



The Beehive Montessori School Inc.

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Our Ref: A056/20.DMc

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

Dear parents,

I hope you have managed a somewhat restful break despite continuing concerns relating to COVID-19. I apologise in advance for the length of this letter, but there is a lot to share with you to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff and their families now that we have the majority of students returning to school.

There is also information regarding the use of Microsoft Teams and learning from home. Please all read the information, even if your child/ren are returning to school, in case the situation changes in the coming weeks.

Thank you for completing the Term 2 Attendance Google Form, it was a great way of being able to quickly see how many are returning. I appreciate that it isn't an easy decision, and respect that you all made the decision that is right for your family at the moment. I understand many of you are choosing to wait for the Government review after the first three weeks of school, however you are welcome to change your mind at any point.

Your prompt responses have enabled us to adapt the plan for next term, which will now include a mix of face to face and remote teaching.

### **Learning from Home**

For those students learning from home, Beehive will continue with our Learning from Home program as outlined last term. This includes the Weekly Work Plans which are designed to continue your child's Montessori education, individual work set by the teachers, and videoconferencing sessions to support and complement the Weekly Work Plans.

Next week students learning from home will be provided with the first Weekly Work Plan for Term 2, plus a weekly schedule that includes student/teacher videoconferencing times. The weekly schedule is designed to provide a structure to the day, and sets out the work expectations for each child. As much as possible, this mirrors the day to day rhythm of the classroom, while at the same time allowing flexibility for individual student and family needs and your own work commitments.

Please use this link

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1dJpwoOQ0ZFMoIVH3BoeRo2O3G9eKuC3I3n7ZgadM3JM/edit> to read and acknowledge protocols to enable your children to participate in videoconferencing sessions.

**We would like ALL parents to read and acknowledge the protocols. This will be helpful in the event of any future changes.**

Beehive will conduct videoconferencing sessions via our own Microsoft Teams license to ensure it has the highest level of security for our situation.

Download the Teams app through the APP store onto a suitable device or using a computer that is connected to the internet, open your preferred web-browser and click on the link <https://teams.microsoft.com/downloads>

Your teacher will invite your children to a videoconference session through your preferred email (except for Adolescent Program) at the scheduled time. Please make sure you include this email address in the Google Form above. Once you have an invitation, 5 minutes before the session time just click on the link and open MS Teams to ensure connection.

## **Attending school**

For those families with students physically attending school, as well as completing the Google Form in the link above, there will be some changes to drop off and pick up routines and times to comply with the Premier's and Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) advice on how to manage school attendance at the moment. This includes:

- a strong message to parents not to send children to school who are sick;
- for schools to send children (and staff) home straight away if they are sick;
- informing the school immediately if a student or their family member is diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- vigilance in personal hygiene, this includes keeping fingernails short and clean;
- age appropriate physical distancing;
- additional environmental cleaning; and
- that parents and visitors do not enter the school grounds.

To ensure the health and safety of everyone, we ask all parents and carers to follow these new drop off and pick up routines. Please make sure you inform other adults who are responsible for drop off or pick up of these requirements.

## **Drop off**

- Please remember appropriate physical distancing while waiting for the Traffic Warden to allow children to cross, and while waiting near the gate.
- The staff carpark will be closed- this is to ensure a larger, safe area for parents/carers and their children to say goodbye.
- The school gate will be open and supervised from 8.20am to 8.45am to allow a longer entry time. Students will go straight to class on arrival –please do not arrive before or after that time.
- Parents/carers of older (Adolescent, Upper and if you and your child is confident, Middle Primary) are to say goodbye to their child/ren at the crosswalk in the car park

over the road. This will help relieve congestion at the gate. I have had confirmation that a Traffic Warden will be there as usual.

- Parents/carers with Junior Primary children are asked to bring them to the area in front of the school gate, say goodbye, watch to ensure they enter the gate, then leave promptly. If the area in front of the gate is busy, please practice physical distancing and wait in the carpark until there is space.
- Staff members will be present at the gate to help children get to their classes, however it would be very helpful for older children to assist their younger siblings by escorting them to class.
- If you wish to speak to a teacher or administration, please call or email, do not enter the school grounds.
- Please be punctual, however if you arrive late, please wait outside the gate, call the school on 93831283 and someone will open the gate for you and take your child to class.
- **Please all be extra vigilant to help make sure all children are safe, and help each other as you can-especially parents with young babies who may need assistance.**

#### Pick up

- To ensure the safety of all students, and parents who are waiting to pick children up, there will be staged departure times and a set pathway (please refer to the map attached).
- As with the drop off procedures, the staff carpark will be closed to ensure a safe space for parents to move through.
- I understand this could be uncomfortable in some weather conditions, but please be prepared to wait patiently as we make sure children leave safely.
- Staff members will send out one family group at a time to the next parent/carer waiting in front of the gate, so once you have your child/ren please leave promptly so the next parent/carer can move to the gate.

**For drop off and pick up to be as smooth, safe and stress free as possible, your punctuality is vital.**

The staged pick up times below ensure that no parents are waiting for siblings who may finish at a different time.

Please read carefully and make note of which **ONE** of these departure times applies to you, and make sure you arrive on time.

1. Younger Junior Primary children who usually leave at 1.00 will be taken to the gate for pick up at 1.00. Please note there is NO Extended Care available for the time being.

2. Junior Primary students who do not have any siblings attending school will be taken to the gate for pick up at 2.30pm.
3. Junior Primary with Middle Primary siblings only (note-this does not apply to any families with Upper Primary or Adolescent Program students) will be taken to the gate for pick up at 2.45pm.
4. All Upper Primary students and their siblings (including Adolescent Program students) will be taken to the gate for pick up at 3.00pm
5. All other students- those in Middle, Upper or Adolescent with no siblings, will be taken to the gate for pick up at 3.15pm.
6. Parents collecting children from YMCA must wait at the green gates near the old building and call Carmen, who will bring your child/ren out to you.

The AHPPC states that the greatest risk of transmission is adult to adult. Staff at school were already practicing physical distancing last term, and staff who are at risk are continuing to work at home. All Beehive staff are very appreciative of your cooperation with the new drop off and pick up routines to help minimise physical contact.

I know the requirements above are very detailed, however we must all do what we can to ensure the health and wellbeing of everyone on school grounds and this is one way we can do that while remaining open for your children.

Please, be punctual, patient, vigilant and understanding while we all work through this together. As we have all realised by now, recommendations change often and our school practices have had to adjust, often with little notice, and I appreciate your flexibility as we have made these adjustments.

We will continue to do whatever we need to do to keep everyone well and to provide a Montessori education for your children, whether they are at home or at school. If you have any queries, please let me know.

Have a lovely long weekend,

All the best

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debbie McCarthy', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Debbie McCarthy

Acting Principal