

4 February 2021

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ

Dear Parents/Guardians,

All organisations require systems and procedures to ensure their smooth operation and St Patrick's is no different. Whilst I understand that this letter is lengthy, I ask parents, grandparents, guardians and carers to take the time to read it, as it is critical in ensuring good communication and will assist us to focus our energy on our core business: Faith, Formation and Learning. Too often, phone calls are made to schools enquiring about news or arrangements that have been published in the newsletter, Skoolbag app, website or school notes. I encourage you to read all notes that will be available on the school website and Skoolbag app.

Punctuality

Being on time for appointments is not only a life skill for employment but also a courtesy to all of those waiting for you or with you. Regularly being late does not teach your child this important life skill, and it also disturbs the class, morning routines and prayer that take place at the commencement of each and every day. It is not possible to drive into Calliope Street at 8:27am and expect your child to be on time. Being late can cause anxiety for your child as they aren't prepared for their morning lessons.

ALL children **must** be at school by **8:30am** as the school gates will be closed. Morning routines, preparation the night before and no television of a morning are some ways that will assist punctuality. Please also take note particularly of excursion departure times, as we can not hold transportation or departure for children who are late.

Morning Drop Off

Under no circumstances are children to be dropped off anywhere other than in the designated areas on the street. There are **NO** exceptions to this request. I would stress that the consideration of all, including our neighbours, needs to be taken into account (i.e. no parking in driveways or double parking on the street). Already last week I have observed parents parking over driveways and delaying neighbours from exiting their driveways. These expectations are for the safety of our young children!

When dropping off in our kiss and drop area (no parking between 8-9am) please move promptly as it assists with the flow of traffic and is considerate to others. **Children are not to be dropped off at the crossing as this is a no stopping area and dangerous.** All children are to walk on the footpaths around the school and cross at the crossings. Students who arrive after 8:30am (when the school gates are closed) **must enter via the administration office. As stated in the letter sent prior to the school year**, as we enter the 2021 school year, we ask that if your child/ren is/are late for school that you **DO NOT** enter with them.

1. Walk them to the office doors, make sure they enter the building
2. Our office staff will sign them in as late.
3. In the afternoon you will receive an 'Explain Partial Absence' letter. Families are asked to complete it straight away and return it the very next day. Alternatively you are able to use the Skoolbag app to send the notification. Please note that an explanation is required - We are not able to enter 'Late' in the roll record.

This is a legal requirement. We ask that parents respect this request.

Afternoon Pick Up

We hold the health and safety of all within our community to the highest regard. During afternoon pickup there are a significant number of parents/carers within close proximity of each other, making it extremely challenging to socially distance. This significantly increases the risk, to all of us. While not mandatory, we would encourage parents/carers to wear masks during this time.

- Parents/carers need to maintain social distance and be particularly aware when entering/exiting the grounds
- Parents/carers must collect their children and leave straight away. While we understand many families haven't seen each other over the break, this is not a time to socialise. You might move to one of the nearby parks to have a safe catch-up

- Parents/carers are to enter the school via the large double gates outside the hall and exit via the small gate outside the hall.
- **TRAFFIC REQUIREMENTS** - If you are parked on Calliope Street you are asked to leave as quickly as possible. Drive safely and obey all road and parking rules. No u-turns or double parking. If there is no available parking space you must drive around the block and come back to ensure a flow of traffic and allow buses through. Be respectful and patient with all drivers.

A letter regarding the safe "Afternoon Dismissal of your child(ren)" has been sent home today outlining the requirements. Please take the time to read this letter and return to school asap.

Consideration of our neighbours

When parking around the school please do not under any circumstances park across or in any driveways.

Supervision and Routines

Before school supervision commences at **8:00am**. When children arrive at school they are to walk immediately inside either the gate entrance between the church and presbytery or the administration entrance and proceed immediately to the central playground and or the grass area. Students are not to arrive prior to 8:00am.

After school supervision concludes at **3:10pm**. Please ensure your child(ren) are collected by this time, as staff have meetings and other commitments to attend.

Attendance

School attendance is extremely important as it provides ongoing instruction and continuity of learning. The school and Catholic Education, Diocese of Parramatta will continue to be focusing on regular school attendance by all students in 2021. Our school attendance goal continues to be 90%. In 2020 the school achieved 83% (an improvement from 2019).

