



# Our Lady of Mount Carmel

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## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents,

This weekend we celebrate the gift of mothers and mother figures in our lives. Over the past two months we have retreated into the cocoons of our homes, and central in this cocoon is often our mother. Our mothers are the ones who nurture us in the cocoon of their womb and then continue to guide and nurture us throughout our lives.

Mothers' Day this year will be an unusual one as our celebrations will be limited. We have not had the chance as a school community to celebrate our mothers with our usual gathering, liturgy and Mothers' Day stall. You might like to hold your own family liturgy or celebration this weekend. Mrs Haddad has prepared this linked reflection that you could use for your own [Mothers' Day Liturgy](#). I hope that all of our mothers, grandmothers, aunts and mother figures have a special weekend surrounded by the ones they love.



Next week sees us begin to emerge from our cocoons as we commence returning one day a week. In your learning packs this week you would have received a detailed letter outlining the next phase of the plan. As the situation continues to improve we will increase the number of days at school. I know that many parents and children are feeling a little apprehensive about returning to school. These feelings are normal. We are fortunate that the wider situation is improving and with continued vigilance in following recommended practices we are able to take this next step.

Some children may not want to return because they have had a great time at home, or their friends may be in a different colour house. This slow return next week will be an opportunity to start slowly, build our confidence and resilience and perhaps even forge new friendships. Imagine how much harder it would be if we had to come back full time straight away! As parents we need to reflect on the situation rationally and try not to be guided by fear of all the many possible scenarios. How you approach this transition back to school will guide how your child handles it. I encourage you to take some time to carefully read the last pages of this week's newsletter providing parents with tips on how to support your child's return to school.

Don't forget, our amazing staff are here to support your children and welcome them back to school, because we have certainly missed them all!

*Olimpia Pirovic*  
Principal

***The Community of OLMC is Safe and Respectful***

## UPCOMING DATES

### Week 2

**Thur: 3:30pm-4pm** Library open to families

**Fri: 7:30am-8am** Library open to families

**12:00pm-3:00pm** Open Zoom for parents

### Week 3

**Mon:** Learning Pack drop off & pick up 8am-11am

**Tue:** Elijah House students attend (Red)

**Wed:** Gilroy House students attend (Blue)

**Thur:** Mackillop House students attend (Green)

**3:30pm-4pm** Library open to families

**Fri:** McAuley House students attend (Gold)

**7:30am-8am** Library open to families

**12:00pm-3:00pm** Open Zoom for parents

## HOLIDAY CHALLENGE

Don't forget to submit your Principal's Holiday Challenge. Email your favourite photo and contact sheet to:

[olmcprincipalchallenge@gmail.com](mailto:olmcprincipalchallenge@gmail.com)

Link for [Reading Log](#). We already have some great photos.

## STAFFING UPDATE

Today we welcome a new member of staff Mrs Vicky Penna. Vicky has been appointed as our Administration Assistant to work alongside Mrs Murphy in the office. Vicky comes to us with experience working in school and doctors offices. Over the coming weeks you will have the opportunity to meet Vicky and no doubt make her feel very welcome. Special thanks go to Mrs Barbara Aboud who has been filling in since the end of last term.

## OUR PARISH NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT MORE THAN EVER

COVID-19 has significantly affected all members of our community, none more so than our Parish. Our Parish is a little different to others in that we are administered by a religious order rather than through the Diocesan office. This means that our parish activities and expenses are only funded through the weekly collections at Mass, without any support from the Diocese. The continued presence of our Carmelite priests in our community and school is dependent on their ability to maintain these financial expenses. Parishioners are still able to make contributions through the electronic weekly planned giving. In the coming weeks you will see content on our school facebook page that has links to Parish based content with a 'Click To Donate' button. Should you be in a position to make a donation refer to the details in the links. For more information on how you can help please contact the Parish Office by phone on 9631 8302 or email [ocarms@tpg.com.au](mailto:ocarms@tpg.com.au)

## REMINDERS FOR RETURNING TO SCHOOL

On Monday you would have received your child's personalised 'Arrangements For Transitioning Back To School' note. This detailed the gradual reintroduction of children, as well as the extended health and safety measures that have been put in place. While we have seen a significant drop in the number of new Covid-19 cases, it is important that we all do our part to ensure this continues.

**Social Distancing – Drop off and Pick up Procedures** Drop off and pick up times need to be reflective of social distancing protocols. It is essential that parents and carers follow the stated requirements to support the safety and wellbeing of all in our community. Staff will be on hand to support parents and children to follow these new protocols, asking those who are not observing social distancing or lingering to move on.

### **Morning Drop off**

-Parents/carers need to be aware of social distancing and personally monitor their own movements to ensure adequate distance at all times.

