

# ORANGE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL



*Safe Respectful Learners*

## **NOVEL CORONAVIRUS – COVID 19 UPDATE 9 – 28 APRIL 2020**

Dear Parents and carers,

Thank you for your support in keeping children home for the first two days this term. The time has allowed staff to work together to develop further learning, participate in training and plan for the challenges of the coming term.

I would also like to acknowledge parents and carers for completing the online survey last week. The responses have been extremely useful and I have tried to incorporate information in this update to answer some questions that came through. Thank you for the many positive and encouraging words in the feedback section about our school – it makes a difference.

In this update, I have really tried to give a wide variety of in-depth information - I apologise for the length! To make it easier to peruse and move through, I have structured it in a '*Frequently Asked Questions*' format. I hope parents and carers find the information useful in understanding school operations at the current time.

### **What is happening for the first two weeks (Phase 0)?**

- From Wednesday 29th April until Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May (Weeks 1 and 2) students will continue to learn remotely. To support the NSW governments efforts in reducing the spread of Covid-19, where possible parents and carers are encouraged to keep children home and continue home schooling.

### **What is happening from Week 3 (Phase 1)?**

- From Monday 11th May, we will begin to transition students back to school for approximately one day per week. When students are not at school, they will continue to learn from home using our home learning packs.
- Based on the survey sent out last Friday, the majority of parents and carers have indicated a preference towards a class/stage based model – where we try to bring year or stage groups back to school on the same day/s.
- Through this week, we will be looking through our survey, analysing initial attendance and consulting with staff to finalise our 'One Day per Week' system. We will distribute the final details on Friday this week.
- A number of parents have sought clarification as to whether attending 1 day per week will be compulsory from Week 3. The Department of Education and NSW Government advice is that it is safe for children to attend. However, if parents are still concerned around possible virus transmission or risk to other household members, you still have the option to continue full home schooling. I encourage parents to contact me closer to Week 3 if you are considering the continuation of full home schooling. This guidance may change later in the term – if so I will advise parents and carers of any new guidelines as quickly as possible.
- We anticipate that this may occur for 2-3 weeks before we are given approval to increase the amount of time students attend school and move to Phase 2.
- A copy of '*A managed return to school - Guidelines for families*' has been provided with this update. This document explains the NSW Department of Education's strategy in returning students safely to school.

### **What if I have no available supervision alternatives?**

- From Wednesday 29th April onwards, our school remains open as does all NSW Public schools for parents who have no other option but to send their child to school. These students will complete the same home learning packs whilst being supervised by a rotational roster of teachers in stage-based groups.
- Any students attending school on site should wear their regular school uniform.

### **Where should I recommence with the OEPS learning form home packs?**

- The learning packs distributed last term contained five weeks of learning, with the first 2 weeks completed at the end of term. This means that there is still 3 weeks of learning in the packs. Students should recommence work on Wednesday this week.
- Each Stage has an Overview page that supports parents and students to understand what activities should be completed each day out of the home learning pack.
  - For students in K-2 – new weekly overview sheets for this week+ will be made available via Class Dojo or in hard copy by contacting your class teacher/the school office.
  - For students in Year 3 or 4 – the weekly overview sheets are already in your home learning packs ready to go. Spare copies can be obtained by contacting your class teacher/the school office.
  - For students in Year 5 or 6 – as per last term, the schedule of activities will be sent to students each day via Google Classroom. Please contact your child's class teacher for further support.
- If a home learning pack has been destroyed or misplaced please contact the school office for a replacement – no questions asked.
- The learning packs should not have been used throughout the holidays. If your child has completed any of the tasks ahead of time for the Term 2 work, parents and carers are directed towards the additional resources available on the following websites (below). Please note that over the coming weeks, teachers will be working collaboratively to develop the next round of home learning packs. These packs will not be distributed until Week 4.

