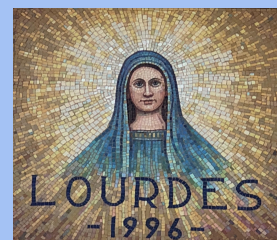




**Parish Priest:** Father Henry Duc  
**Phone:** 9622 2960

**OOSH:** Ben Irmisch  
**Phone:** 9676 7293



## Newsletter Term 1 Week 10, 2020.

**1ST APRIL, 2020**

### FUTURE DATES

**Last Day of Term**  
**Thursday 9th April**

**First Day Term 2**  
**Monday 27th April**

**Holy Thursday**  
**Thursday 9th April**

**Good Friday**  
**Friday 10th April**

**Easter Vigil**  
**Saturday 11th April**

**Easter Sunday**  
**Sunday 12th April**

**Please note Easter**  
**liturgies will be live**  
**streamed from the**  
**OLOL Parish**  
**Facebook page.**



**Wishing all our**  
**families a**  
**Blessed Easter**

### Principal's Message



*Dear Families of Our Lady of Lourdes,*

*Thank you for your continued support of our community in this unusual and challenging time.*

*During the past two weeks teachers have transitioned the students into an online approach to learning and teaching for both the students at school and at home. We have been able to provide all children a learning pack with an exercise book, learning grid for home learning, reading material for each child at their level and library books.*

*We have also extended access to Google classroom to every student in the school and though we know our younger children will need assistance this will be an important platform to enable learning at home.*

*Further, this week we have trialled and begun a Morning Welcome and Afternoon Catch Up with each class via zoom meetings. I would particularly like to thank our teachers, Mrs Cividin, Mrs Willemse and our IT Trainee Nicholas Adams, who have worked tirelessly to support teachers, students and families to access and be able to use technology to develop new ways of learning and connecting. This has been an enormous effort and we are committed to continue to develop our ability to develop learning in an online environment.*

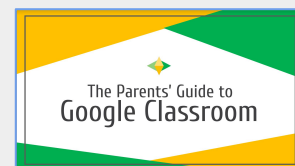
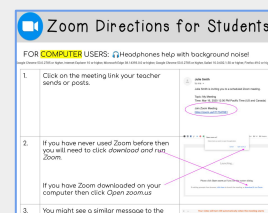
*I would like to congratulate the teachers and teacher assistants who are doing a magnificent job meeting the needs of the students at school and also the needs of the students who are learning from home. I would also like to acknowledge our office staff, Mrs Polo and Mrs Korajiza who have supported families with their many questions.*

*Finally, I leave you with this reflection:*

*Jesus reminds us all, "Do not be afraid I am with you!" May these words continue to speak of encouragement, balance and comfort as we seek to journey together over these days.*

**God Bless,**  
**Keiran Byrnes**

### HELPFUL WEBSITE LINKS FOR PARENTS:



### Enrolments for 2021

**The school is accepting applications for enrolment. Enrolment applications are available online on the school website or collection at the School Office.**

**The preference is to submit applications via to the school email or by post.**

**If you have any relatives or friends considering enrolling their child at OLOL in 2021 encourage them to visit the school website or phone the school office about enrolment applications. If you are an existing family with a younger child ready for school in 2021 it is important that you submit your application. For further enquiries contact Beth or Anne in the school office on 8869 6800.**

## School Update Related to COVID-19

### School Remains Open

We greatly appreciate the support and positive feedback we are receiving during this period of learning from home. As announced by the Prime Minister *'if you can work or study from home – you should do so'*. While our school is open, the vast majority of our students are already studying from home, and **we appreciate the efforts** of parents and carers as fewer students on site means fewer journeys being made by parents outside their homes. It also shows great respect for our community, our staff and those families who simply need to send their child to school due to commitments as essential workers. Given all school work (until the Easter Holidays) has now been provided or will be provided online, I am **strongly encouraging those students who can study from home** to do so.

### Advising Student Absences

Please continue to advise us via the usual channels if your child will be away from school. The State Government has confirmed that students who are at home due to the Premier's advice, and are attempting school work, will be marked as having a 'flexible' timetable / attendance. This will not be counted as an absence. Students not attempting school work will be marked as 'absent'. Students attending school will be marked as 'present'. If parents advise that their child is sick, then that day would be marked as 'sick'.