-Parents/carers will drop the children at the gate. No parent or carers will not be allowed to enter the front playground

### **Afternoon Pick up**

-Pick up will begin at 2:50pm to support a quicker departure

-Parents/carers need to maintain social distance and be particularly aware when entering/exiting the grounds

-Parents/carers must collect their children and leave straight away. This is not a time to socialise

Thank you for your continued support. While this situation continues to force us to take necessary precautions, we do so willingly to support the safety, wellbeing and learning of all.

## LEARNING PACK PICKUP

Don't forget Monday is our next Learning Pack pick up day between 8:00-11:00am. Please remember to return the previous week's learning pack along with any readers. When your child attends school they **must** bring their learning pack and pencil case to school with them.

While your children are working on the Learning From Home Packs, please do not pull apart the booklet pages to complete and glue into their scrap books, this makes it harder for the teachers to mark and keep the learning together.

## CHANGES TO PREMIER'S READING CHALLENGE 2020

Due to the current situation, the Premier's Reading Challenge rules have been amended. These amendments ensure students are able to still fully participate in the challenge, while also responding to their limited access to PRC texts. The following adjustments will be applied to the Challenge in 2020:

- Students on all Challenge levels are able to read 10 choice books - an increase from five.
- Students on all Challenge levels will be able to include books on their reading records that they read collaboratively as a class, in person or online with their teacher or at home with their parents/carers.
- Students who complete the Challenge in 2020 will be able to count this towards cumulative awards.
- Students who do not participate in the Challenge in 2020 will not be disadvantaged in the receipt of cumulative awards

To enter the Bonus Choice Books on the [Student Site](#), students can search for "2020 Bonus" on both the main search page, or in the "add choice book" tab, and these [records will appear for them to add to their Reading Record](#).

## OPEN ZOOM SESSION FOR PARENTS

On Fridays, Miss Pirovic and Mrs Anderiesz will hold two open ZOOM sessions for the primary purpose of supporting parent queries. No new announcements will be made during these sessions. This is just an opportunity to check-in and receive support.

**FRIDAY-12:00pm-1:30pm**

**Meeting Id:** 971-0573-4667 **Password:** 838160

**2:15pm-3:00pm**

**Meeting Id:** 994-0982-8046 **Password:** 684441

## KINDERGARTEN 2021 - APPLICATIONS CLOSING

The 2021 Kindergarten enrolment period will be closing on **May 15**. Parents are asked to finalise their enrolments by returning their enrolment pack, with all the appropriate documentation before the closing date. Enrolment packs are available from the office. We have created a [virtual tour to allow families to experience our school and learning spaces](#).



## FEE RELIEF FOR FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HARDSHIP DUE TO COVID-19

As the impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt in the community and by our families, we are committed to ensuring no child is denied an opportunity to attend a Catholic school because of financial hardship.

[Learn about the simple new process to assist families who are experiencing difficulties with school fees due to COVID-19 here](#)

## CHANGES TO BUS 8005

This notice is to inform you of a change to the school bus timetable for the hillsbus 8005 morning service. The change is effective from Monday 4 May. The time of this service has changed from 8:05am to **8:00am**

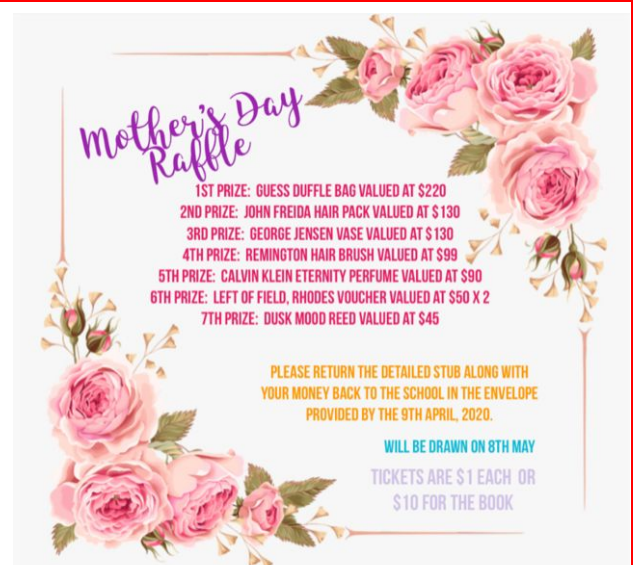
## P&F NEWS

Thank you to everyone who has returned their Mothers' Day Raffle tickets. We plan to draw the raffle during a livestream on our Facebook page on Friday 8th May. Winners will be notified by phone.

