

THE CAREY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL CHATTER

CARE: CHALLENGE-ACHIEVE-RESPECT-ENCOURAGE

24 March 2020

Thank You:

During this time of uncertainty surrounding the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, I would like to thank all Parents and Carers for their support and words of encouragement. As increasing numbers of Parents and Carers exercise their right to keep their children home in order to reduce their risk of potential infection, maintaining a sense of normal routine has become increasingly challenging. While the school continues to operate, we will endeavor to provide as much information and advice regarding the situation as it unfolds.

School Operations:

Please note the due to the Coronavirus situation, the following events between now and the end of this term have been postponed until later in the year :

- School Assemblies
- School Photos
- Cluster Meetings
- ANZAC Service

In order to protect the health and safety of the staff and students, the following will also occur:

- As of the end of the lunch break tomorrow that our **school canteen will be suspending operations** and will be closed until the end of the term. Lunches and morning teas will therefore not be able to be purchased after tomorrow.
- For health & safety reasons, as of tomorrow, the students will not be allowed to make their own lunches, as the potential risk of spreading the virus is too high. A small number of vegemite sandwiches have been prepared for any students who may need them tomorrow, however after this time, it will not be possible for students who may require lunches to be provided with them.
- As an additional precaution we are asking that Parents/Carers and younger siblings of students do not enter classrooms to drop their children off each morning. (Please note that this **does not** apply to Kindy and Pre Primary classes)

Please do not hesitate to contact the school should you have any further queries or concerns regarding any of the above.

I have also attached a number of work from home documents to our **Skoolbag App** that are aimed at supporting those Parents & Carers who have exercised their right to keep their children at home in order to protect them from possible infection. For additional ideas relating to assisting your child at home with their on-going education, please refer to the Department of Education Website at: www.education.wa.edu.au and click on the Learning at Home Tab. This is a fantastic resource aimed at individual year levels offering a range of activities from across the curriculum.

Please find below some very helpful information for getting us all through at this time of uncertainty:

Understand that reactions to the pandemic may vary.

Children's responses to stressful events are unique and varied. Some children may be irritable or clingy, and some may regress, demand extra attention, or have difficulty with self-care, sleeping, and eating. New and challenging behaviours are natural responses, and adults can help by showing empathy and patience and by calmly setting limits when needed.

uncertainty. Children often feel more in control when they can play an active role in helping themselves, their families, and their communities. For example, children can help by following safety guidelines (e.g., washing their hands), preparing for home confinement (e.g., helping to cook and freeze food), or volunteering in the community (e.g., writing letters or creating art for older adults or sick friends, sharing extra supplies with a neighbour).

CHOOSE RESPECT

RESPECT IS TO TREAT WITH CARE AND CONSIDERATION

Provide age-appropriate information.

Children tend to rely on their imaginations when they lack adequate information. Adults' decisions to withhold information are usually more stressful for children than telling the truth in age-appropriate ways. Adults should instead make themselves available for children to ask questions and talk about their concerns. They might, for example, provide opportunities for kids to access books, websites, and other activities on COVID-19 that present information in child-friendly ways. In addition, adults should limit children's exposure to media coverage, social media, and adult conversations about the pandemic, as these channels may be less age-appropriate. Ongoing access to news and social media about the pandemic and constant conversation about threats to public safety can cause unnecessary stress for children.

Create a safe physical and emotional environment by practicing the 3 R's: Reassurance, Routines, and Regulation.

First, adults should *reassure* children about their safety and the safety of loved ones, and tell them that it is adults' job to ensure their safety. Second, adults should maintain *routines* to provide children with a sense of safety and predictability (e.g. regular bedtimes and meals, daily schedules for learning and play). And third, adults should support children's development of *regulation*. When children are stressed, their bodies respond by activating their stress response systems. To help them manage these reactions, it is important to both validate their feelings (e.g., "I know that this might feel scary or overwhelming") and encourage them to engage in activities that help them self-regulate (e.g., exercise, deep breathing, mindfulness or meditation activities, regular routines for sleeping and eating). In addition, it is essential to both children's emotional and physical well-being to ensure that families can meet their basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, clothing).

Keep children busy.

When children are bored, their levels of worry and disruptive behaviours may increase. Adults can provide options for safe activities (e.g., outside play, blocks, modelling clay, art, music, games) and involve children in brainstorming other creative ideas. Children need ample time to engage in play and other joyful or learning experiences without worrying or talking about the pandemic.

Increase children's self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is the sense of having agency or control—an especially important trait during times of fear and uncertainty. Children often feel more in control when they can play an active role in helping themselves, their families, and their communities. For example, children can help by following safety guidelines (e.g., washing their hands), preparing for home confinement (e.g., helping to cook and freeze food), or volunteering in the community (e.g., writing letters or creating art for older adults or sick friends, sharing extra supplies with a neighbour).

Create opportunities for caregivers (which may mean yourself!) to take care of themselves.

Children's well-being depends on the well-being of their parents and other caregivers. Caregivers must take care of themselves so they have the internal resources to care for others. To this end, adult caregivers can engage in self-care by staying connected to social supports, getting enough rest, and taking time for restorative activities (e.g., exercise, meditation, reading, outdoor activities, prayer). Seeking help from a mental health provider is also important when adults struggle with very high levels of stress and other mental health challenges.

Seek professional help if children show signs of trauma that do not resolve relatively quickly.

Emotional and behavioural changes in children are to be expected during a pandemic, as everyone adjusts to a new sense of normal. If children show an ongoing pattern of emotional or behavioural concerns (e.g., nightmares, excessive focus on anxieties, increased aggression, regressive behaviours, or self-harm) that do not resolve with supports, professional help may be needed. Many mental health providers have the capacity to provide services via "telehealth" (i.e., therapy provided by telephone or an online platform) when in-person social contact must be restricted.

Emphasize strengths, hope, and positivity.

Children need to feel safe, secure, and positive about their present and future. Adults can help by focusing children's attention on stories about how people come together, find creative solutions to difficult problems, and overcome adversity during the epidemic. Talking about these stories can be healing and reassuring to children and adults alike.

Take care.

Phil Greenmount
Principal

Congratulations to the following certificate winners...

Merit Certificate Winners

TA 2	Alvin & Olivia	TA 8	Jai & Connor
TA 4	Jackson & Cheyenne	TA 10	Tegan & Tristain
TA 5	Ali & Logan	TA 13	Jade & Madison
TA 6	Brylle & Kira	TA 14	Jhon & Nevaeh
TA 7	Alyssa & Abbie	TA 15	Seth & Andre

PBS Award Winners

TA 2	Xander	TA 8	Chelsea
TA 4	Makayla	TA 10	Louis
TA 5	Savannah	TA 13	Taylah
TA 6	Pippa	TA 14	Brice
TA 7	Luna-Rose	TA 15	Shondyll



Aussie of the Month
Shirlkedā Humphries