



St. Damian's Newsletter

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Thursday March 26, 2020

No. 6 - 2020

**PLEASE NOTE:
SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS IS BETWEEN 8.30am TO 3.30pm ON SCHOOL DAYS.**

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents and Families

What a week! It has been a very extraordinary way to conclude a term. This is something none of us have ever experienced before. The Victorian Government's sudden announcement to close schools came unexpectedly. However, given the circumstances, we were anticipating it. The staff have been at school this whole week preparing for what may well come in Term 2. We are indeed grateful to have had this time to prepare for online learning should schools remain closed. At this stage, the Victorian Government has scheduled Term 2 to begin on Tuesday 14th April for staff and **Wednesday 15th April for students**. However, should this change we are now well prepared to support our students' learning. For many of us, it has been a huge learning curve as we navigate our way through all the different online educational platforms and work out what is best for our students and teachers.

I commend our staff on their resourcefulness, co-operation and their professional manner. True to form, each one has simply 'got on with it', supporting each other and ensuring that everything that can be done is being done.

Please read the following so that you are familiar with what is being prepared for Term 2. Please remember, the next two weeks are officially school holidays. It is important in this current climate that we maintain 'normality' as much as possible. Children should use the holidays to relax, unwind, de-stress and generally have fun. School work should only consist of keeping up with some reading – personal choice novels are great for this – the rest of the time is holiday time with families. I know that this year, we have a 'new normal' however, let's try to keep things calm for the wellbeing of all families and especially children, who may become anxious with all the media reports, lock-downs etc. I urge all our families to try and enjoy these two weeks of holidays before Term 2 commences. Have picnics in the backyard, play family games, enjoy films together on the TV, do cooking, teach the children how to do simple household chores, etc. We will be in contact with families next term to keep everyone informed.

In the event that we need to have school closures in Term 2:

Online Learning in Term 2

Our three main platforms for online learning will be **Google Hangouts, Google Classroom and Seesaw**. We will be training the students on how to use these in our first week of Term 2. To use any of the Google Applications for Learning, the students will need to log into their account. All prep to Year 3 parents will receive an email next term with your child's email address (username), and their password. Please keep this email in a safe spot for use in term 2. Parents in years 4-6, your child will already have their Google Account which they have been using on their Chromebooks already.

We acknowledge that this move to online learning can seem daunting, but rest assured, the staff at St Damian's will be doing their best to ease the students and parents into this in the first week of Term 2. If parents would like to watch some video tutorials about Google Accounts, or the online platforms, please refer to these links below:

Google ACCOUNT

How to log into Google Account with student email and password

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E40UEoa19As>

How to log into multiple accounts - great for families that have more than one child

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E40UEoa19As> (funny voice but its a simple video)

How to make Separate Google PROFILES - more technical, but again good for families that may have multiple children and parents using the 1 device.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QX5XCfqp9I>

SEESAW

Seesaw introduction for Parents <https://web.seesaw.me/parents>

ON-LINE SAFETY

We urge all families to ensure that they have appropriate **internet filters** in place to keep students safe while using the internet at home. As students will be using Google products, this is very important.

Thank You

A very huge thank you to Mrs Lau (Alexandra Hall- Towers 1/2C) for the generous donation of hand wash for the classrooms. We are very grateful in these uncertain times to receive these essentials to help with the students' daily hygiene regime. We are most grateful to Mrs Lau for the support to everyone in our school community. This shows that we are indeed a community who look out for each other. Thank you so much!

Enrolment for Foundation Year (Prep) 2021

With all this uncertainty it is easy to miss the fact that school life continues to roll on. Just confirming that enrolments for Prep next year are still open. If you have a child starting school next year, could you please collect an enrolment form and lodge at the office as soon as possible. Thanking you.

ANZAC Day Services

All ANZAC Day services have been cancelled. There will not be a dawn service at Watsonia RSL, there will not be a 10.00am service, however the Wreath laying service will go ahead at 10.00am.

