

23 March 2020

Update – COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians,

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Yesterday afternoon the Premier announced additional steps to combat the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), which included bringing forward the school holidays in Victoria, to commence from Tuesday 24 March (and plan to resume Term 2 on Tuesday 14th April).

Students will commence holidays as of Tuesday March 24 with staff working through to Friday March 27 in order to prepare for the likely transition to flexible and remote learning.

SCHOOL RESPONSE

I wish to update you on how our school is responding to the impact to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and our plan to provide “At Home learning” in the event of full school closure.

Due to the fact that teachers and parents are familiar with the “Class Dojo” app that was recently rolled out across the school, it will be our main means of communication between students and teachers for students who are “schooling/learning from home” (Remote Learning).

SCHOOLING AT HOME

(In the event of full school closure and implementation of “At Home Learning”)

At the start of each school day (8.45am) teachers will send an outline of set learning activities for the day. While there will be a planned literacy and numeracy session outlined, there will also be additional online resources/educational sites that students/parents will have the option of accessing.

In addition to digital worksheets, teachers have send home learning packs (and will provide further learning packs as required) that include worksheets for particular lessons. It is important to note that the learning pack is not to be completed in a random fashion, but is to be completed in line with specific, planned sessions as directed in the daily outline.

While literacy and numeracy will be our main focus when rolling out this remote learning option, tasks in various subject areas (like Art, Science/History/Geography/Health) will also be added in time.

Teachers will be in contact at certain specified times throughout the day eg. 8.45am sending of daily learning activities, responding to individual requests up to twice a day (either in group direction or individual assistance), and providing feedback up to twice a day (either in group or individual feedback).

Classroom teachers will also make contact to speak with parents weekly, via telephone, to see how your child is progressing with their work.

PRIVACY & SAFETY WHILE USING ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS

Although we will be using Dojo as our main line of communication for “At Home Schooling” we will no doubt discover limitations in its usability. It may also lead us to explore/develop other ways of using the platform to maximise student learning. The fact is that, in these unprecedented times, we (teachers, parents and students) are all on a steep learning curve.

Like all forms of online activity, there is a danger of students accessing content that could be inappropriate or even harmful. While there are safety nets and filters when accessing the internet at school, homes may not have the same level of protection. For this reason, it is important for you, as parents, to monitor your child’s online activity and speak to your child about guidelines and making safe choices while using technology/devices.

Please refer to our Child Safety policies and Codes of Conduct for students, teachers and parents (on our website). Our established School-wide behaviour expectations (Respectful, Responsible, Active Learners) can also be referred to when talking to your child about the importance of making good choices on or offline. You

may find the attached article (COVID-19: An Online Safety Kit for Parents & Carers) helpful. https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/blog/covid-19-online-safety-kit-parents-and-carers?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=CV19%20alert%20-%20parents%20%20general&utm_content=CV19%20alert%20-%20parents%20%20general+CID_29af4f39070a97c93e3b83de0a5859a7&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Learn%20more

As part of our preparation for providing “At Home Learning”, the teachers are mindful of not sharing sensitive information about individual children in a group situation. The teachers are working on ways to provide learning adjustments (learning activities that cater for students at various levels) through this online platform. Sending group allocations home with individual students (eg Your child’s Fountas & Pinnell Reading level is ...) will enable your child to access certain learning activities at their appropriate level.

TEACHER CONTACT

In the event of school closure and the implementation of “At Home Learning”, teachers will be attempting to assist students during school hours (8.45am-3.15pm). Teachers are planning to be contactable: 8.45am to 11am, 12 to 1.00pm & 2pm to 3.15pm via Class Dojo. Understandably, digital instruction may not be as ideal as face-to-face, but the teachers will do the best they can to answer student questions and give guidance, where needed, in a timely manner. For this reason, most learning tasks will aim to be reasonably self-explanatory and student/parent friendly. Please ensure that your child does not bombard their teacher with unnecessary online conversation, reminding them that the teacher is aiming to assist all students with their learning.

ATTENDANCE

Even though your child will be at home with you, by law, schools are still required to monitor attendance. If your child is unwell and unable to complete work provided, please notify your child’s teacher via Class Dojo. We are planning to send a message that requires you to “Like” it to confirm that your child is “schooling at home” and attempting to complete the set learning tasks. An Afternoon response will also be required (eg Clicking the “Like” button indicates that your child has participated in “Schooling At Home”). More details or the refining of this system may be required and further information will be sent home (via dojo or email).

ESSENTIAL SERVICES WORKERS

Please see the attached letter from Maria Kirkwood (Director of Catholic Education-Diocese of Sale & Chief Executive Officer-Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Ltd.)

Please notify our office (51441780) or by email to schooladmin@stmarysale.catholic.edu.au if you are rostered on to work (during school hours) in one of the essential service sectors and require supervision of your child/children at school.

As principal, I will communicate with you by email and through the class teachers (Dojo). If you have any queries please contact me on 51441780 or principal@stmarysale.catholic.edu.au

Regards

Brett Morris
Principal