



At the end of the day
all you need is hope and strength.
Hope that it will get better and
strength to hold on until it does.

Dear St Emilie's Families,

Good morning and please know that you are all very much in our thoughts and prayers at this very difficult time.

As you may have heard last night as part of the Prime Minister's address to the nation, schools will **continue to remain open**. At this stage Victorian schools are the exception, closing early for school holidays on Tuesday this week.

The NSW Premier announced that schools in that state will remain open, but has encouraged parents to keep their children at home to contain the spread of coronavirus. "For parents that have no option and for parents that are workers, school is safe for children to attend and schools will remain open," she said.

After weighing up the pros and cons, many more Australian families, including an increasing number of those from our own school community, **have now decided to keep their children home from school**. Some of these families have medical reasons for doing so, some are self-isolating after returning from overseas, while others believe that their children are simply safer being at home.

We respect every parent's decision to keep their children at home at this very difficult and unprecedented time and **we thank** families for contacting us to let us know of their decision and the reason for it.

We also thank those of you who have acknowledged **the difficult position schools and school staff** find themselves in, both personally and professionally. As educators **with families of our own**, we are as equally concerned about the spread of the virus in the community as all of you. Nonetheless, we are required to continue to turn up to work each day to do our very best. At this stage, unless we receive different directives from CEWA, we have three more weeks of school contact time before the school holidays and each day we are responding to an ever-changing landscape.

Many decisions continue to be discussed in regard to **delivering the school curriculum offsite should a school closure eventuate**. We are currently planning for **alternative learning options**. We will share key learning intentions across learning areas and online resources to support children's learning. It is a given that the short timeline of events impacts on the time available for this planning however we continue to do our very best to serve the needs of all families.

Our primary focus during the day is face to face teaching. Given the rapidly changing attendance situation however, we are now addressing the learning opportunity of all children in our school, whether **onsite or offsite**. **Parents are asked to please be patient and have realistic expectations of teachers in regard to this evolving situation**. We greatly appreciate your understanding and support.

Advice about COVID-19 is **continually changing**. We have made every effort to share communications with families in a timely and transparent way. Given the dynamic nature of this unique situation however, the information we provide today, may indeed change at very short notice.

We continue to care for all children coming to school based on the very best **health advice** we have been given, and while **we are instructed to remain open**, we will maintain a positive, clean, calm and safe environment for children to play and learn in.

Below are some answers to a parent email I received on the weekend that might be of interest to you also:

[Are students in classrooms sitting at a distance up to the health department standards?](#)

We like all schools are doing our best under the circumstances, based on the age of the students and the physical environment in which they are working.

[Are chairs, tables and stationery being wiped down regularly by teachers and by cleaners?](#)

Yes, cleaners and teachers are taking extra care to ensure a high standard of cleanliness is maintained.

[Are students practicing hand sanitising regularly with the use of class hand sanitizer?](#)

Yes, washing and cleaning hands regularly (using soap and sanitiser) has been reinforced, overseen and monitored since Day 1. We have enough supplies of hand santiser and soap for the time being, with more on order.

[Are teachers regularly checking that students are healthy before entering the classroom? \(making sure that a child has no visible symptoms of cold or flu?\)](#)

Yes, the parent of any child who is seen to be displaying any symptoms of being unwell is contacted and directed to collect their child from the Office.

[In the event of wet weather, would students be in a room or area with 1.5 m distance?](#)

So far we have not been faced with a wet weather day, however if this was to occur we would attempt to use a combination of spaces around the school to assist us, for example, the school hall, the learning

hub, the undercover area, outside undercover verandah areas etc to be able to create more space around each child.

[Whilst waiting at drop off areas after school, are students being congregated with the guidelines of social distancing in mind?](#)

We continue to do our very best to get children **off site as quickly as possible** - usually within 15 minutes. (Read further information below).

[As the situation of Covid 19 increases, I am becoming more concerned as to why schools are not being shut down when other countries have followed suit.](#)

This is a matter for the Government. Our school is part of a system and as such, we must abide by the decisions of our Executive Director.

[Should we choose to isolate my child, what is the school's expectation of her in terms of learning?](#)

We will do our best to accommodate children who are at home with a simple learning plan for the start of Week 9 and Week 10.

The Learning Plan will outline a series of lessons to be completed across the week, however it is important to understand that at this stage we are not seeking to replicate the school environment, daily routine or mirror curriculum instruction. Please note that these plans are to be seen as a short term solution. We continue to prepare for the **possibility of prolonged school closure after the school holidays**, with a long term view for **sustaining curriculum delivery at home**.

In the meantime, if your family is **UNABLE to access the internet reliably**, you are asked to please let your teacher know asap, as in the event of a school closure, we will be relying on families having internet access.

While you are waiting for the learning plans that will come home next Monday, **parents are encouraged to:**

- make sure there is good variety in the day for your children - busy time, active time, quiet time, thinking time, snuggle time, reading time, share a joke and a story time;
 - get outdoors!
 - cook!
 - read!
 - play games!
 - draw!
 - socialize in safe social distancing ways and provide comforting routine and reassurance.
 - watch a heart-warming movie together!
 - laugh, play, pray together
-

sending virtual hug



loading...



Additional Important Information

Effective as of today:

Parents of Kindy and Preprimary children are invited to collect children **from the classroom door** at 2.30pm each day until the end of term. Please maintain social distancing as much as possible between other parents and leave the school site quickly. These families are also permitted to collect any siblings from other classes at this time.

Parents of Years 1-3 students are invited to collect children **from the classroom door at 2.45pm** (plus any older siblings). Drive through for all other students will continue to happen at 3.00pm.

Drink Fountains will only be used to fill drink bottles from now until the end of term.

We are extremely busy dealing with this evolving and complex situation. If you have any questions or concerns however, please do not hesitate to contact us. Emails are best, but please keep them short.

Let us Pray and Reflect ...

Finally, "a pandemic is the time the world discovers who its neighbour really is - when we begin to embrace the concerns of others who are suffering with Coronavirus, as well as deal with our own fears and anxieties. When we reach out to those whose need is greater than ours, the elderly and vulnerable, and do all that we can to become 'community', then we are being true followers of Christ". "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second (Commandment) is this: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30,31)

We wish one and all the very best for the week ahead and thank you for your understanding, patience and support during these uncertain times.

Kindest regards

Tania Thuijs

Principal

Let us pray:

We pray for our communities -
snapshots of humanity
with all ages, backgrounds,
education, employment status,
politics and religious viewpoint
who are our neighbours
in the streets where we live.

We pray for all of them;
not only those we know by name
and chat to through the day,
but also less familiar faces
about whom we know so little
and pass by with just a smile.

We are all in need
of your love and protection at this time.

Bless all our homes and families,
and let your love, comfort and peace
so shine within this community
that smiles turn to conversations,
and strangers become friends.

We pray this through Jesus Christ,
the Prince of Peace.

Amen

