary Church for students only. Families may 'take the walk to Jerusalem' when the church is open over the Easter season.

Kindness

I have been pondering over the last few days after I saw the bare supermarket shelves about our need to spend time in gratitude of the many gifts we have, and to focus on others and their needs. How can we best encourage our students to be the light to those around us in these challenging times? Sonya and Ruth are going to work with teachers and students to find ways our children might reach out to others; perhaps by making cards or bookmarks, saying prayers or making phone calls to their family members. This [link](#) is a story from the Age about kindness in action during these tough times.

Not Cancelled

Conversations will not be cancelled

Relationships will not be cancelled

Love will not be cancelled

Songs will not be cancelled

Reading will not be cancelled

Self-care will not be cancelled

Hope will not be cancelled

May we lean into the good stuff that remains

Author Unknown

School Photos have been cancelled as a safety precaution, but also because we expect a large number of students to be absent at this time.

Parent Teacher Conversations have been postponed. If you need to speak to your child's class teacher, please email them. They will call you for a brief discussion. The call may indicate "No caller ID" so please make sure you accept the call.

Cleaning and Supplies

We have increased cleaning of doors, stair rails, light switches, bubblers, benches and other surfaces. We are continuing to monitor soap supplies in toilets.

Our cleaners have assured us that they have plentiful supplies of soap and toilet paper. **We are running short of tissues** and we cannot access these, so if you can spare a box we would be most appreciative.

Water Bottles

Students should bring water bottles that they can fill in classrooms and access at all times in class. They will not bring their bottles onto the yard so that they do not get mixed up or lost.

Gym Mats

The gym mats have been removed temporarily to reduce contamination risks.

Hand washing

Handwashing technique has been taught, and reminders are given to students to wash hands before coming into school, before eating and after play. There is increased checking of soap supplies as we are going through supplies more quickly (a pouch usually lasts 2 weeks but we are using it more frequently these days!) It appears that the wastage of soap by some students has now stopped.

Student Arrival Times

No students should be at school until 8:30am unless at OSHC. Duty teachers will remind students to wash hands before school and then go to class from 8:40am. This is to reduce crowding at the doorways and along stairs. Parents are asked to kiss and hug their children goodbye at the door, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Soft Toys

Soft toys should remain at home as they can hold many germs, unless your child specifically needs a soft toy and the teacher is aware of this need.

Fees

We recognise that some families may be impacted by reduced income over coming weeks and months. Please see me if you need support with school fees.

Staff

When making plans we have also considered our staff. We need to provide them with the safest possible working conditions. With this in mind, staff have been asked to work from home, when not teaching. They have been asked to arrive no earlier than 8:10am and leave by 4:00pm. If you need to speak with the teacher outside of these times, we suggest you email to make a phone appointment.

Patience

As you will appreciate, we are working in unprecedented times and our minds are jam packed with possibilities, and how to plan for these future possibilities with the healthiest approach. It is also a time when emails, incoming phone calls and conversations are at their peak. While we will endeavor to answer all questions and scenarios as promptly as possible, we may use newsletters and updates as a means to respond to queries, rather than sending personalised responses.

Let us continue to hold all who may be unwell at this time, and all involved in responding to the COVID-19 situation in our thoughts and prayers. Thanks for your understanding and support.

Kind regards,

Chris