<b>Additional resources Websites:</b>	<b>Focus Area:</b>	<b>Suitable for:</b>
<b>Reading Eggs</b> - <a href="https://readingeggs.com.au/">https://readingeggs.com.au/</a> We have a paid school subscription to Reading Eggs/ Reading Eggspress for every child from Kinder to Year 6. ABC Reading Eggs makes learning to read interesting and engaging for kids, with great online reading games and activities. Your child's Reading Eggs login details were sent home last term in our Home Reading Alternatives letter and can also be provided by contacting your child's class teacher.	Reading	K-6
<b>Epic Reading</b> - <a href="https://www.getepic.com/students">https://www.getepic.com/students</a> Epic Reading is a comprehensive digital library for students from Kinder to Year 6. Students can login and have access to over 35 000 great books, learning videos, quizzes and more. Each class has a class code their students can use to login, select their name and start reading. This is another fantastic alternative to Home Reading books. Login details were sent home last term in our Home Reading Alternatives letter and can also be provided by contacting your child's class teacher.	Reading	K-6
<b>Kids News</b> – <a href="https://www.kidsnews.com.au/">https://www.kidsnews.com.au/</a> Kidsnews.com.au is a ready-to go literacy resource using current daily news stories for students. The content is written into educational stories in child appropriate language and filtered/censored to remove any inappropriate content or imagery. The site does not link to any outside news sources or sites, therefore pupils can use it safely for independent learning.	Reading	Years 3-6 Best suited to independent readers
<b>Behind The News (BTN)</b> – <a href="https://www.abc.net.au/btn/">https://www.abc.net.au/btn/</a> Behind the News is a long-running news programme broadcast on the ABC made in Adelaide and aimed at school-aged children. BtN is aimed at upper primary with the hope of helping them understand issues and events outside their own lives.	Literacy – listening and viewing	Years 4-6
<b>Teach Your Monster to Read</b> - <a href="https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/">https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/</a> Teach Your Monster to Read is a series of fun learning games to support children to learn to read, by practicing a range of essential skills including matching letter sounds, blending, tricky words and reading sentences.	Early Reading skills	Kinder, Year 1
<b>Prodigy Maths</b> - <a href="https://sso.prodigygame.com/login">https://sso.prodigygame.com/login</a> Prodigy is an engaging, game-based Maths program, designed to motivate students to learn and practice Maths skills. Our Primary classes (Year 3-6) all have class Prodigy accounts with students linked to them.	Maths	Years 3-6
<b>ABC Splash</b> - <a href="https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/resources/-/all/all/interactive">https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/resources/-/all/all/interactive</a> ABC Splash contains a series of interactive games across a range of learning areas, including English, Maths and Science, with content suitable for different primary age groups.	English Maths Science	K- 6

### **How long should my child/children be working each day?**

- Many parents have expressed concern that their child finds it difficult to work for the full school day or complete all tasks throughout the day. During the holidays, the NSW Department of Education provided some guidance around suggested hours for remote learning. As a guide they suggest:
  - K-2 children – approximately 2 ½ hours per school day + additional activities (wellbeing, sport, physical activity, etc).
  - Yr 3-6 children – approximately 3 hours per school day + additional activities (wellbeing, sport, physical activity, etc).
- Parents and carers also have the choice as to when you would like your child to complete their learning. Children may start earlier or later than a regular school day or split the day into two sections, etc. My advice is to do what works best for your household and against the other commitments you are no doubt doing your best to juggle.
- If you or your child need help with any activities or are unsure in any way – do not suffer in silence. Please phone the school and we will look to either put you in contact or get a relevant staff member to call you back to assist. You can also email the class teacher or message via Class Dojo or Google Classroom. Whether on site or working from home, our staff are always here to help.
- Overall, my advice is again to do your best but balanced against all the other conflicting priorities that you are coordinating. If you are able to get through some core literacy and numeracy tasks most days, particularly some reading and some of the other key learning area work - that's great. At the end of the day, yours and your family's wellbeing also need to be supported – this is also an important priority.

### **What are the current measures in place at school, particularly if my child has to attend one or more days due to care availability?**

- The School Canteen remains closed and our Breakfast Club program is not operating.
- Cancellation or postponing of special events, excursions, assemblies and external sports activities.
- No COLA assemblies
- No school bubblers. A reminder to please ensure that your child/children come to school with a labelled drink bottle.
- Recess/lunch time eating areas have been spread out to support social distancing.
- Personal hygiene practices are regularly taught and reinforced, including supervised hand washing throughout the day.
- All wet areas adjacent to classrooms have been supplied with hand wash and paper towel. Classrooms have been supplied with surface spray for wiping down desks, door handles, etc at the end of each learning period. Teachers have been instructed to have students wash hands at the end of the morning and before/after recess and lunch. The student toilets are being constantly stocked with soap.
- The Department has provided our school with additional hours of cleaning each day.

