



## CHRYSALIS STEINER SCHOOL educating the whole child

### COVID 19 Update for Chrysalis – Week 8

Dear Parents and Staff,

Things are moving quickly in respect to advice from the Federal and State Governments shutting down non-essential services. Schools will be open in both NSW and Victoria tomorrow, however, Victoria will close schools on Tuesday, bringing forward their school holidays. It is increasingly possible NSW will move this way, as well, however we are yet to receive formal advice.

In the interim, we are taking steps to prepare for all eventualities. Over the last week, the risk to schools being affected by COVID 19 has been increasing. We have had a mixed message from the government regarding social distancing. It seems that the medical evidence points to the need to eliminate physical contact and minimise interaction. This is near impossible in a school environment. Risk management and making decisions about individual health cases has been difficult but, taking care of our staff and children are paramount. The risks to our school community and the vulnerable members of the broader community continue to grow, and we need to be pro-active in protecting our community; young and old.

On a daily basis we get information from relevant expert organisations working with COVID 19, gathering information from neighbouring schools and other Steiner Schools. At this time there are 3 Steiner schools in NSW which have gone to online learning opportunities. This is because of not having enough staff, or enough children who are coming to school because their families choose for them to be at home during this self-isolating time.

Our information for the last week has shown that there has been an increase in sickness in children rising up from 17 absences the week before to 50 in one week (1/4 of our children). Flu like symptoms, colds and stomach bugs seem to be the areas of sickness. Being vulnerable and unsure is what we are all feeling, and we as the adults need to continue to support our children in these uncertain times.

**At this point, as a pro-active measure for our community, we would like to encourage families to keep their children at home if at all possible from Wednesday 25th March.** We appreciate this may not be possible for all families at this time, and the school remains open until we are advised to shut by authorities. Whilst open, teachers will be rotated throughout the school depending upon availability.

The school continues to minimise risk and encourages families to keep children with any flu or cold symptoms to stay at home. We will send your child home if they come with any sickness. We will continue to manage the hygiene level and close contact as best as we can.

This situation is unlike any we have experienced before in our lifetime. We need to be conscious about how we action what is necessary for our school, community and for the grandparents, disabled, and people with compromised immune disorders.

In saying that, the school is in the process of setting up a home learning environment through Google Classroom, so that students can still continue learning at home. We will be ready for launching this as soon as next week, finalising on Monday March 30th for home use. We would like to acknowledge that classroom learning is different to a home learning program, and the expectations from the School is that families will manage the opportunities of Google Classroom to fit in with their life. The teachers will give suggestions for parents to follow, but ultimately families will need to manage this as they see fit.

Parents in **Classes 6 to 8** may have received an invitation to join Google Classroom as a guardian. This is associated with our preparations to provide online lesson content for these students. Students in this age group will work with the Google Classroom online with parents supporting as needed. **Kindergarten** will provide their own Google Classroom for parent interaction (not students), as well as craft packs and other work that will be sent home this week. **Classes 1 to 5** Google Classroom is not for student interaction but parent interaction to bring the information to the younger years. At the moment, some teachers have been sending work home to students in hard copy, but this will change once we go to Google Classroom. We also plan to make student packs available for each child for home use.

Our teachers have been working very hard to develop their skills in this medium, as well as bring together relevant resources, over a very short time. We expect to provide further information as teachers create lesson content. Your understanding of any teething issues would be greatly appreciated, as we believe this will be a valuable resource for students and parents while continuing and supporting student learning. It could be, though, that the School is ordered to close early this term but with this work we will be in a stronger position for the commencement of Term 2.

We appreciate this is a testing time for all in our community; with parents caring for families, working from home, and teachers seeking to deliver appropriate learning content for the children while at home. We will continue to monitor and work with our community for the best outcome possible through the school's communication pathways. We will be in touch this week as information comes to hand.

Best wishes,

Kelley and the Leadership Team

Issued: Sunday 17:15 hrs 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020