CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19) OUTBREAK: UPDATED DET INFORMATION
As of today, the DET advice in accordance with national public health guidelines and current information from the Australian Chief Medical Officer and Victorian Chief Health Officer is that Victorian public schools will remain open.

For the most current advice see here:

As a Victorian government school we are bound to follow the advice as per issued by the DET. Given the rapidly changing landscape regarding the impact of COVID-19, we will be providing a range of online learning resources and links to useful sites so as to minimise the disruption to our students learning in the event that schools will be closed shortly. Currently we have 22% of our students absent on a daily basis, mainly due to parent choice, in the context of protecting their children from possibly becoming infected with the virus. These online resources are being uploaded progressively on Sentral and are available for use immediately.

I have written an opinion piece, titled, ‘Should our schools stay open?’ on this most worrying issue. I have forwarded the piece to our Prime Minister, Premier, the DET and others. I have attached a copy with this newsletter for your interest.

Continued...
HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER?

Please ensure you let the school office know if you have changed address or updated mobile phones with new numbers. This information alleviates stressful situations for students when they are ill and we cannot contact parents.

SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS UPDATE

I initially received a total of eight (8) nominations for the (6) parent representative vacancies on school and one (1) nomination for the one DET representative vacancy at the closing date for nominations. Following closure for receiving nominations, subsequently two parent nominees withdrew their nominations, leaving six (6) nominations for the six (6) vacancies. Given then, that for both categories I received exactly the number of nominations as there are vacancies, we are not required to conduct a ballot. As Returning Officer, I therefore declare all nominees elected. They are:

Parent Representatives: Jade Thomas (re-elected), Mel Dobric (re-elected), Karen Ingwerson, Leigh Caulfield, Michelle Thompson and Vince King (all 4 new councillors).

DET Representative: Angela Maskery (new councillor)

At this stage our AGM of School Council is scheduled to take place on Monday 20th April, at which our new school council membership will be ratified and Office Bearers will be elected.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)

Q. What is the likelihood of schools being closed in the future due to the coronavirus outbreak?

A. It is hard to tell – any answer is speculative at this stage.

QUOTABLE QUOTE

‘Pandemics tell us a lot about human behaviour, none of which is new’

Henry Grossek

DIARY DATES:

PORTAL PERMISSION TO BE GRANTED BY:
Should our schools stay open?

It is a vexed question as to whether our schools should continue to stay open given the pandemic that COVID-19 has become. Prime Minister Morrison has made clear his view that they should stay open, supported by that of our Chief Medical officer, Dr Brendan Murphy who says that while COVID-19 is spreading rapidly, children have “very few instances of clinical disease”.

The Victorian Chief Health Officer, Dr Brett Sutton, is of the same view, noting that, “there is currently limited information on the contribution of children to transmission of COVID-19, and that the WHO-China Joint Mission noted the primary role of household transmission observing that children tended to be infected from adults.”

Notwithstanding the views of our Prime Minister, endorsed by our Chief Medical Officers, on the ground in our schools a significant and increasing number of parents are choosing to keep their children home as a preventative measure. At our school, for example, student absenteeism has grown daily in the past week with now over 140 students (22 per cent) absent from school on a daily basis. This is not an uncommon trend, with some other schools experiencing daily student absence rates of over 50 per cent and rising.

Interestingly, this trend is in defiance of Prime Minister Morrison’s advice to parents when he says, “Obviously we are concerned about the health of the kids, but there is only one reason for kids to stay at home, and that is if they’re unwell.” The fact that significant and increasing numbers of parents aren’t listening to our PM on this crisis, should be of concern to him.

The arguments for closing our schools centre on several points. Firstly, schools are known to be hot-beds for the transmission of colds, influenza and a variety of respiratory infections. Bringing, in many cases, hundreds of students with staff together daily for 6 hours, in the context of limiting mass social gatherings of no more than 100 people in order to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, is a moot point.

Secondly, too little still remains definitively known in relation to the level of COVID-19 transmissibility by children. For example, whilst it is true, that to date as the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Brendan Murphy, says, “While COVID-19 is spreading rapidly, children have very few instances of clinical disease,” that ought not provide too much comfort. Our COVID-19 testing regime, is stretched to the limit, with all bar those people presenting under certain limited criteria, not being tested. Anecdotal it may be, but we have no idea how many people, including children, are slipping through the system, because they are A-symptomatic or because suffering only very minor symptoms at all. Evidence to date suggests children may well fall into these categories.

