

25 January 2021

## COVID PROCEDURES - TERM 1, 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that everyone returns to school safe and well. During the break we have all had to manage a range of restrictions. The Cumberland area has also become an area of concern with some local cases reported. This will have an impact on how we start the year. I ask all parents and carers to carefully read the following information to understand the procedures in place to protect the health and safety of all in our community. We will begin this Term with many of the same processes we finished 2020. While it is not ideal, we must follow the restrictions put in place to ensure the health and safety of all.

Please note that when the Premier and Media make announcements regarding restrictions and procedures this does not mean that we immediately implement them. This information is reviewed by Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP), who then provide advice and directives to schools. The School Leadership Team will make decisions based on the unique situation of our school community. We will then inform you of any procedural changes in writing via letter, email or Skoolbag app. Try not to speculate or pre-empt decisions and wait until the school provides you notice.

### **KINDERGARTEN COMMENCEMENT**

The current situation does not provide an ideal way to introduce our Kindergarten children and their families to school life. We have been able to make a concession for a short period of time to allow Kindergarten parents to bring their children onto the school grounds to settle them for the first week of school only. From 1 February - 5 February Kindergarten will commence their school day at 8:45am and finish at 2:30pm. Specific details regarding these arrangements will be shared directly with Kindergarten parents via email.

### **MORNING DROP OFF**

- Parents/carers need to be aware of social distancing and personally monitor their own movements to ensure adequate distance at all times.
- Parents/carers will drop their children at the entrances to the school.
  - Kindergarten to Year 4 students are to enter via the gate between the church and the presbytery
  - No parent or carers will be allowed to enter the front or back playground.
  - As per the majority of 2020, Mrs Hoey, members of the school leadership team and I will be outside the school gates to support students who may need more focus with transitioning back to school and their safe entry into the school grounds.
- Parents are asked to remember and respect the parking rules at all times. Parking rangers will continue to monitor and fine drivers for non compliance.

### **OFFICE ETIQUETTE- NEW PROCEDURES**

- Parents/carers must use the provided QR code to register their attendance BEFORE entering the School office area
- As the office is a confined space parents/carers are encouraged to wear a mask.
- No more than 3 parents/carers are to be in the office area at any given time. If you approach the office and see three adults already in the foyer, you are asked to wait outside until a person vacates.

### **LATE ARRIVALS - NEW PROCEDURE**

Sometimes unforeseen situations will occur and families will be late for school. However, this poses a significant health risk for our parents, students and office staff when our foyer has numerous families attempting to sign children in as late. 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.

### **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.

### **WALKERS**

Staff will continue to walk students up Calliope Street and across the bridge at Byron Rd. Parents are to **remain near their cars** and students will walk up Calliope Street and enter their family car via the pedestrian side doors. Students will be supervised to cross the bridge and are expected to walk to their parents/carer. Parents who park in Calliope St, Trenton Rd and Byron Rd are requested to observe social distancing. Please note that staff will no longer be parking on the street as the staff car park has reopened and so we strongly encourage parents/carers particularly of older students to take this opportunity to collect their child(ren) in this manner.

### **SCHOOL MEASURES IN PLACE**

- Sanitising and handwashing procedures for students set during 2020 will continue into 2021.
- Students and staff are provided access to sanitisers etc, to follow the hygiene advice.
- There will continue to be minimal mixing of grade groups.
- Bubbler access is allowable, however we encourage the students to have their own water bottle which can be refilled from classroom taps.
- Monday assemblies will continue to be via zoom.

### **STUDENT ILLNESS**

In regards to student sickness, we are still required to operate under the protocols that were advised in 2020 which have been outlined below. We understand these processes may be frustrating, however in order to protect the health and safety of all, we are required to follow them. Parents are also asked to be respectful to school staff who call to ask for a child to be collected as we are following the procedures expected of us.

- No student is to attend school if they are unwell.
- Each student who is absent from school or who has been sent home because of flu-like symptoms must have a COVID-19 test
- Students are not able to return to school until they return a negative COVID-19 result and are symptom free
- A negative COVID-19 test result must be provided to the school before a student can come back to school. The test results can be a NSW Health or COVID-19 Testing Centre letter, SMS or email and/or a medical certificate
- These same protocols apply to school staff.

In circumstances where children may suffer from seasonal hay fever, allergies or have other medical conditions resulting in recurring symptoms, parents are asked to obtain a letter from their treating doctor documenting a child's recurring symptoms. for their child to attend school.

### **RESPECTING PRIVACY**

As a school community our guiding principle is that 'At St Patrick's we are making a difference by being safe respectful learners'. This means that we respect the privacy of all members. We ask that adults and students do not make assumptions or judgements about other classmates or parents relating to their absence, health profile or learning. If you have any concerns these should be raised with school staff. By remembering to live by the statement above we ensure that our school community continues to be one that is welcoming and inclusive.

If at any time you have any concerns or questions please discuss these with your child's teacher, Mrs Hoey or myself.

I look forward to sharing a year of great learning, spiritual growth and community building with you, your children, our staff and our Parish community.

Kind regards,

**Steven Jones**  
**Principal**