



Forestville  
**MONTESSORI** School  
*Thriving beyond...*

**Returning to School Plans at FMS**  
**Latest News – Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020**

To all our FMS families,

In contemplating the '*new normal*' this has to be one of the strangest letters I've ever written to parents but times like this also offer opportunity. Here at FMS, the staff team has been working on some exciting developments that are sure to be winners with your children. I hope you've all managed to enjoy the holidays and the gorgeous Sydney weather in some way. I've been thinking about you all, hoping you and your family are safe and well.

### **Health and safety first**

We commenced a strict cleaning regime at the end of Term 1, and this will continue. The personal hygiene protocols we implemented will also continue and reminders will be sent to everyone.

#### *Student health plans:*

- If your child has a respiratory condition it is vital that you update his/her health plan and stay alert to any changes in their condition.
- Non touch thermometers are now in use across the school as needed.
- No child is to attend school if they are sick with even the slightest symptoms.

#### *Social distancing:*

- The 2sqm rule does not apply for students.
- Limiting interactions of parents and staff is our current focus.

#### *We are asking for everyone's cooperation with the following changes until further notice:*

- Toddler and Pre-school children to enter via Angel Place and walk to the left around the car park, via the music room at drop-off and pick-up times. Now we know you'll want to say hello to our chickens, you can still do that but please walk back around via the music room when you leave. This will ensure less congestion in the 6-9 area.
- 6-9 students should enter and exit via Angel Place.
- 9-12 students should enter and exit via Brown Street.
- All parents and adults dropping off and collecting children should maintain appropriate social distancing at all times.
- On entering Reception, maintain social distancing. There should be no more than 2 adults at any given time. We ask that you wait outside if there are more than 2 adults.

- All parents and carers collecting children midday or at the end of the day are not to congregate at either the Birth-3, 3-6 or 6-12 play spaces until further notice.
- Staff will maintain distance from each other in all teaching spaces. We are very lucky at FMS to have large teaching spaces.
- Staff meetings are now all held virtually. No gatherings of more than 3 staff in any one space and all with appropriate social distancing. Administration staff on campus has been restricted with some staff working from home on certain days.

## Your child's education: How will we continue to provide high quality Montessori education?

We will re-open on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April for students who need to attend and for families who wish their children to return to school. Our onsite programs will continue. We have not adopted the model of 'online at home and at school'. Instead, we have remained true to our Montessori philosophy.

We will offer a *Hybrid Education Model* with programs available on site at FMS matched with '*Learning from Home*' programs designed by our educators for parents who choose to self-isolate.

Program	Arrangement	Offering On Site	Offering <i>Learning from Home</i>
Nido and Parent Toddler	Separate details to follow	No-however, this will be reviewed by Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2020	Yes
Toddlers (2-3 Years)	Open-normal program operating	Yes	Yes
Pre-School (3-6 Years)	Open-normal Program operating	Yes	Yes
Lower Primary (6-9 Years)	Open-normal Program	Yes	Yes
Upper Primary (9-12 Years)	Open-normal Program	Yes	Yes

For families choosing to self-isolate what will *Learning from Home* look like?

- Learning from Home Pack #3 will be distributed on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April.
- Additional Resource pack for Pre-School students can be collected outside Reception-details to follow (from Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April).
- Staff will set up one on one student conferences with every child aged 5-12 Years next week.
- Small group discussions for children aged 5-12 Years will be facilitated by staff.
- Continue uploading work your child has completed to Transparent Classroom via the app for teacher feedback.
- Zoom catch-ups will move into the social sphere and we're asking parents to organise this.

## Next exciting development

We've been thinking about how we make the most of this opportunity to design a learning management platform that will serve us beyond COVID-19. We wanted something that was true to our Montessori philosophy and values. We wanted something that would open up possibilities, for example allowing our students to share with Montessori children around the

world, collaborative classroom projects, providing parent education accessed when it works for you, training we could offer Montessori teachers in developing countries. We've got big dreams.

For now, we've focused on designing an online architecture that provides our students with rich, deep, inspiring learning where the screen is the portal not the focus. It's coming soon.

In the meantime, focus on the *Learning from Home* packs ([Lower Primary](#) & [Upper Primary Get Crafty](#)), call us if you need anything. For 6-12 students, we can't wait to see your hand made Montessori materials. We'd love you to upload pictures of your designs for the Bead Frame, Checkerboard, Stamp Game, Racks and Tubes to Transparent Classroom.

## **Next steps for parents**

To ensure the ongoing success of our Hybrid Education model, our Educators and Assistant Educators will combine time on campus and working from home. To enable staff to continue teaching and designing high quality *Learning from Home* materials, we need to know your intentions. We recognise that your plans may change and that is all ok. We want to be flexible. It would just help us to know at least three days in advance each week of your intentions.

[Please respond to this email](#) providing your intentions for your child/children's return to school for Term 2.

## **Staggered return to school**

From the week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> May, we will facilitate students' staggered return to school, as recommended by the State Government. Whilst we've started the initial planning, I would like to workshop this further with the staff next week.

Of course, we'd love to hear your thoughts on this. How can we facilitate a safe and smooth return for you and your family?

## **Screentime**

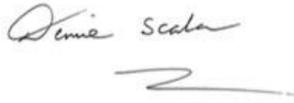
One of the common themes we're hearing from parents is *'Help, how do I transition my child off the screen?'*

[Here's a link](#) to our guide.

In closing, the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 will be 150 years since Maria Montessori's birth. Her pioneering legacy has impacted the lives of children, educators and parents for over 110 years. I keep thinking about what she would be doing if she was living through COVID-19? We may not be celebrating together in August, but we can hold onto the beacon Maria Montessori offers us. We're all on this planet together to change the world for the better:

*"We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity." Maria Montessori*

Stay safe and take care of each other.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denice Scala". Below the signature is a horizontal line that tapers at both ends, resembling a stylized underline or a decorative flourish.

Denice Scala  
Principal