

Somers Primary School



Term 3, Issue 1 Thursday 23rd July, 2020.

Newsletter

Principal's Report



Dear Families,

What a rollercoaster we have been on of late! We had a great end to the term with all of our students and staff at school, and it looked as though many of the things that we had been looking forward to would return. Unfortunately, the significant increase in number of COVID-19 cases meant that we again had to return to remote learning. Despite this setback, we have been determined to ensure that our approach to 'Remote Learning 2.0' would provide our students with the best education possible. We utilised the first week back, which comprised of five student-free days, to respond to the feedback provided by our school community in our first iteration of remote learning.

Based on the feedback, we have developed an approach to remote learning which allows children to have daily live teaching from their teacher. In addition, students get to have extended daily contact with their peers, as well as time off-line to complete activities.

Feedback from students this week has been generally positive – they have really enjoyed seeing their friends and teachers. For some families, having classes at specific times has been a challenge, and we appreciate your support in ensuring your child has been able to get online on time for their class.

This week I have had the absolute pleasure of taking classes with our students in Prep B. For me, this has been a very positive experience – seeing the Preps online everyday accessing their learning, getting help from their teachers as well as their families, has been awesome.



Principal's Report continued...

All the staff at our school are teachers because they genuinely enjoy seeing your children daily, caring for their wellbeing and helping them make progress. Our improved approach allows us to do this much more effectively.

In a time of immense educational challenge and change, the work that our staff have done to arrive at this point cannot be underestimated. Our teachers and educational support staff have demonstrated great resilience, teamwork, innovation and dedication to ensure that our curriculum is of the highest quality given these difficult circumstances. I thank all of our staff for their work over the past few weeks.

We know that no approach is going to work as well for all families, so we are encouraging families to provide feedback on how things are going for them. Please send me an email if you have feedback (hugh.greer@education.vic.gov.au). We love to hear success stories and positive feedback, as well as suggestions for improvement. Thanks to all of the parents who have passed on their positive feedback – this really helps our staff stay positive and motivated!

Face Coverings at School



In line with advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer, the Victorian Government has announced that those in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire must wear a face covering when they leave home from 11.59pm on Wednesday 22 July 2020. Face coverings will be mandatory for people aged 12 and over. These measures will slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and help protect the community. In our school, this means that school-based staff will be required to wear a face covering. Teachers and education support staff will not be required to wear face coverings while teaching, but those who wish to do so, can. Teachers should wear face coverings in other areas of the school when not teaching (for example, in the staffroom, on yard duty and when providing first aid or taking temperatures), and when travelling to and from school.

Students who attend primary school for on-site supervision will not be required to wear a face covering. Students who are aged 12 by Year 6 will not be required to wear face coverings, though students who choose to wear a face covering at school may wear one. The Victorian Chief Health Officer has advised that it is not practical to require some primary school students to wear face coverings while others are not required to.

WebEx Troubleshooting

So far this week, our WebEx video system has been working well, with the vast majority of students able to access their online classes. We know however that things don't always run smoothly, and it can be frustrating and disappointing for children and families when this system is not working as we would like.

Some of the common issues that have come up for students have included not being able to hear videos when teachers are sharing content, bandwidth issues at home (meaning that student video is not streaming to the rest of the class), and some unique issues with connectivity depending on ISPs or specific modems. If you are having issues, be patient, ask for help, re-join the meeting if necessary or type a comment in the chat or via ClassDojo to the teacher.





Most of all, discuss with your child that sometimes setbacks happen, and encourage your child to bounce back and try again.

Principal's Report continued...

Attendance

Teachers will be marking our attendance rolls daily when we see your child online, including when specialists teach their class. If your child is not online, please contact the school to let us know why they are absent.

Behaving Appropriately Online

This week some staff and parents have reported an incidence of hearing inappropriate language during an online class. Please remember to speak and act respectfully whilst your child is online, and ensure that others in your house do so too. Offensive language and behaviour will not be tolerated – all students and staff have the right to be treated with respect and to feel safe at school.

Students who are not following our expected online behaviours will be reminded of the need to follow these behaviours, and if the behaviour of concern continues, removed from the online class, and parents contacted.

Please also be aware it is not OK for students or families to film or take photographs of online classes. Please ensure that you supervise your child whilst they are in their class, and ask them not to record audio, video or images from the meeting without teacher consent.

Welcome Mrs Skinner!

A huge welcome to our new classroom teacher in 5A, Mrs Jessica Skinner. Jess is replacing Chloe Hampshire now that Chloe has commenced family leave. Staff gave Ms Hampshire a 'virtual send-off' via WebEx on Thursday last week.



