

MARCH 17 2020

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Pleasant Street Primary School

SUPPLEMENTARY NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We would like to thank our community for their cooperation and patience as we work through the current situation. We appreciate that parents and guardians have been following our new parent access protocols and limiting their entries into the school buildings.

We will continue to monitor the situation and follow the advice of DET and DHHS. Pleasant Street Primary will remain open and operational unless we are directed to do otherwise. Please contact the school if you are self isolating and require home learning for your child.

Those families accessing Camp Australia services should contact them for updated information, however, we can confirm that should schools close Camp Australia services will also be suspended.

Please read the attached statement from the Department of Human Health and Services Victorian Chief Health Office Dr. Brett Sutton in regards to school closures.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Mark McLay and the Pleasant Street Primary staff.

In Brief

Increased hygiene measures have been put in place across the school.

We ask parents to limit entry into the school where possible including dropping off students at external doors and arranging pick up meeting spots outside. This includes Prep children who will be walked outside by their teachers to the Pirate Sandpit at 3:30pm.

All parent meetings have been postponed or will be conducted by phone.

All parent classroom helpers programs will not be operating until further notice.

All camps, excursions or extra curricular events have been cancelled or postponed until further notice.



STATEMENT ON SCHOOL CLOSURES IN VICTORIA

Dr Brett Sutton MBBS MPHTM FAFPHM FRSPH FACTM MFTM

Victorian Chief Health Officer

Victorian Chief Human Biosecurity Officer

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) met recently to consider the issue of school closures in relation to the community transmission of COVID-19.

The Committee's advice is that pre-emptive school closures are not likely to be proportionate or effective as a public health intervention to prevent community transmission of COVID-19 at this time.

As Victoria's Chief Health Officer and as a member of the AHPPC, I fully endorse this advice in relation to schools in Victoria.

There is currently limited information on the contribution of children to transmission of COVID-19. The WHO-China Joint Mission noted the primary role of household transmission and observed that children tended to be infected from adults.

Previous work suggests that the potential reduction in community transmission from pre-emptive school closures may be offset by the care arrangements that are in place for children who are not at school.

There is a particular risk associated with the fact that children may require care from vulnerable grandparents or may continue to associate (and transmit infection) outside of school settings.

Broadly, the health advice on school closures from previous respiratory epidemics shows the health costs are often underestimated and the benefits are overestimated.

This may be even more so in relation to COVID-19 as unlike influenza, the impact on otherwise healthy children has been minimal to date.

For pre-emptive school closures to be effective, prolonged closure is required and it would be unclear when they could be re-opened. If there were still a large pool of susceptible students when schools are re-opened, there would be likely to be re-emergence of transmission in the community.

School closures may still be considered late in the outbreak in anticipation of a peak in infection rates, for a shorter period of time. Short term reactive school closures may also be warranted to allow cleaning and contact tracing to occur.

Should evidence change in relation to school closures then my advice to the sector, in collaboration with AHPPC, would of course change also.