



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School Merbein

Reg. No. 1277

Monday, 18th May, 2020

Dear Parents and Families,

Thank you for your support during these past few weeks of remote and flexible learning!

The following information is based on advice from the Chief Health Officer, sent to all Catholic schools last week regarding the phased return of all students to onsite schooling.

In the **first stage**, students in Prep, Grade 1 and Grade 2 will return to **full-time** schooling from **Tuesday 26th May**.

In the **second stage** of our return to onsite schooling, all other year levels will return to school from **Tuesday 9th June**.

To support all school staff to prepare for this transition, **Monday 25th May** will be a student-free day. On this day, children of Essential Services workers or vulnerable children who have been attending OLSH during the remote learning period will **need to make other arrangements for their children**.

For those students of parents who are essential services workers or vulnerable children, the existing model of onsite schooling will remain in place during the two-week period from **Tuesday 26th May to Tuesday 9th June**. The current process that we are using to enable parents and carers to indicate the days or part-days for which onsite schooling is required will continue for this two-week period.

All other students in those year levels will continue learning from home until Tuesday 9th June.

Once a year level has returned, all students will be expected to attend school as normal. This means if you choose to keep your child/children home after their year level has returned to onsite schooling, we can no longer support their learning from home. Students who do not return to school will be marked as absent with "Parent Choice" as the reason.

This does not apply to children who need to be absent for **severe health or medical reasons**. Parents or carers of students with complex medical needs (including those with compromised immune systems) **should seek advice from their medical practitioner to support decision-making** about whether onsite education is suitable, noting that this advice may change depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria. A letter from your child's doctor may be required to support this.

This same approach is being taken by all Catholic and government schools in Victoria.

To support the health and wellbeing of all students and staff, our school will continue an enhanced cleaning routine and will encourage frequent handwashing.

If your child is ill or is feeling unwell, they must not attend school. They must remain home and seek medical advice.

While the Chief Health Officer has advised that students will not be required to maintain physical distancing at school, there will be a number of important changes to our school operations, consistent with health advice to all schools. These will apply until further notice. Changes will include:

- To minimise congestion and unnecessary contact between adults, adjusted arrangements for drop-off and pick-up will apply. This will include only using the Kiss and Go Zone at the beginning and end of the day. Staff will be on hand to greet students in the first week of the return and will supervise students moving to cars in the pick-up zone at the end of the day. The next two weeks might be a good time for students to practice getting into the car themselves without parent assistance as we will need to keep the line of cars moving as quickly as possible.
- Parents who absolutely cannot pick up students through the Kiss and Go will be required to line up at the cones placed on the footpath on the Surgey Street side of the front gate. Students will be sent from the waiting area to parents. Parents and families must not congregate at the front of the school and must move away quickly once their children have been collected.
- restrictions on access to the school site for anyone other than immediate school staff and students.
- the way we conduct parent/teacher meetings and interviews and present student reports (more information about this will follow in the coming weeks).
- bubble taps will not be used – students must have a drink bottle.
- recess and lunch times will be staggered when all students have returned.

All students are expected to be in full winter uniform upon their return. Lowes store at Centro is now open for sales of uniform items. Students will also need to be warm due to the necessity for added airflow and ventilation through classrooms, making them potentially cooler than usual.

We understand that some families may feel anxious about this move back to classroom teaching and learning. I can assure you that this decision has been taken on the basis of the best health advice available to our state.

More information about the return to school and coronavirus (COVID-19) can be found on the CECV website, which will continue to be updated: www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Coronavirus-information-for-parents.

Thank you for your continued support and patience during this time. We look forward to welcoming all of our OLSH students back to the classroom! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss these.

Yours sincerely,

Narelle Gallagher