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Issue 3

SCHOOL VALUES

Be Resilient

Be Kind

Be Responsible

Be Respectful

This is what I had written before Lockdown was announced on Friday, before I was fully aware of the new cases in the Melbourne areas.

The weeks are flying by already with lots of things happening around the place as we settle into a new school year. We would like to thank families for your continued support and patience as we work through ever changing COVID guidelines and processes. It is important to not get complacent with zero regional cases recorded for quite a lengthy period of time. While we can move about with a bit more freedom I have certainly appreciated the fact that our school community continues to work within the guidelines provided when coming on-site and only being on-site when required and not staying for longer than is needed.

We are now in Lockdown until Thursday to minimise movement around the State and to keep the risks of cases spreading any further. This means;

All students will be learning from home, except for students in the following categories:

Children whose parents are considered **essential workers as listed**, cannot work from home and where no other supervision arrangements can be made
Vulnerable children, including children in out-of-home care, children deemed by Child Protection and/or Family Services to be at risk of harm and children identified by the school as vulnerable (including via referral from a family violence agency, homelessness or youth justice service or mental health or other health service).

Staff will have been in some contact today about specific class instructions and providing remote learning tasks and activities. We encourage families to not put yourselves under extreme pressure and just do what you can over the next couple of days. Staff and students will pick up where we left off when we get back to school.

Our School general information night and P/1 information which was on Tuesday night will be rescheduled again for another time.

The Lockdown shows us that it is really important that all families have at least one parent logging into Educate us regularly so that you can receive up to date information. Please check in with the office if you need a new login or need a refresher. Information about school requirements were also placed on the parent Facebook page – if you are not part of this page and would like to be, please contact Nikki at school, or search for it on Facebook.

Community involvement

Once the Lockdown is completed we will let you know about parents coming back on-site and in what capacity. **Pre mini lockdown** we can have parents back at school helping out, it just needs to be under controlled guidelines and adhering to current restrictions. We had two parents at school on Friday afternoon as part of our low key hobbies and clubs sessions. This activity was conducted outside, with social distancing and was enjoyed by all. Activities that are conducted outside with controlled numbers are more easily able to be conducted with minimal risk to all.

With this in mind you may see some families working at school outside on different activities over the next few weeks. If you would like to help out at the school this term, please let us know and we can work with you to work within the current guidelines.

Working with Children Check and documentation process.

It is also important to know that if you are planning on working/volunteering in the school in some capacity a Working With Children Check is compulsory.

Documentation for a volunteer is free and doesn't take long to obtain. Please let us know at school if you need some help with this process. We have put an outline of the process up on our office foyer information board. Once you have it in place, please bring it in to school so that we can keep a copy on file.

School Council

On Thursday night School Council met on-site for the first time in almost 12 months. We were all socially distanced, used hand sanitiser and had masks when not engaged in heavy discussion. The School Council elections timeline is again included in the newsletter today. There are at least 5 places on School Council up for grabs this year if you are interested. Please contact Mr O'Neill if you would like to know more about how to join School Council and what the group does. If you are nominating for this years school council you will need to do that by Monday 15th 5:00pm. If we have not received enough nominations by that time, we will extend it until the end of the week – Friday the 19th February, 5:00pm.

Proposed Election Timeline for 2021

Monday 8th February 2021 - Notice of election and call for nominations

Monday 15th February 2021 - Closing date for nominations

Monday 22nd February 2021 - The date by which the list of candidates and nominators will be posted

Wednesday 24th February 2021 - The date by which ballot papers will be prepared and distributed

Wednesday 3rd March 2021 - Close of ballot

Wednesday 3rd March 2021 - Vote Count

Thursday 4th March 2021 – Declaration of poll

Thursday 11th March 2021 – First council meeting to elect office bearers (the Principal will preside)

*The **Grounds and Maintenance committee** is looking for some interested families who would like to be more regular contributors. Keep a look out for information about the chance to join this group and help out with jobs out in the school yard.*

Uniform

Thanks to all families for working hard to ensure all students are in correct school uniform at the beginning of the year. There is a great consistency in uniform across the school. Well done.

Attendance

All grades are still above the required 95% at the beginning of the school year, which is the goal for all classes in 2021. The P/1 and 2/3 room are both just on 97% with the 456 room sitting on 95.24%. Keep working at being at school where you can and only being away when it is unavoidable.

Toys and mobile phones at school

A reminder that toys and personal belongings should only come to school as part of a show and tell session in the classroom. Unfortunately, school cannot guarantee that things will not be broken or lost if they are taken out into the school yard at break time. Any valuable or sentimental items should be left with the classroom teacher during breaks. Mobile phones or electronic devices are required to be handed into the office at the beginning of the day to be locked away.

