

## Morning Drop-offs at the Gate

COVID-19 has clearly had a major impact on our daily lives, therefore the school would like to take this opportunity to thank all the children and parents for the positive way in which they have managed through this pandemic. Furthermore, as Principal, I would like to thank my staff for the way they've displayed resilience and flexibility to change.

Many parents and students have told me that they love the drop-offs at the gates because it ensures a calmer start to the school day. Students have certainly enjoyed the added responsibility of getting themselves to class and have settled far more quickly into their routines.

Feedback from teachers is that classes are getting off to a calmer start and teachers and students are more productive during the prime learning time through the morning. It has been this consistent flow of positive messages about the mornings that has prompted the school to look deeper into the benefits of extending these drop-off practices.

One thing we have noticed is the increased pride that children have taken in completing tasks independently. Without their parents there to help them, they have had to cope on their own and take control. And they have. They have taken control of getting themselves set up for the day and have felt a sense of accomplishment.

Another factor is that, without so many people in the room in the mornings, the class gets off to a calmer and quieter start. Furthermore, the teachers have been able to give their undivided attention to their students. They are not talking with parents but the children. The children have been able to talk to their teacher about what is on their minds before the official lessons start. Our teachers say it has been a much more productive and calmer time.

However, the down-side to not having parents in classrooms has been that teachers and parents have not been able to interact, get to know each other and to pass on incidental information. The relationship between teacher and parents is vital to the education of the children. So, we don't want to lose that connection. But perhaps we can find alternative ways of boosting that contact and connection, without losing the calm and productive start to the day in the classroom.

Therefore, we are proposing that drop offs at the gates in the mornings continue throughout Term 3. We do ask parents to park in the correct direction and only allow students to leave the vehicle on the kerb side of the car. We encourage parents to speak with their child(ren)'s teachers in the afternoons or via email, phone, ClassDojo etc. Teachers are also happy to book a time to meet with parents for a more formal and longer discussion. This meeting can be done in person, over the phone or using Webex Meet, if you wish. This means the teacher can be prepared with the information on hand for a productive discussion.

The Kiss and Wave has experienced a marked increase in traffic yet it has worked well. I encourage all parents to remember that the kiss and wave is designed for children to get out of the car with their bags on their own. Where possible we do not want parents to alight from their cars and help their child(ren). Kiss and Wave is now too busy to accommodate this without holding up traffic. Let your children take control and be prepared to get out of the car on their own with their bags. Remember, we want to build independence for children and their ability to get out of a car with their bags and walk into school is an opportunity for them to feel that sense of accomplishment, independence and control.

If you have an urgent message in the morning for a teacher, please phone or go to the office, or see a staff member at the gates.

While drop-offs will continue at the school gates, it is expected that from Term 3 (Phase 5 of the COVID-19 Roadmap), parents will be allowed back onto school grounds to pick up their children as usual. (This will be confirmed in Term 3). This is the time to have a quick word with the teacher to arrange meetings etc.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hans Geers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'H'.

Hans Geers, Principal