If your child is absent from school due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances you must either phone the school, send in a note, email or Skoolbag message the class teacher/school. This should contain the following information—

1. child's name
2. date(s) absent
3. reason explaining absence

The Attendance Roll is a legal document, and written documentation to support a child's absence from school is required. If your child is on extended sick leave, that is over two days, please inform the School Office via email, phone or Skoolbag app on the third day. Please ensure that upon your child's return to school that a note is sent containing the above information. Too often staff waste time following up these notes. After 7 days upon your child's return to school should no written documentation be received by the school your child will be marked on the attendance register as an unexplained absence. If your child has continued unexplained absences and/or a significant number of days absent or partially absent (late to school or leave early from school), there will need to be a meeting with the school principal to discuss this issue.

Application for Leave

The Catholic Education, Diocese of Parramatta, has issued all schools with procedures for the approval of leave applications consistent with amendments made in June 2009 to the Education Act 1990. First and foremost, under the Education Act of 1990, I must remind all parents that you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child(ren) attend school. In the Act, the delegated officers (Principal, Executive Director of Schools or the Minister for Education) are the only officers who may grant exemptions from school attendance.

As such, Catholic Education, Diocese of Parramatta, has developed the following procedures for the *application of leave*.

Step 1: At least two weeks prior to the planned date of leave parents are to complete an "**Application for Exemption from School Attendance – Holiday (Form A1)**" (available on the school website (school notes/leave applications).
Step 2: Send to school the completed "**Application for Exemption from School Attendance – Holiday (Form A1)**" for approval.

Step 3: If leave is granted, the principal will sign the **“Certificate of Exemption from Attending School (Form C1)”** and send home.

Please note that the Certificate cannot be granted retrospectively, and if the application is not received within at least **two weeks** notice the **“Certificate of Exemption from Attending School (Form C1)”** may not be granted.

The days will be noted as absent on your child(ren)'s school attendance and semester reports.

Contact Details

I cannot stress the importance of ensuring that the school is kept up to date of any changes to home address, phone numbers and email addresses. Every year staff attempt to contact various families with no success due to changes in phone numbers, especially mobile numbers. Not only is this a waste of time, it can in some circumstances be extremely stressful to your child. Please send an email or complete the form “Change/update Personal Details” on the website or Skoolbag if your details have changed.

All newsletters are sent via email and Skoolbag only, please ensure the school has an up to date email for both parents. **Should you not receive this via email, please email the school as we do not have your current email address.**

Medication

If your child is ill and requires medication during school hours they must remain at home until the prescribed course is completed. If your child needs to take ongoing medication during school hours, the office staff must administer it. All prescribed medication must be delivered by a parent to the office in the original container, clearly marked with the student's name, the name of the drug, dosage, frequency of administration and prescribing doctor's name. All tablets must be pre-cut, as the administration staff must administer correct doses as provided by parents only together with completed form for temporary administration of prescribed medication which can be found on the school website or is available via the school office.

For long term medications, there are forms that must be completed before administration of the medicine can take place. These are available from the office or on the school website. A formal action plan will then be established. The Catholic Education Office advises that St Patrick's staff will not administer non-prescribed medicines such as cough mixture or pain relievers bought over the counter. All children with existing school Health Care Plans/Anaphylaxis Plans will be reviewed during Term 1 of each year.

Permission Notes for Excursions, Incursions and Overnight Excursions

The school goes to great lengths to ensure that our communication of major events is well publicised. These events are on the school calendar which can be accessed via the school website or Skoolbag. We have done this to ensure that staff and parents have adequate time to plan for these events. As such, I ask parents to assist us by returning all permission notes by the dates published. Organising large groups of students is a complex and difficult endeavour and late returns places our staff under unnecessary pressure and this in turn impacts the planning and safety of students.

Copies of permission notes will be available on the school website should they be misplaced and or for some reason not received. If permission forms are not completed and returned your child will not be able to participate in the excursion, incursion or camp (and there will be no excursion money refunded) your child will then remain at school. It is a legal requirement for the school to have and retain permission slips.

School Uniform

I thank everyone for their efforts in ensuring that the children returned to school in full summer uniform. The St Patrick's Catholic Primary uniform identifies us as a community and therefore should be worn with pride at all times. The following areas are important for our school:

- A school hat is an important part of the school uniform and is to be worn when children are outside the classroom. Our policy of "no hat, play in the shade" is a preventative measure to safeguard our children from the risk from the sun.