OHSC

Thank you to all the families who returned their feedback form regarding our new provider, TheirCare. The overwhelming consensus is that families are indeed very satisfied with this new service. Some families have requested a Holiday Program to be considered. I have already had talks with TheirCare to have this in place for the next holidays (June-July). In the meantime, holiday programs are offered at some nearby schools, such as Watsonia Heights P.S. I suggest parents call to see if these are still running given that some activities planned have had to be cancelled due to COVID19. We will definitely be offering a holiday program at St Damian's next holiday period. Holiday programs is something our previous service provider never offered.

Easter Liturgies

Unfortunately, due to restrictions on public gatherings, the Easter services have all been cancelled. This is definitely something very new for us as a faith community. I cannot ever remember, not having Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday Masses. It is a very surreal feeling. However, we are still able to celebrate these important feast days through personal prayer and watching services online. There is an opportunities for you to Live Stream daily mass from St. Patrick's Cathedral: Monday - Friday, 1:00pm, Saturday 8:00am & Sunday 11:00am, you can access these by the following Link <https://melbournecatholic.org.au/Mass>

Condolences

We offer our deepest sympathies and prayers to the Micomonaco family on the passing of Romeo's father, father-in-law to Tania and grandfather of Francesca 5L and Giulia. We pray that God's grace grant them all peace and comfort during this very sad time.

Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close remember those that have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country, let us choose love during
this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,
let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbor.

Amen

(taken from the Parade College newsletter)

*During the next two weeks, keep safe everyone and remember to check in on each other.
Hopefully we will see you all next term, God willing,*

Rosanna



St. Damian's Primary School

Dear Parents

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd has released the following information for families to support them in managing the health and wellbeing of their children.

Supporting school communities

We are all aware that some people in our school communities have heightened levels of concern and anxiety regarding the many impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. These thoughts and feelings are normal and understandable. Most adults and children will be able to manage these feelings through being resilient and practising positive coping skills. However, some may feel overwhelmed and unable to adequately express their concerns. This may result in escalated levels of distress or worry.

Conversations with children and young people

Families and caregivers of children and young people should discuss news of the virus with those in their care in an open and honest way. Try to relate the facts without causing alarm, and in a way that is appropriate for their age and temperament. It is important to listen to any questions they may have, and to let them know that they are safe and that it's normal to feel concerned. If the media or the news is getting to be too much for them, encourage them to limit their exposure.

Resources

A range of key resources, including videos and tips for young people, have been collated for you to share with your staff, students and families to help promote ongoing wellbeing and good health across your school community:

[SPECIAL REPORT: Coronavirus](#) – Dr Michael Carr-Gregg developed this video for parents and school staff. Catholic Education Melbourne acknowledges the generosity of SchoolTV in making the report accessible to parents and staff in Catholic school communities

[How to talk to your children about coronavirus](#) – ABC News article

[Worried about your child getting coronavirus? Here's what you need to know](#) – *The Conversation* article

[Talking to children about natural disasters, traumatic events, or worries about the future](#) – This Emerging Minds video introduces ways for parents and carers to manage media coverage of traumatic events, and talk to their children about their worries and fears

[Traumatic events, the media and your child](#) – This Emerging Minds fact sheet provides guidance on how to support and reassure children during ongoing media coverage of COVID-19.

Try to maintain a practical and calm approach

While families are the main source of comfort and information, school staff play a key role in supporting and reassuring children and young people. Familiarity, predictability and stability in the school environment enhance children's sense of safety and capacity to manage emotional responses. Refer to:

- the Australian Psychological Society's [advice for maintaining positive mental health](#) during the coronavirus outbreak
- Beyond Blue's information about [mental health](#) in relation to the coronavirus, facts about [anxiety](#), and other practical advice and resources at www.beyondblue.org.au
- the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Melbourne's [keeping healthy and staying safe](#) video with Infectious Diseases Physician Dr Andrew Dalley
- headspace's information for young people and [Tips to maintain a healthy headspace](#).

Online safety

The [eSafety Commissioner](#) website provides information for parents/families about child safety best practice online, including:

- supervising young people using [technology](#)
- [privacy](#) for young people in the online world.