

St Michael's Parish School

ASHBURTON



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Thursday 1st June, 2023

Dear Families,

Independent Education Union - Victoria & Tasmania **Victorian Catholic Agreement**

As many parents and caregivers may have heard, the Independent Education Union (Vic-Tas) has reached an 'in-principle' agreement with the employers, the Melbourne Archdiocese of Catholic Schools (MACS), for a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) covering Victorian Catholic Schools. This EBA will shortly go to a vote to be finalised. It is one which will result in an historic shift in the way the work of teachers is regulated and valued, aiming to manage an increasingly larger workload. Many of the changes within the new agreement have already been finalised and implemented by State Government Schools.

One element of this agreement aims to regulate teacher working hours, providing teachers with more autonomy and control over their time during the school day. No doubt you are already aware that many of our staff at St Michael's School, as with many colleagues I have worked with in previous schools, arrive at work before 8am and many are still in classrooms and offices at 6pm, not to mention the planning, preparation, assessment, reporting and communications that happen outside of these hours. This, of course, is in addition to parent meetings, evening meetings (Sacraments, information sessions, Cybersafety etc) and attendance at Sacraments on weekends.

I write this merely to assist you to understand the enormity of the role of a teacher. Whilst at times challenging, these are the realities of the teaching profession. At present, teaching staff at St Michael's are on duty from 8.30am in classrooms and finish the school day at 3.15pm (Mon) and 3.30pm (Tues-Fri). As noted above, the face to face time spent with classes is only one part of a teacher's working day. Upon the calculation of 'face-to-face' teaching time and directed and non-directed expectations within the school day, this currently puts us OVER what will be allowed when the new EBA officially commences.

With this in mind, and in accordance with the new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, the following changes will be implemented at St Michael's School from the commencement of Term 3, Monday 10th July, to address this.

Some actions will remain in place:

- The school gates will continue to be open from 8.30am.
- Arrival time for students will be between 8.30-8.50am.
- Two teachers will be on duty in the quadrangle and near the Four Square courts.
- Monday morning assemblies will continue from 8.50am.
- Parents are welcome to remain and attend morning prayers in classrooms.

Some actions will be different:

- **Buildings will be opened from 8.45am, no longer 8.30am, allowing teaching staff more time for preparation, planning and communication with colleagues.**
- **Upon student arrival, school bags will be placed in allocated areas around the quadrangle / buildings. These areas are to be advised later this term.**
- **At 8.45am, a bell will ring, students will line up in allocated areas in safety lines and be greeted by classroom teachers and accompanied into class.**
- **Another bell will ring at 8.50am signalling the start of the 'learning' school day.**
- **Should it rain, students will either shelter under the many undercover spaces available (outside Year 5/6 classrooms, near taps, outside literacy room) unless it becomes too heavy and windy, in which case the bell will ring and classrooms will be opened.**

One of the most challenging changes for some parents will be the “push” from their children to be dropped off earlier than required. Please keep in mind that, whilst the gates will open at 8.30am, this is only so that if you NEED to bring children before 8.45am that you have the capacity to do so. Any child requiring supervision before 8.30am will need to make contact with [Extend](#) and arrange before school care, as has always been the case at St Michael's.

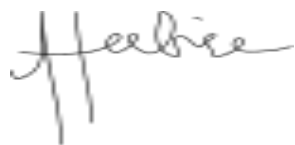
After discussions with the staff and consultation with our Parents and Friends Association (our only parent body for consultation at present) we believe this will cause the least impact to parents and families as possible.

I ask for your support in this matter and, should you have any concerns or questions over this change, I ask that you please address these to me and not seek clarity from the staff. The staff will endeavour to help the children understand these changes in these last few weeks of term 2 and we ask that you support us with this in the way you discuss it at home with your families. Children usually readily accept and are positive about change if their closest adults accept it and speak positively about it too. Otherwise, it can become a huge challenge for all involved.

We understand that the new EBA will be challenging to parents and to leadership teams in schools as we look to restructure routines that have been embedded in daily practice for many years. However the EBA brings with it a positive recognition of the role of a teacher and attempts to provide more balance within a teacher's working week and the demands of the profession. Hopefully this new EBA will provide a stimulus for highly skilled teachers, as we have at St Michael's School, to remain in the profession as their chosen long term career and further attract skilled and enthusiastic young adults to the role of a primary teacher.

Thank you for your understanding and support in this matter.

Warmest regards,



Annie Herbison
ACTING PRINCIPAL