- Hair is to be neat and tidy. Long hair must be tied back with ribbons/scrunchies of the school colour (dark blue or green). Boy's hair is to be off the collar and of gradual even grade (no shorter than #3, no lines). Both boys and girls hair is to be of consistent natural colour, and extremes of hairstyles are to be avoided.
- Nail polish and jewellery (apart from a chain with a cross or religious medallion, and a watch) are not to be worn.
- Plain stud earrings or sleepers may be worn.
- Make-up is not to be worn.

Thank you for your support of these requests.

The Sports Uniform is to be worn on set sports day only and sand shoes are to be worn only with the sports uniform. Slip-on shoes and skate shoes are not safe or acceptable for sport. Children are to wear full school or full sports uniform, not a combination of both.

For **Term 1** Students are to wear their sports uniform on the following days only for Physical Education lessons unless otherwise communicated:

Kindergarten:	Tuesday
Year One:	Tuesday & Thursday
Year Two:	Wednesday
Year Three:	Wednesday
Year Four:	Tuesday
Year Five:	Thursday
Year Six:	Thursday

Student Mobile Phones

It is an expectation that all students who are required to bring a mobile phone to school, sign their mobile phone into the office (student foyer) prior to the commencement of school every morning. At the end of the day students are to collect their phone from the school office and sign it out. At no time during the school day is a student able to use their phone (or watch) to contact their parents or access games and or social media. Should any student do so, they will have their phone confiscated and their parents will be required to collect it from the school office. These procedures are in place to ensure the privacy of all community members, appropriate use of phones and ensuring learning is not disrupted. If you need to contact your child for any reason you can do so by phoning the school office.

Canteen

Open Monday to Friday for breakfast, recess and lunch. A 2021 menu is available on the school website and has been shared via Skoolbag. Just a reminder that there are three ways to order a lunch order - via the online app (**prior to 9:00am**), over the counter prior to school or writing an order on a brown paper bag with correct money inserted.

Important Information from Teachers

Please let your child(ren)'s class teacher know (via note or in person) about the following:

- If your child(ren) have to wear glasses
- If your child(ren) have a hearing aid
- If your child(ren) are under medical treatment
- If your child(ren) are going to be absent for an extended period of time (see school office as well)
- If your child(ren) need to be collected from school early
- If your child(ren) has recently experienced any major upsets (eg: family break-up, death of a relative, moving house, etc).

Lost Property

All items of clothing (including socks and shoes) must be marked with your child's full name. Drink bottles, lunch boxes, etc. must also be marked with your child's name. It is imperative that parents carefully identify their child's/children's clothing in permanent ink. The school has lost property boxes full of unclaimed items. All unclaimed items will be given to the clothing pool after being displayed at particular times during the term.

Homework

Working at home, or "homework", is a purposeful and deliberate extension of student learning. It is work that is connected to what students are learning to do, or learning about, at school. At times it may involve researching or preparing for learning that is to take place, whilst at other times it involves practise of skills learnt at school. Below are some recommended times for homework:

Kindergarten	approximately 10 minutes
Year 1	approximately 15 minutes
Year 2	approximately 20 minutes
Years 3/4	approximately 30 minutes
Years 5/6	approximately 30 to 40 minutes

All children are expected to read every night.

No formal homework will be given over the weekend. However, children in Years 5 or 6 may be required to complete projects or research information for assignments.

The most useful Homework of all is the learning that occurs during family interactions and shared experiences:

- Lots and lots of family conversation such as storytelling, jokes, family discussions, etc.
- Shared bedtime stories with a caring adult or family member reading to the children.
- Family games, activities and hobbies.
- Regular visits to the local library.
- Outings to all kinds of places of social, historic and natural interest.
- The kind of imaginative play that comes naturally to children of all ages.

Thank you for your support with the above requests to ensure that each and every child is safe at St Patrick's.

Once again, we are looking forward to working with you in the Catholic education of your children.
May God bless all our endeavours this year.

Yours sincerely

Steven Jones
Principal

5 Easy Steps to Staying Informed



SkoolBag is the easiest way to stay up-to-date with school events, last minute notices, newsletters and all your school's communications.

1. Download SkoolBag

Search SkoolBag in the Apple App or Google Play Store, download the FREE app:

SkoolBag: School Communication



2. Create an Account

Follow the prompts to create your account in seconds.

3. Add your School

Type your school's name and press enter. Tap the plus icon to add.



4. Allow Notifications

Ensure you Allow SkoolBag to send you push notifications when prompted.



5. Subscribe to Groups

Select Year Groups / Sports Teams to appear in your feed.