### Learning at Home

We continue to add to our online learning options to support students and families. Please supervise your child's online work and refer to the poster included in this newsletter "Using Technology Safely at Home". We know this is new learning for all of us and there may be some glitches to begin with so please be patient as we test our technology in an endeavour to strengthen the connection between home and school.

The teachers are very concerned about not only the children's learning, but also about their wellbeing. With this in mind, our classroom teachers will be making a phone call to each family this week. If your child's teacher calls you and you are not available, please do not call them back. They will call you again later in the week.

### Gold, Merit and Faith in Action Awards

All awards will be put on hold until further notice given that most students are learning at home.

### School Staff Working Remotely

Over the course of this week staff from OLOL will trial working remotely on one day on a rotational basis, ensuring we have staff on site each day. This is a critical step in ensuring we are able to provide staff with the ability to work remotely, identify potential issues and test our protocols and technology. Many businesses, professions and industries successfully trialled and then implemented working remotely. We are working to ensure our staff are well placed to do the same. Supervision for those students unable to stay at home will continue, however, in the light of Government direction the school will be further exploring and implementing staff working from home on a rostered system.

### School Holidays

The end of term is fast approaching and the school holidays will begin. This holiday will be different to any that we have experienced before. We all have the responsibility to follow Government directives and follow the restrictions put in place to help prevent any further spread of COVID19. It is also an important time for children and staff to rest and have a "holiday" from school. As such OLOL staff will not be providing learning activities or responding to emails. If it is necessary to contact the school in this holiday period please use the school email address.

## Out and About

As we approach the end of Term 1 it is a very different landscape to that with which we began the term. Who could have predicted such a dramatic change and in a similar way we cannot predict what Term 2 will look like.

Of what you can be assured is the ongoing commitment of the staff at OLOL to support each child and each family though these challenging times. We will continue to explore ways to support student learning in a society where “social distancing” is now the norm.

As part of the changing educational landscape NESA has determined that NAPLAN 2020, for all students, has been cancelled. This decision includes the cancellation of:

NAPLAN Online practice testing, 23 March – 9 April 2020

NAPLAN Online tests, 12 May – 22 May 2020

NAPLAN paper tests, 12 May – 15 May 2020.

This is a sensible decision in the current climate and relieves pressure on students who are currently learning from home.

At this point in time, as a school community, we will also have to cancel our Mothers' Day stall and our Mothers' Day Mass and Breakfast - hard decisions for hard times.

As we approach the Easter break I wish all our families a peaceful, safe and holy Easter. I look forward to the time when our classrooms and playgrounds are once again full and we are all able to gather together as a community.

Carol Cividin - Assistant Principal

## School Photos

School Photos will be available next term. At this time we do not have an exact date. As soon as we are notified by the photo company that they are available and how they will be distributed we will notify parents.



## Staffing Update

I am writing to inform you that Mrs Elizabeth van Zoggel has been appointed as class teacher at St Gabriel's School, Castle Hill. Mrs van Zoggel will conclude her service to Our Lady of Lourdes Seven Hills at the end of Term 1, 2020.

Miss Brownlow has been appointed to teach Two Blue from Monday 27th April, 2020 until the end of the school year.

I wish to congratulate and thank Mrs van Zoggel for all she has given, both personally and professionally to this community and to the children in her care. We wish to acknowledge her contribution to our school community.

We wish Mrs van Zoggel all the best in her new role and in the future.

We also keep Mrs Michelle Khattar in our prayers as she formally begins her maternity leave at the end of this Term 1. We wish Mrs Khattar and her family all the best as they await the birth of their second child.

**God Bless**

**Keiran Byrnes**



This year we prepare to commemorate the central mystery of our Christian faith: the death and resurrection of Jesus within the context of a wounded and vulnerable global community. Presently, we are being awakened to the reality of our human connectedness which transcends national and global boundaries. The paradox "we are one, but we are many", is understood and realised as we witness the spread of the life-threatening Covid-19 virus.