Our school will be closed on Code Red days. The school will be contacted in advance about this and communication will go home to families to let you know what is happening. **On Extreme fire rating days, the school will be open.**



We are given up to date information at school about weather conditions and will communicate this to families via EducateUs, email, phone tree or Facebook, depending on the time of day we are informed. On these days we do require that families respond or acknowledge the contact so that we can confirm you have received the message. We understand parent concern on these days, however it is important to try and keep the school phone lines open for emergency service information. Some information about this will also be placed on our school Facebook page and parents Facebook page. If you have any questions about this, please come and see us at school. We have included the fire rating symbol which most families are already familiar with. All families should have their own home fire plans in place.

Our school bus route will not be operating on Code Red days. This is a new consistent process across the State and an important one to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

At the beginning of each week all classes have a Respectful Relationships lesson aimed at their level. The information below gives families a bit of an idea of what RR is about.

What is Respectful Relationships?

Respectful Relationships is about tackling family violence through education.

Rosie Batty, CEO of the Luke Batty Foundation “the school community is an essential part of social reform by modelling a culture of respect through the whole school, not just by teaching respect in the classroom”.

In 2017, respectful relationships education was introduced to be taught as part of the Victorian curriculum. The Victorian Government is supporting schools to model respectful relationships across the whole school community as part of its commitment to respectful relationships education.

The Government is providing Victorian schools with a range of extra supports and resources including, new Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials.

In the classroom, children will learn problem-solving skills, to develop empathy, support their own wellbeing and build healthy relationships with others. The initiative will also provide resources to best support children and staff who are affected by family violence.

When children build positive relationships with their teachers and peers they feel safer and happier at school, are more resilient and have positive social attitudes. Positive relationships also increase a child’s sense of social connectedness and belonging which can result in better health and academic outcomes.

Further information about Respectful Relationships is available on the Department of Education and Training website: www.education.vic.gov.au/respectfulrelationships Eppalock Primary School makes use of the Department provided resources to teach our students about Respectful Relationships. These age-appropriate and evidence based materials are designed to enable teachers to develop student’s social and emotional capabilities to promote positive, healthy and respectful relationships. They provide teachers with handouts and activities for students that guide classroom discussion.

Educating with Integrity – Eppalock Primary School’s Code of Conduct

Eppalock Primary School’s Statement of Values:

Kindness – to be friendly, generous, and considerate.

Resilience - the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties

Respect – treat others with consideration and regard: respect another person’s point of view

Responsibility – be accountable for one’s own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non- violent and peaceful ways; contribute to society and civic life, take care of the environment

Aim of this Code of Conduct:

Eppalock Primary School is a values-based educational institution, where School Council, teachers, staff, students and their families actively promote a culture that embodies integrity, mutual respect and common courtesy. We strive for our entire school community to respect each other, to always ‘do the right thing’ and together make appropriate decisions.

The Code of Conduct or ‘Statement of Values’ has been created to outline the shared expectations, roles and responsibilities of principals, teachers, parents, students, community members and the Department in maintaining respectful and safe schools.

Objectives:

- To value the health and wellbeing of all members of our school community. All teachers, staff, students, school families and visitors have a right to feel safe and respected at school and during school business.
- To acknowledge the formative role that parents and care-givers play in the development of their child’s sense of justice, equity, dignity and worth.
- To respect cultural diversity and ethical difference within our school. We believe our school community’s diversity is worth celebrating.
- The responsibility for upholding the values of the school must fall on those with the greatest capacity to reason and control their actions. As such, the ‘adult community’ of our school is expected to model courteous behaviour and treat all members of the school community with respect and consideration.
- To accept responsibility for the day to day care of our school place and property. We will take pride in our school, our work and care for our education, relationships, school resources and surroundings.

Rules of Conduct

- Direct parent to parent contact/conflict that emerges from a school incident/situation involving their child should be avoided. Mediation via the school is considered to be a priority in diffusing such situations.
- Bullying has no place within our community and as such will not be tolerated. This is as true for adult-to-adult interaction as it is for child-to-child. Instances of bullying need to immediately be brought to the

- attention of the Principal in line with the intention of this Code and the school's Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures.
- Under no circumstances must a parent, guardian/care giver, or member of the school community intimidate or act in a manner that threatens or harasses any of the teaching or school staff and vice versa.
- In order to protect people's good name and reputation, issues need to be resolved through calm and direct dialogue, respect for each other and due process. Targeting of particular persons or their reputation will not be tolerated.
- There is an expectation that people 'volunteering' at the school will refrain from expressing opinions on other students and their families. Volunteers must not share opinions about children with the broader community. Any concerns should be raised with the Principal.
- All volunteers at the school must have WWCC documentation lodged at the office.
- Every member of the school community has a right to a school that is free from abusive, manipulative or threatening behaviours. Such behaviours have the potential to erode our school culture and our efforts to effectively build positive, productive relationships.
- Explicit behaviours that will not be tolerated and are considered to be a breach of this Code of Conduct (either on or adjacent to the School grounds) include;
- Shouting, being rude, being aggressive or harassing others;
 - ◊ sending rude, confronting or threatening letters, emails or text messages;
 - ◊ being manipulative or threatening;
 - ◊ speaking in an aggressive tone, either in person or over the telephone;
 - ◊ making sexist, racist or derogatory comments; and
 - ◊ being physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close or over someone.