New Email Addresses

Recently our school has migrated to a new email server. This is part of a Department-wide migration to enable staff to have larger storage capacity, simpler email addresses and streamlined sign-in processes across cloud-based services, such as Google, Office365 and Webex.

Teachers' email addresses are now much simpler – [first name].[surname]@education.vic.gov.au. Our new school email address is somers.ps@education.vic.gov.au. You can still send emails to our old email addresses – these mailboxes will remain active and emails forwarded automatically.

Stay healthy, happy and safe!

Regards,

Hugh Greer

Principal

hugh.greer@education.vic.gov.au



Assistant Principal's Report



Dear Families,

I hope you have managed to have a great school holiday break, despite the challenging times we find ourselves in!

Remote learning in Term 2 was an extremely challenging time for our school community and, for some families, the announcement of the return to remote learning this term may have caused a great deal of anxiety, stress and frustration. Feedback we received last term was that some of our students felt quite isolated with the limited interaction they had with their peers and teachers and we hope that the changes we have made this term will address this for our students. This week I have had the pleasure of teaching 1/2B via WebEx. I have really enjoyed the daily face to face interaction with the students and it has been great for our students to be able to see and interact with their peers during these times as well.

Student Wellbeing during Remote Learning

There are a number of resources available for families to support mental health and wellbeing of their child during remote and flexible learning. These resources can be found on the links below.

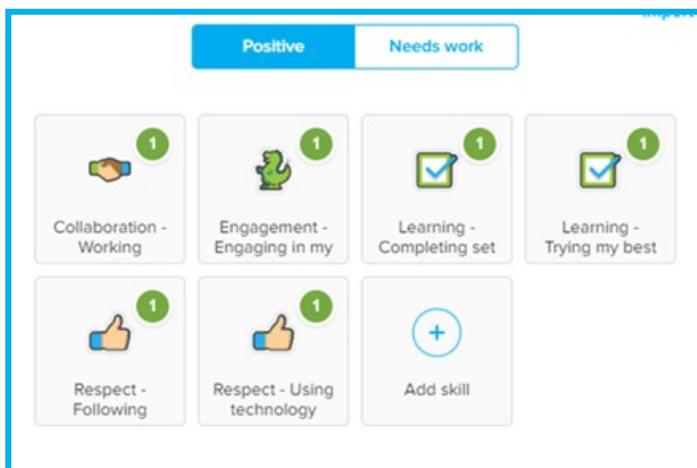
- *Department of Education resources:*
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/family-health/Pages/default.aspx>
- *Smiling Mind- digital care packs to support kids through COVID-19 and beyond.*
[Smiling Mind- Digital Care Packs](#)

The Wellbeing team will meet weekly during the remote learning period to discuss and implement extra support for students who may need it during this time. We encourage parents to contact myself or Hugh at the school if, at any time, you have concerns about your child's wellbeing or learning.

Recognising our CLEAR Values

We were lucky enough to be able to open our CLEAR Café at the end of last term and students were able to spend the points they had earned or save them to use later in the year.

This term we will continue to recognise CLEAR values by awarding Dojo points which have been aligned to the values of Collaboration, Learning, Engagement and Respect. When we return to school, Dojo points will be added to each student's CLEAR card tally.



Dojo points are aligned with our CLEAR values.



CLEAR Café is run by our Wellbeing Captains.

Assistant Principal's Report

Triple P online- Positive Parenting Program

The Victorian Government has funded the online Triple P – Positive Parenting Program for all Victorian families, providing access to expert parenting advice during these challenging times. The program was developed in Australia and has been successfully implemented around the world.

Families can now access free expert parenting advice through the online Triple P – Positive Parenting Program. The program is relevant to families with children between 2 and 16 years and provides strategies to deal with specific challenges, such as building children's resilience and dealing with conflict.

There are courses specifically for parents of toddlers to tweens, and for parents of pre-teens to teens.

It gives parents strategies to:

- raise happy, confident kids
 - manage misbehaviour so everyone in the family enjoys life more
 - set rules and routines that everyone respects and follows
 - encourage positive behaviour
 - take care of themselves as a parent
- feel confident they're doing the right thing.

[Sign up to the Triple P program via their website.](#)

Kirsty Egglestone

Assistant Principal

Kirsty.Egglestone@education.vic.gov.au



JULY Student Birthdays - Hip, Hip, Hooray!!!!!!!

Wishing the following students a very happy birthday and best wishes from your teachers and friends at Somers Primary:

Tahli Q, Ryan K, Daniel W, Kyeisha S,
Grace J, Madeleine L, Oscar P,
Mikayla K, Toby Q, Kalani W,
Sammi R, Jonty M, Eli O, Lucas K,
Chloe G, Toby A, William P, Lara B,
Isla K, Oscar S, Millar K, Lili P