### **Can parents come onto school site, particularly in the morning/afternoon?**

- The answer is yes however where possible we ask that parents limit or avoid doing so and use caution. Some points of guidance:
  - While we understand that parents may want to escort younger children into/out of the school, particularly if anxious, we are hoping that primary age students are able to move in/out unescorted in most instances.
  - We are asking all parents/carers not to enter classrooms or hallways inside school grounds.
  - We are urging parents/carers coming on to the school site in the morning or afternoon to observe social distancing from other parents, students or staff of approximately 2 metres where possible.
  - We are asking that all payments being made to the school office are made by either online payment or using the EFTPOS facilities in the office.
  - 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/carer in at a time, with additional people waiting outside.

### **What if my child is sick?**

- 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'*. This remains of critical importance.

### **How will my child's attendance at school be marked this term?**

- Attendance – even through these interesting times, schools are still required by legislation to keep accurate records of student attendance. **For the initial two weeks of Term 2, we are asking all parents and carers to communicate with the school once via an email or phone call a reason for children not being at school.** This explanation will be used for at least the first two weeks – we will advise if additional communication is required. Under the current circumstances these reasons would more than likely be one of the following:
  - My child/family are self-isolating due to exposure or close contact with a person with Covid-19.
  - My child is sick/ my child is sick and we are keeping him/her home due to Covid-19 like symptoms.
  - My child is not attending school due to a compromised immune system or a member of our household having a compromised immune system.
  - 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.
- If any of the reason listed above are given, the student's attendance is marked as 'Flexible' Leave – which does not impact on their overall attendance.
- On any days where your child attends on school site – they will simply be marked as 'Present'.
- PLEASE NOTE - there are only two main reasons where a student may be marked as absent:
  - NO note has been received covering any or all of the first two weeks this term. This is recorded as an 'Unexplained Absence'.
  - A note has been received but there is NO indication of the child completing home learning of any type – including no interaction with online learning platforms (Class Dojo, Google Classroom, Email) and/or staff have been unable to establish contact with the parent/carer to discuss the progress of learning at home.
- These roll marking procedures are far from our normal processes and hence we realise that parents and carers may be confused or unsure around some of the guidelines. Please email me at [glen.bourke@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:glen.bourke@det.nsw.edu.au) or contact the school office should you require any assistance.

### **How can I communicate with the school?**

- Clear, accurate and timely communication is more important than ever under the current circumstances. Our major communication channels include the [SchoolStream app](#) (usually with 2-3 updates per week + other alerts) and [Facebook](#) (often containing video messages and some selected updates). Hard copies of any notes or update information are also available via the school office.
- As per last term, on occasion we still receive communication from a variety of sources from parents/carers – including phone calls, in person, emails, Facebook Comments/Messenger and more. A reminder: to ensure systems that promote and encourage clear and productive communication, there are three methods of communication that we ask parents/carers and staff to use:
  - Phone calls
  - Email
  - Class Dojo (as well as Google Classroom for Stage 3)
- Most, if not all parents and careers will have had a staff member contact them to check how children are progressing and if any assistance is required. All staff have been working hard to ensure contact is maintained with students however due to the sheer weight of numbers in each class, this has been very challenging. We have also found that some families have been called multiple times (sometimes on the same day) despite our best efforts at avoiding this occurring. We don't want parents to feel 'harassed' and hence we are starting a new system where we are allocating each staff member with a small number of families. You will receive a phone call from this allocated staff member approximately once per week to touch base, discuss how all children in the family are progressing and any help required. Parents and carers are still free to contact their child's class teacher at any time via the means listed above. A reminder that these phone calls may come up as an 'unknown' number on your phone as staff may be making the call from their personal phone.

Please contact me on [glen.bourke@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:glen.bourke@det.nsw.edu.au) should you have further questions. I will endeavour to answer personally or include the answers in future updates. Thank you as always for the wonderful support and encouragement you continue to provide to the school.

Regards,

Glen Bourke  
Principal - OEPS