

ORANGE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL



Safe Respectful Learners

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS – COVID 19 UPDATE 4 – 24 March 2020

Dear Parents and carers,

I am writing to provide further updates around school operations.

Latest Government Advice:

The Premier and the Secretary have both indicated that schools will remain open however, those parents who have the capacity to keep their children at home should do so from Tuesday 24 March 2020.

Thank you to the many parents and carers who have been able to support these new directives passed on yesterday. I know that this has been an extremely difficult situation for our community and that for some parents/carers, they simply have no alternative but to send their children to school. Please know, we are also doing our best to provide a safe school environment for these children. The support of our school community continue to be greatly appreciated in meeting the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

From tomorrow, our classes of remaining students will be restructured into stage groups to support the transition to our new teaching and learning format. Each stage group will be housed in a double classroom area to support increased social distancing. In line with the directive from Department of Education Secretary, Mark Scott, Orange East will be providing supervision of learning which will be different to our regular teaching programs. Over the next three days, staff will be working hard to design our learning from home package, which will contain weekly units of work with instructions for daily content, supporting resources and systems for communication with teachers. We will commence using these new units from next week. This will mean that teaching content delivered at school will be the same as those lessons delivered at home.

It is extremely difficult to replicate the classroom environment and resources available in a school. This approach represents our best effort to create a user-friendly program for parents and carers that supports the continual development of core content for our children. As the old saying goes, it feels a lot like 'building a plane while it is in mid-air'. We ask parents to bear with us over the coming days, weeks and possibly months as we fine-tune and develop our skills to support this new model of education.

Updates for today

- Attendance – even through these interesting times, schools are still required by legislation to keep accurate records of student attendance. If you have not already done so, we are asking all parents and carers to communicate with the school via an email or phone call a reason for children not being at school. This explanation will be used for the remainder of term. Under the current circumstances these reasons would more than likely be one of the following:
 1. My child/family are self-isolating due to exposure or close contact with a person with Covid-19.
 2. My child is sick/ my child is sick and we are keeping him/her home due to Covid-19 like symptoms.
 3. My child is not attending school due to a compromised immune system or a member of our household having a compromised immune system.
 4. My child will not be attending school as we are following the advice given by the Premier to keep children home from school where possible.
- Please be advised that we have ceased using the merit and PBL reward systems – meaning no bees/Dojo points. With students working both at school and at home, we want to ensure that all students are treated equitably. Over the coming weeks, as the nature/level of school operations becomes more apparent and consistent, we may look to implement a simple interim system.
- Please note that the old reward systems used for attendance have also ceased. This means:
 1. Unfortunately this year I will not be running a 100% movie award at the end of the year, to do so would be inequitable and contrary to the advice being given to parents and carers.
 2. The end of term merit awards will also cease until the school returns to regular operations.

- The new '**Learning from Home**' tab on our school website is now operational. The tab contains links to our interim '*Learning at Home*' packs, homereading resources and other websites that may be of use with students at home. The resources can be found at: <https://orangeeast-p.schools.nsw.gov.au/learning-from-home-resources.html>. A reminder that the interim '*Learning at Home*' packs can also be collected from in front of the school office or mailed out.
- We are aware of an issue with the online reading resource '*Epic*'. At the moment, it only allows access during school hours. This can be changed, but requires some additional information and steps that we are working through, including setting-up parent accounts. If you are also experiencing issues with *Reading Eggs* or the *PM e-Collection* please contact the school office. We will do our best to have a staff member trouble shoot the issue and contact you as soon as possible. A reminder to contact the school office if your child has not received their log-in for either of these programs.
- To support home learning we are prioritising the establishment of a system where teachers, students and parents can interact and share information – most likely via the program '*Class Dojo*'. Establishing this communication channel will be important in trouble shooting issues (as with the problem outlined above) but particularly in moving to a supported learning from home model where classroom teachers can support students and parents.
- As we move through these interesting times, we are receiving quite a bit of communication from parents – including phone calls, in person, emails, Facebook Messenger and more. To ensure that questions are efficiently and correctly answered, I ask all parents requiring assistance/with questions to direct communication via the school office. This will allow our office personnel to ensure your message goes to the correct person and you receive a helpful and timely response. It will also ensure that our staff have 'down-time' outside of school hours. As we move to this new format of 'school', we will develop and adapt to new communication protocols – including the use of '*Class Dojo*'. The office contacts options are:
 1. Phone – 6362 7464
 2. Email - orangeeast-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

A reminder around a couple of changes to school operations

For parents who need to send their children to school, as communicated throughout last week we continue to put in place multiple strategies and variations to school operations to support the safest possible work environment under the circumstances.

- The school canteen will cease all trading effective tomorrow, Wednesday, 25th March.
- Please consider carefully the need to come into the school office. We are requesting that where possible, parents and carers phone or email the office with regard any queries. The office foyer is now restricted to one parent/carers in at a time, with additional people waiting outside.
- We are urging parents/carers coming on to the school site in the morning or afternoon to observe social distancing from other parents or students of approximately 2 metres where possible.
- We are asking all parents/carers not to enter classrooms or hallways inside school grounds.

A Reminder Regarding Sick Children

With regards to students who are ill, on the advice of Mark Scott, Secretary of the DoE, I ask that parents please keep children home if they are feeling unwell. This includes '*if your child has a cold, fever, cough, sore throat, any respiratory illness or flu-like symptoms. By attending school, they could be putting other students and adults at risk*'. He reiterates that '*this is not the time for soldiering on*'.

I apologise for another lengthy update but I feel clear communication is essential as we navigate these unusual times together. Please do not hesitate to contact the school should you have any questions or require further explanation of current school operations.

Thank you in anticipation of your support and understanding of these measures.

Regards,
Glen Bourke
Principal OEPS

Tuesday, 24th March