The argument that keeping children at school, rather than be at home and cared for by say, elderly grandparents, reduces the risk of jeopardising the health of grandparent carers has superficial merit. Nonetheless, a close examination of this argument reveals some gaping weaknesses. For instance, the longer that children remain at school in the current climate, statistically, they are at greater risk of at the minimum becoming unwitting carriers of COVID-19. With school holidays soon to commence, is it not reasonable to assume that grandparents called on to care for children in the holidays will be at greater risk of infection than now?

From an economic perspective, school closures will undoubtedly have a profound effect. So too have all other measures, all designed to minimise the spread of COVID-19 across our broader community. The longer we take to curtail this pandemic, the longer will be the damaging economic impact of COVID-19 on all of us. Put another way, who would be prepared to argue that keeping our schools open now will not lead to an increase in the spread of COVID-19? The only potential long term economic benefit of keeping our schools open now, would be if we could be certain that keeping them open will not have any impact. If not, we will all pay a greater long term price. So much it can be argued, is arbitrary, in relation to public announcements. Take for instance Prime Minister Morrison’s statement that if schools close, then it must be for 6 months. Why 6 months, not a fortnight with which to start? The COVID-19 landscape is changing almost by the hour in these surreal times. How can Mr Morrison be so certain? Flexibility is a wonderful attribute to have in times of shifting sands. Start with a fortnight and then review the situation. Who really knows how long COVID-19 will prevail? It’s a fair bet to argue that the longer we take to close schools the more likely it is that they will have to close for 6 months. Why take that risk?

There is also the question of the wellbeing of our 50,000 plus school staff across our state who are being required to attend work every day of the week, many in schools with well over a total of 100 adults and children in close proximity to each other for 6 hours. As a member of the teaching profession, I find it most disappointing to say the least that very little attention by our leaders, in their media comments, has been given to the wellbeing of school staff. Think about it – over 50,000 people go to work in Victoria’s public schools alone, every work day. They matter too, because without them fit and well, our children will suffer too and the ripple effect will engulf us all.

Henry Grossek
Principal
Berwick Lodge Primary School
HEADLICE
Over the next week, and including the two week holiday break, we would appreciate the support of every family in the school in the detection and **total eradication** of any live lice and/or eggs that are found in children’s hair. While we realise that families are busy, we feel that it would be a most worthwhile exercise in eradicating lice from the school. To be successful, **every family** would need to commit some time to checking their children’s hair at least twice over the holidays. If any live lice are found, treat immediately. (Complete follow-up checks and treatment.) If any eggs are found, apply lots of conditioner, and patiently remove all eggs. If every family is diligent in this exercise, we will be able to break the head lice cycle in the school. We thank you in advance for your cooperation, and look forward to a ‘**Lice-free Term 2 at B.L.P.S.**’

TERM FINISH – 2.30pm Friday 27th March.
Term 1 will finish at 2.30pm on Friday 27th March. **Term 2 will start on Tuesday 14th April.**

LOST PROPERTY
If your child has misplaced any items of clothing, lunch boxes or toys, please remind them to come and have a look along the main corridor for the lost property. All items remaining on Wednesday 25th March will be given to the local Op shop or our second hand uniform shop.

PLANNING WEEK
Tomorrow our teachers begin planning week. Each area of the school have a day with their team to plan for our term 2 teaching and learning activities. Whilst the teams are planning, our specialist teachers or relief teachers take the grades. We look forward to the wonderful programs our teachers are planning for term 2.

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS
Today, our Respectful Relationships team of teachers met to work on our action plan for 2020. Our teachers have embedded Respectful Relationships curriculum across the school. We have planned in conjunction with DET to host a parent session later in May. Details to follow in the future.

COMMUNITY GARDEN WORKING BEE CANCELLED
Our Community Garden working bee which was planned for tomorrow, Friday 10th March has been cancelled. We will reschedule to sometime next term.

