

Armadale Primary School



SPECIAL EDITION 25TH MARCH 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We are living in unprecedented times, trying to make the 'right' decisions with the information that is available. With no 'how to' manual we are dealing with restrictions and closures that are and will continue to have a huge impact on how we live our life and try to continue with some semblance of normality. I would like to reassure the community that we are working very hard to keep you up to date with information and also looking at the various options we have in terms of online curriculum provision. This will mean a significant mind shift for a lot of staff, students and parents, but we undertake this journey together. We are utilising all available resources and expertise to help guide us in our decision making processes. On behalf of myself and all my staff I would like to thank you for the extreme patience you have demonstrated as we navigate our way through a world that is changing almost by the minute.

I would like to thank all of the parents who have made the decision to keep their children home as this has allowed us to encourage social distancing within the classrooms. I would like to also thank those families who have reduced the foot traffic into the office and are communicating with the school via phone or email. The reduction in this area has been significant and very much appreciated. I would also like to thank those parents who have accepted that we need to have students dropped at classroom doors, even though in some cases it can be distressing, particularly if your child is anxious about this arrangement. Everything we are doing is to minimise the risk to all of our community. If there is a silver lining in all of this, for me, it has been the overwhelming amount of support the school has received and the recognition that we are giving our absolute best despite our own worries or concerns for our families. In my career, I cannot remember a time when this has occurred on such a large scale – thank you does not seem to be a word that conveys the heartfelt gratitude that many are feeling, but I sincerely thank you for your support.

To my staff, I acknowledge and appreciate that these are very difficult times in which to be working in a school environment. The courage you demonstrate each and every day is amazing. We have pulled together in a really unique way and are supporting each other. I see lots of staff just 'checking in' with each other. It is appreciated by everyone. There will be times over the foreseeable future where you will need to make personal decisions for your own families and I have said emphatically no judgement – we all do what we can, when we can. I know, like never before, that our community values your commitment to their child's education, for this I applaud you.

I will endeavour to keep you all up-dated as further information becomes available.

Connect: We have made a decision for individual class teachers to put information out to parents through their own Class Connect Community. This is due to the sheer volume of information that would have been put into the newsletter. We are also putting together documentation so that students have the relevant logins and passwords to online platforms. When these are available another notice will be put out. Students at school will take them home with them, those already at home will be given instructions on how they can be collected or distributed.

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From Ms. Blundell

NAPLAN: Due to the cancellation of 2020 NAPLAN we have suspended extension classes for the remainder of the term. We will review this when we return in Term 2.

Sick Students: Where students are coming to school with cold or flu like symptoms, we will be calling parents and asking that you collect your child and keep them home until they are not presenting with symptoms. I have spoken with staff and asked that they remain home if they are presenting with cold and flu symptoms. This may lead to a little more disruption than would occur normally throughout the cold and flu season but we need to err on the side of caution.

Library Access and Borrowing: The borrowing of library books was suspended yesterday, this is three days earlier than normal and the library will not be available to students during lunch breaks. This is to ensure that we are able to maintain cleanliness of the keyboards, mice and desk space. The areas are being cleaned at the conclusion of each class and we are also encouraging social distancing where numbers permit.

Extra Cleaning: We have managed to purchase disinfectant and a soap sanitiser. This has been made available to each block to be used at teacher discretion. We have not been able to purchase quantities that could be made available for students, but as suggested previously, if parents have some on hand and wish to provide it for their child's individual use they can do so.

Going around the classes, I am seeing many teachers getting students to wash their hands in the wet area sinks prior to the start of the day. Students are also reminded throughout the day and many routines are in place to ensure that we are maintaining higher levels of hygiene.

Year 6 Camp: This is perhaps one of the most distressing things that I have to inform the community about, in particular parents of current Year 6 students. We would like to hold off on making a decision about camp until the last possible minute, but the decision needs to be made in Week 1, Term 2. The camp has a 90-day cancellation clause that means if we cancel inside of the time frame we are liable for \$4200 in fees. This is an activity that has immeasurable value and we would be loath to have to cancel but we can't afford to carry this cost if camp does not go ahead. In the current climate I am unable to offer alternatives and it is our preferred option that camp goes ahead if possible.

Drink Fountains: Whilst we are not stopping students from using the drink fountains it would be preferable if parents are able to send their child/ren with two drink bottles. Students do have the option of refilling bottles as required but again we are looking at the ways to minimise the risk in high traffic areas.



Home Technology Survey: This has gone out to families through Connect today and will take about 30 seconds to complete. This information is vital to our future planning and we would appreciate your participation.

Thanks again for all your support.

Fiona Blundell