This reflection and prayer focuses on the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, the one who animates the Body of Christ. It offers us a way to find meaning at this time of the global pandemic in the context of our Christian faith founded on and in God who is LOVE.

**Let us pray**

We call to mind all in our community, our world who at this moment are working to bring healing to the deeply wounded Body of Christ.

1. For Pope Francis as he brings words of hope, comfort and support to all those who are experiencing suffering and loss at this time. May he be strengthened in his work of inspiring others to reach out in love and compassion to the sick, the vulnerable and those isolated in our world.

**Lord hear us.**

**Lord hear our prayer**

2. For our National and State leaders who are working hard to encourage the human community to collectively embrace the task of saving lives and livelihoods. May they be sustained with all the energy and vision that is required at this critical time.

**Lord hear us.**

**Lord hear our prayer**

3. We remember at this time all those throughout the world who are working in the front line of the Covid -19 pandemic. In the care of the sick they risk their bodies for the sake of the lives of others. May they receive the strength and insight needed to minister with skill and compassion.

**Lord hear us.**

**Lord hear our prayer**



*Thank you for all your lovely messages of support and encouragement*

To all the Teachers and Staff at OLOL Seven Hills,

My husband and I wanted thank all the teachers and staff for your support throughout this crisis. We are sure there are many others in the community that appreciate your continued efforts.

We feel very blessed that our children are able to continue their education in the middle of all this and have some form of 'normality' in their lives, even if it's only for a small portion of their day. I wanted to express our deepest gratitude for the exceptional job you are doing under these trying circumstances.

Thank you and may God keep you all safe and in good health.

I think it is really helpful and thorough what has been provided. The sending home of books was great too as some variety for the children. The instructions for google classroom were very clear and we easily navigated this.

Thank you for providing the update, it's certainly a new experience for all of us.

Both our kids are working off line today on their school work as I am adjusting to working from home full time also.

My daughter is keen to join in via the google classroom, we are going to spend some time over the weekend to understand how it all works. Well to be fair my daughter wants to show me as she is very confident she know exactly how it all works.

I just wanted to say, I think the school is doing a fantastic job at responding to the situation we all find ourselves in, it's a massive adjustment but the support and effort can be felt albeit remotely, it's so appreciated.

We wanted to say a very big thank you to all the incredible staff at Our Lady of Lourdes. We are so grateful that our children are so well supported and cared for.

What we are experiencing is difficult for everyone and there is no blueprint for the best way forward. I know how hard everyone has been working to make sure that all the students in your care are safe and settled. The enormous amount of work to plan and prepare for whatever lies ahead is challenging whilst also looking after all of your own families. We appreciate how your whole staff has been able to do this for all the families in your care.

Dear OLOL Staff

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your support over the last few weeks. It has been a challenging space and OLOL has provided clear direction and support. For that we are very grateful.

We wish all teaching and support staff at OLOL all the best for the coming weeks. We pray that the OLOL community stays safe during this time.

Our Lady of Lourdes  
Parish  
7 Grantham Road  
Seven Hills NSW 2147



Dear Staff, Parents and Children,

My first word is a Big HELLO to everyone in our beloved OLOL community. I am sure that you all have been doing the right things by staying safe and well and looking after yourselves and all around you.

I have found this to have been one of the most challenging times in my life, because I have been forced to re-arrange my life both as a private person and as a priest in lot of ways, for instance I had to livestream Weekend Masses from the Our Lady of Lourdes Facebook page, and honestly I got quite distracted in the first Mass due to the cyberspace nature of the congregation. However, it is not all bad news, since I have been able to put into practice a few things Katherine O'Meara, a poet from Madison, Wisconsin, USA wrote recently in a poem called 'And People Stayed Home'.