INFORMATION FROM SCHOOL TV – REDUCING ANXIETY AROUND COVID-19
Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, a psychologist, presents a short and fact based video for school communities on how parents, carers and teachers can help children and young people deal with any anxiety they may experiencing as a result of media coverage of the COVID-19 outbreak. Please click the following link to watch:

https://schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-coronavirus

Sandra McCrum and Angela Maskery
FOUND ITEMS

The below items have been handed into the office. Please collect them by Friday 27th March 2020
**SCHOOL BANKING**

**Notice from CommBank School Banking**
The health, safety and wellbeing of our communities and our people is our first priority. Due to the rapidly developing situation with coronavirus, School Banking has been temporarily paused from **20 March 2020** until the start of **Term 2**. Please don’t bring your deposit book with your weekly banking into school and we will notify you when banking will recommence.

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**SICKBAY DONATIONS WANTED**

Sickbay are in need of the following items, so if your doing an Autumn clean during the holidays, we would greatly appreciate them;

- Towels
- Single bed fitted sheets
- Single bed doona covers
- Pillow cases.

We are also very low in stock for boys & girls underwear and socks. Due to hygiene regulation, these must be brand new & still in a packet.

Thank you in advance 😊
Do you hold a concession card? You maybe eligible to apply for CSEF funding worth $125.00 per student. If you are new to our school or have a child just starting with us in 2020, you will need to apply for this. Please see our friendly office staff for the form.
DID YOU KNOW?

ACE Foundation offers FREE GLASSES*

to all Primary School students in the City of Casey if they are required.

*1 pair of glasses per student

Forms are available from the general office

0459 520 010
2 Woodbine Road
Cranbourne North 3977
acefoundation@trcgp.com.au
acefoundation.org.au

LIKE US ON
Facebook aidingcaseyeducation
BUSINESS ADVERTISING

Lunar Drive In

115 SOUTH GIPPSLAND HWY, DANDENONG. 9706 9988

ALL CAR LOADS
ONLY $25* EVERY MONDAY, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY
PER MOVIE

ALL CAR LOADS ONLY $30 PER MOVIE THURS-SUN

SESSIONS AT WWW.LUNARDRIVEIN.COM.AU

Information correct at time of printing. All dates and films are subject to change.
COP DEN DO MARTIAL ARTS
WOULD LIKE TO INVITE...

Lessons will be taken by a number of professional instructors.

Lessons held at Berwick Lodge on Thursday evenings from 6 - 8pm.

ALL GRADE 3 to 6 WE HAVE ROOM FOR 30 MORE STUDENTS, BE FIRST IN TO PARTICIPATE IN FOUR NIGHTS OF FREE TRAINING COP DEN DO MARTIAL ARTS!

MORE INFO CALL PETER ON 0414468781

STARTING IN FEBRUARY 2020 – GRADE 3 to 6

COP DEN DO PERMISSION FORM

I ______________________ give permission for my son/daughter, __________________ to attend Cop Den Do martial arts lessons.

Phone Number: __________________  Emergency Number: __________________

Grade: ________  Signed: __________________

TO BE RETURNED UPON FIRST LESSON.
Is your Lollipop person the sweetest?
School Crossing Supervisor of the Year Award

As part of our commitment to the ongoing safety of your students, School Crossing’s Victoria, together with your local council, is looking for the ‘Supervisor of the Year’ 2019/2020.

There are seven regions across the state. A winner will be selected in each region, and the overall winner, will be selected from the regional winners. The winner of the 2017/2018 Supervisor of the Year is Margaret Coulson from the City of Greater Geelong and School Crossing’s Victoria would like to enlist your help to boost this year’s nominations.

It is our goal to reach as many parents, residents and school staff as possible and by involving them in the nomination process encourage all road users to think about, and reward, the active role the Supervisors play in the safety of their children.

Your support of this program will help ensure your Crossing Supervisor is shown the appreciation they deserve. We would appreciate if you could include the attached advert in your next school newsletter.

Nominations are open now, and close on Friday 8th May 2020 go to the School Crossings Victoria website www.schoolcrossingsvictoria.com.au and complete an online nomination.

Thankyou for taking the time to read this letter and I hope you will be able to support this initiative.