Unfortunately, due to current COVID 19 restrictions, it is not possible to host a Mothers' Day Stall, which we are very sad about. Thanks to Diana Khoury and Linda Khoury for their efforts in coordinating all the gifts and prizes for this year. Even though we can not come together in the traditional manner, we are grateful for your time and energy.

Each family has received a small gift in this week's learning pack that they can give to their Mum, Grandmother or special person on Mothers' Day. Thank you to Karly Jouni for organising these gifts. We hope that this small gift will help you to make Mothers' Day a special day in your family.

**Tune in to our Facebook Live on Friday morning at 9:30am, See you then!!**





# Reconnect and Re-engage!

## Tips for parents to support their child's return to onsite schooling following the Covid-19 Pandemic

With schools starting to return to a routine of on site learning our children can be filled with mixed emotions. It is also very normal that some children may display symptoms of separation anxiety as they anticipate this change to the routine that they had adjusted to during the pandemic, along with the natural ongoing worries that continue about Covid-19 in Australia. As parents and carers it is important for us to be prepared to respond to and support these differing emotions that arise in our children so that we can support their transition back to a school routine successfully.



Your child may be experiencing a myriad of emotions about returning to school after such a long absence from attending school during the pandemic. Some of the emotions they may be feeling include;

- Happiness -They might be happy to play and engage with their friends and recommence a more 'normal' style of play on the school grounds.
- Worry - Children may be worried about what they have missed out on by not being present at school both socially and academically. They may be concerned that their friendships have changed. When your child returns to school their closest friends or supports may not be physically present at school the same day they are and this may also cause your child to worry about returning.
- Insecure - Your child may be more concerned about the threat of COVID-19 in school and the presence of germs. School has always been a safe place for your child and with all of the changes which have occurred in the environment, that sense of security may be challenged. This may result in a reluctance to attend school.
- Excitement - Your child might be excited to leave home and return to the regular routine of face to face school, including seeing their classroom teacher.

## What behaviours to expect in primary school children

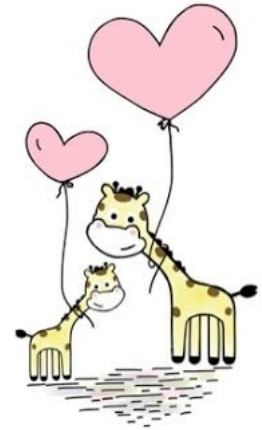
Primary aged children often struggle with communicating their feelings and worries verbally to us. Their main communication tool for us to interpret what they may be experiencing is their behaviour. The following behaviours may present in children who are feeling apprehensive about returning to school after the pandemic:

Refusal or hesitation around attending school	Whinging	Difficulty sleeping, nightmares	Being unusually clingy	Teary, crying, distressed
Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, nausea	Shaking with fear	Shyness Withdrawing from others	Lacking trust in their teacher or other school staff	Refusing to speak

## Strategies and practical tips

**Our parenting** - adults are in a challenging position as we too have mixed feelings about the 'return to normal' post pandemic, and we may be processing the numerous impacts it has had on our family. Try to be kind to yourself and monitor your own wellbeing daily so that you are aware when you may be less resilient or tolerant than usual, and can take action in the form of self care to restore some balance.

- Being available to recognise and respond with compassion to behaviours that may indicate your child is struggling with returning to school.
- Our children look to the adults in their lives for guidance on how to react, feel and behave. Remember that they are sponges that absorb from us even when we aren't aware. Try to limit their exposure to negative conversations, media messages, and anything that may add to their worries about returning to school.



**Practical strategies** - anytime your child has experienced separation anxiety you have probably already used a range of strategies to help them cope and adjust to being away from you. Some strategies that may help during this time include:

- If you suspect your child will struggle with the transition back to school let their teacher know as soon as you can, so that the school can be best prepared to provide consistent support when they arrive at school.
- Support your child to connect with their class teacher or another familiar staff member when they arrive at school, or even settle into a game with their familiar friends.
- Remind your child of who/when/how they are getting home from school.
- Say goodbye briefly, don't make it longer than it needs to be. Being kind but firm.
- Maintain a calm relaxed demeanour, even though it can be upsetting if your child is distressed to leave you.
- Sometimes a small familiar item from home carried by the child provides some reassurance to the child while they are away from their parents. Choose an item that isn't sentimental or too large and distracting in class. Sometimes even a family photo or a photo of their pet helps a child's sense of connection to home.
- Similarly, you could pop a note in your child's lunch box that they can look forward to.
- Some parents find that their children are reassured by drawing a heart on their child's hand, telling the child that they can touch/press it when they want to feel close to their parents/family.

If you have concerns about your child's emotional wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact your school or classroom teacher who will consult the school counsellor for additional support to be provided to your family during these challenging times.