Implementation

- The Victorian Department of Education and Training 'Creating Respectful and Safe School Communities FAQs for Parents' and its 'Statement of Values template' for promoting Healthy, Safe and Respectful school communities are two key reference documents for this Code.
- All members of the school community will demonstrate and help foster respect when dealing with others both at school, when representing the school at out of school events or attending out of school hours events.
- Clear boundaries and consequences are an important part of life for growing children and the learning environment. When an incident occurs that breaches or has the capacity to breach this Code of Conduct, a warning letter will be sent by the Principal to the person concerned (appendix A). The Principal will manage such an incident using the DET's '*Staged Response to managing behaviours*' process.
- When an incident occurs that breaches or has the capacity to breach this Code of Conduct, all parties will be required to have input into a set of specific actions that they can work on to enable the situation to be resolved. The specific actions for all parties will consider how a 'safe and respectful' relationship can be reinstated moving forward. A Parent/Principal Agreement will be a key requirement where a family of the school is directly involved and the process will be managed using the DET's '*Staged Response to managing behaviours*' process.
- As a minimum, a conflict or breach of this code must consider:
 - ◊ interventions and sanctions;
 - ◊ the ongoing risk to students, teachers, staff, families and broader community;
 - ◊ an explanation of all sides in the conflict/situation;
 - ◊ an acknowledgement of each other's perspective and agreement on ways to manage differences;
 - ◊ an apology or expression of regret;

- ◇ an admission of fault;
 - ◇ A change of decision;
 - ◇ A change of policy, procedure or practice;
 - ◇ Agreement on what constitutes acceptable behaviour moving forward and clear consequences if this is breached.
 - ◇ An undertaking that unacceptable behaviour will change.
- Any conflict on school grounds will be dealt with in a mature and appropriate manner in accordance with school procedures and DET procedures. Where students are concerned, an approach to the school will be made in the first instance.
 - Every effort will be made to listen to the grievances of all parties in a calm and rational manner without recourse to involve outside parties who are not directly involved.
 - This Code of Conduct will be distributed to every school family and staff member at the beginning of each school year.
 - Training and awareness relating to this Code of Conduct may be required to ensure that we maintain positive and productive relationships within our school community and a respectful and safe learning environment. DET resources will support these activities.

Consequences for breaching the Code of Conduct

Principals are responsible for determining what constitutes reasonable and unreasonable behaviour.

Unreasonable behaviour and/or failure to uphold the principles of this Code of Conduct may lead to further investigation and the implementation of appropriate consequences. This may include:

- utilising mediation and counselling services;
- alternative communication strategies being applied;
- formal notice preventing entry onto school premises or attendance at school activities. Written notice will follow any verbal notice given;
- an intervention order being sought; and
- informing the police which may result in a charge of trespass or assault.

By agreeing to meet specified standards of positive behaviour, everyone in our school community can be assured that they will be treated with fairness and respect. In turn, this will help to create a school that is safe and orderly, where everyone is respected and empowered to participate and learn.

Review & Evaluation

Eppalock Primary School Council will regularly review school culture and conduct of staff, children and the broader community to consider potential vulnerabilities. Risks arising from these assessments will assist in defining and reviewing the content of this Code of Conduct.

Continuous awareness and promotion of this Code of Conduct, as well as the broader approach to building a safe and respectful education environment, will be made a priority in our goal of excellence in education at Eppalock Primary School. Continuous awareness will help sustain interest in and commitment to the code and ensure that compliance is monitored at every opportunity and by every member of the school community.

Last Review 2021 Next review 2024

IMPORTANT DATES

MARCH

Monday 8th Labour Day Holiday

Wednesday 10th School photo's

APRIL

Thursday 1st Last day of Term 1

Monday 19th Pupil free Curriculum Day

Tuesday 20th First day Term 2

Monday 25th Anzac Day Holiday

CSEF—CAMPS, SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS FUNDS

IMPORTANT

CSEF is provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

If you hold a valid means-tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible for CSEF. A special consideration category also exists for asylum seeker and refugee families.

The allowance is paid to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of your child.

The annual CSEF amount per student is:

- \$125 for primary school students
- \$225 for secondary school students

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the CSEF visit www.education.vic.gov.au/csef

HOW TO APPLY

New applicants should contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from www.education.vic.gov.au/csef

If you applied for the CSEF at your child's school in 2020, you do not need to complete an application form in 2021 unless there has been a change in your family circumstances.

You only need to complete an application form if any of the following changes have occurred:

- ◆ **new student enrolments;** your child has started or changed schools in 2021 or you did not apply in 2020.
- ◆ **changed family circumstances;** such as a change of custody, change of name, concession card number, or new siblings commencing at the school in 2021.

Check with the school office if you are unsure.