

# Mount Ousley Public School

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## **URGENT UPDATE ON COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Today I greet you in the midst of these unprecedented and rapidly changing times. The world as we know it is changing every day.... sometimes every hour. Even the note that I was writing throughout today to update you from the weekend was suddenly made obsolete by just before 3:00pm this afternoon. This afternoon, I watched a live-stream announcement made to Principals by the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, and this will impact all of us from tomorrow onwards.

### **Here are the main points:**

- Schools will remain open for children of essential workers, children without safe care at home, etc.
- Learning will continue, but in a new way.
- The same learning will be accessed from home and at school. No student will be disadvantaged by staying at home.
- Learning at school will not look like regular lessons. Schools will be providing *supervision of learning* only. Likewise, *supervision of learning* will be provided at home by a parent or carer.
- Staff may be reduced also, and therefore on rosters to supervise groups of students. (Please be aware that your child may not necessarily be supervised by their regular class teacher.)
- The expectation from the Department is that your child/ren will remain at home, unless it is absolutely necessary to attend school.

### **How this will look at MOPS:**

Here at MOPS, we are determined to keep quality learning happening, (and we feel we are well set-up to do so!)... So even at home, your child will have access to learning and their teacher through Google Classroom and/or Seesaw.

Over the past week, teachers have been working collaboratively to plan remote learning activities for your children in case of school closures, or the situation in which we now find ourselves. As we already have 1:1 devices and online learning on digital platforms operating at MOPS, this should prove to be a smooth transition.

While the school remains open and many students remain at home, the learning provided for remote learning at home will be the same as what is provided at school. Teachers will set tasks, questions and challenges for students to complete each day. Teachers will engage in online feedback and communication at certain times as well. I am looking forward to seeing the creativity that I'm sure will emerge... to find innovative ways to feel connected with each other in this very disconnected situation. I think this is going to be one of the most important things we can do... feel connected.

At MOPS, we feel strongly about keeping the feeling of community alive, not only between students and their friends, but also between families and between staff. We have Schoolbag for announcements. We can also stay in contact by phone and email if you would like to get in touch. We are currently exploring apps like Zoom to enable us to gather virtually to stay in touch and feel connected as well.

We recognise that some families may not have access to a device (iPad/Laptop/Computer) and/or internet at home. If this is your situation, can you **please** contact the school as soon as possible in order for us to make arrangements to support you. We have plans in place. Please do not hesitate to contact me!

## How can we stay safe?

NSW public schools have been provided with measures that we can all take in our schools (and at home) to help 'Flatten the Curve' of COVID-19 transmission in the wider community.

Mount Ousley Public School continues to implement a range of strategies to reduce transmission including:-

1. **The promotion of personal hygiene measures**
  - The installation of pump hand sanitisers in the halls near entrances to groups of classrooms
  - Scheduled hand-washing times before every eating break
  - Scheduled hand-washing or hand sanitising times on the way back into classrooms after lunch and recess
  - Mandatory cough / sneeze / runny nose etiquette - eg. into crook of elbow, hand sanitise after blowing nose, tissues straight into bin
2. **Physical distancing**
  - Outdoor (or backyard) lessons where appropriate
  - Splitting the school into two halves - K-2 and 3-6
  - No communal learning spaces shared by cross stage students
  - Staggered lunch and recess breaks
3. **No mass gatherings** - All school assemblies, excursions, scripture, etc. cancelled (No outside of school gatherings should be attended either. We all need to follow these guidelines if we are to keep each other safe and reduce the spread of this virus.)
4. **Reducing the mixing of students** - Keeping students to stage groups as much as possible

We will reinforce existing policies to exclude students and staff who are unwell, and current policies requiring quarantine for those who have recently travelled overseas, have contracted COVID-19 or are *close contacts* of someone with the virus.

## What does this mean for the foreseeable future at Mount Ousley?

- Assemblies, Morning Assemblies, Scripture, Choir, Music classes, Band, Guitar, sporting events and trials, P&C meetings, and Harmony Circles are cancelled
- Parent / Teacher Conferences are cancelled
- NAPLAN, Cross Country Carnival, Easter Hat Parade, Choral Festival and Southern Stars have been cancelled
- Wet weather arrangements have been adjusted to minimise student mixing
- The Canteen has been closed
- Announcements about how school will look in Term 2 will be made later this term

I understand that this is a confronting and complex time, and we are all feeling the uncertainty of what lies ahead. I am just staying focused on what kind of world we would like it to be when we come out the other side of this...

I know in our little corner of the world, we will have practised kindness, generosity and empathy, and a commitment to wellbeing both mental and physical... for ourselves, towards each other in our little school community and towards the wider community... and all of this will no doubt have made some kind of impact on all those little ones who are watching how we behave along the way.

I believe that *that* is what we can bring with us to the other side of this curve...

Take care of yourself, your loved ones and our humanity.

With kind regards,

*Tiffany Sinton*  
Relieving Principal

*nb. From this point onwards, please check the Schoolbag App notifications or email for updates. We will be launching our new website soon as well, so look out for news on that. Let us know if you cannot access any of our current communication methods. And don't hesitate to contact me at school if you need to talk. School ph: 4285 4211*