



COVID-19

Community Update

July 29th 2020

Dear parents and carers,

I hope this communication finds you well and your family safe and healthy. I will continue to communicate regularly with our school community during this time to keep you as informed as possible.

From the feedback I have been receiving, it appears that our students have transitioned back to Remote Learning (RL) 2.0 very smoothly and successfully - we continue to be incredibly proud of them. The staff have been incredible in doing everything possible to engage the students and ensure that their learning needs are met - their commitment and creativity has been and continues to be outstanding.

The positive and constructive feedback that you have provided continues to be greatly valued and appreciated. Of significance, we remain open, functional and safe here at school, albeit with a highly reduced onsite workforce and a significantly reduced student attendance at school. As always, it's certainly wonderful to see the smiling faces of our students each day.

We continue to read and hear many different news stories about this current pandemic, including the impact this health crisis is having on schools. School closures, including in our local area, are becoming more common. Principals who have experienced school closures have commented on how well this process has been managed by the DET and DHHS. Should the identification of a positive COVID-19 test result in Old Orchard closing, it is possible or even likely that this may not be confirmed until very late in the evening - we encourage you to check your Sentral messages and emails on a regular basis to ensure that you have the latest information.

Once again, we ask all parents, students and staff to follow and adhere to all safety precautions in relation to the wearing of masks, hygiene practices and social distancing. We are determined to do everything possible to keep everyone safe here at school.

The wellbeing and engagement levels of our students is also a significant priority. If you are concerned about your child's wellbeing, you should make contact with your child's teacher, Matt O'Hern, Rachel Barnes or myself. You can also contact Parentline on 13 22 89, a phone service for parents and carers of children from birth to 18 years old. Parentline offers confidential and anonymous counselling and support for parenting issues.

Our Leadership team and other key staff meet regularly to discuss children and families we are worried about. We discuss ways in which the school might be able to help in adjusting work requirements, organising additional phone or video-conferencing support. We are working extremely hard at addressing the complex needs of our most vulnerable children, whilst also working with specific groups of children through the school that have additional needs.

We continue to review, on a daily basis, the provision of learning tasks for our children and make adjustments where possible to continue to challenge all children, through these difficult times. The importance of

maintaining well-being levels, caring for others, being mindful of taking breaks and engaging in regular exercise, eating well and maintaining regular sleep patterns cannot be overemphasised.

Just a reminder that, In the interests of everyone in the Old Orchard community, it is essential that students (or staff) who are unwell do not attend school. All students attending onsite will have their temperature taken (using a non-contact thermometer) on arrival at school. If the recorded temperature is greater than 37.5 degrees, you will be contacted to collect your child. The wearing of masks is now mandatory for staff and visitors to the school. Staff are not required to wear masks whilst teaching.

We are currently working on setting up our next virtual assembly and will endeavour to hold one on a weekly basis. I ask all parents, carers and students to allow time in your busy weekly schedule to sit down and watch these assemblies to celebrate our wonderful students and the hard work they are affording their studies. It's also incredibly important that we continue to celebrate together, special events, birthdays, award winners and acknowledgements, during these indifferent months.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate you all on the contributions you are making, to your work, school, families and daily structure. I've loved hearing of the fun and creative activities that our staff and school community are discovering, whether it be a board game, a mini-concert, mini Master Chef or simply relaxing watching the footy, Netflix or reading a book. I'm also in awe of the amazing work that many members of our school community are doing, particularly those in our hospitals.

Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen in life, the appreciation of excellence and beauty, gratitude, hope, humour, patience and spirituality, is what I believe matters most – and most importantly, what our students and children need modelled to them over the coming days-weeks-months.

From a school perspective, our priority is to work closely with families in the best interests of our students. Thank-you as always for your support, patience and understanding.

Kind regards and stay safe

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Principal