I am very grateful to one of our wise parishioners for sharing it with me recently, and it goes like this,

*'And people stayed home, and read books and listened, and rested and exercised, and made art and played, and learned of new ways of being, and stopped and listened deeper, Someone meditated, someone prayed, someone danced, someone met their shadow, And people began to think differently and people healed and in the absence of people who lived in ignorant ways, dangerous, meaningless and heartless, Even the earth began to heal, and when the danger ended and people found each other, grieved for the dead people, and they made new choices, and dreamed of new visions, and created new ways of life, and healed the earth completely, just as they were healed themselves.'*

While waiting for the day of a complete healing, I hope that you might find O'Meara's prophetic words inspiring and resourceful as I have in the last many days. It is worth remembering that you and I are not alone in these uncharted waters called Covid-19, because our Lord Jesus is always by our side and keeps affirming us 'do not be afraid', as he often said to the disciples throughout his public ministry (cf. Mt 10.31; 14.27; 28.5; 28.10; Lk 12.32).

Let this uplifting message from Jesus be the light to shine our path in coming days, and kindle the fire of love and compassion to warm our hearts and the hearts of others' around us. Please join me in our livestream liturgies for Holy Week and Easter starting with Palm Sunday this weekend by going to the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Seven Hills website and following the link. Before ending this letter, allow me to say thank you to our highly committed school staff for the extra effort they are putting in to make sure our children receive the best care and support when both attending school and learning at home.

Wishing you all a grace and energy-filled Holy Week and Easter. May the Risen Jesus bless you and keep everyone safe.

Fr Henry Huu Duc Tran



# Using Technology Safely at Home

HERE ARE 5 WAYS TO FOLLOW OUR RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT AT HOME:

## BE RESPONSIBLE...



### I will...

- Use equipment safely
- Only access files as requested by the teacher
- Always re-write information in my own words
- Always ask my teacher if I have a question about a task
- Always use my parrastu login for all school work
- Dress appropriately and not use my bedroom for Zoom meetings

## BE RESPECTFUL...

### I will...

- Not share my personal details over the Internet
- Be respectful and courteous when communicating on the Internet
- Not take photos of others or share photos of myself without permission
- Record a list of websites I use to create a bibliography
- Only use my own account to log into the Network



## KEEP SAFE ONLINE...



### I will...

- Keep my passwords safe and secret, even from my friends
- Research and only use acceptable material from the Internet
- Turn off the screen and tell a teacher or parent/guardian if I see any unacceptable material or feel harassed or disrespected on a computer

## I UNDERSTAND THAT...

- If I can't follow all of these guidelines I will not be allowed to use technology for my schoolwork
- All my online activity is monitored by CEDP.
- I need to follow school guidelines for using Zoom and Google Classroom for home learning



## MY PARENTS AGREE THAT...



- The Internet and school technology is to be used for my child's learning
- They will support the school's online learning guidelines
- Cyber-bullying and use of social media is unacceptable and there are consequences
- They will monitor their child's Internet use at home



# Active 1 OLOL Tips & Tricks

## Active Tech

There are many great ways to use iPads to get Active. Try this out!

[GO NOODLE YouTube Channel](#)

## Active Information

Five Ways to a Healthy Lifestyle

1. *Get active everyday*
2. *Turn off the TV or computer & get active*
3. *Eat more fruit and veges*
4. *Eat Fewer snacks & choose healthy ones*
5. *Choose water as a drink*

[Healthy Kids: NSW Govt Weblink](#)

[Healthy Kids: Languages Other Than English Resources](#)

## Active Challenge

Try the challenge below at home everyday for two weeks!

Resource from:

<https://www.cpnpetespowerpe.com/>

## Active Skills

RUNNING TIPS (YouTube Video)

1. Breathe in through your mouth & nose for 2 steps and out for 2 steps
2. Keep your hands & shoulders relaxed & arms bent
3. Toes first for uphill, Heels first for downhill

15 Skier Jumps



15 Crab Push-Ups



5 Tuck Jumps



12 Neck Rotations



10 Toe Touches



## GET ACTIVE each day

Physical activity is an important part of being healthy. Find as many ways as you can to be active everyday.

HOW MUCH ACTIVITY SHOULD KIDS DO EACH DAY?

Toddlers 1-3 years Preschoolers 3-5 years

3 hours

ACTIVE PLAY

ACROSS THE DAY



- Standing up
- Moving around
- Active toys

School age 5-12 years

1-3 hours

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

ACROSS THE DAY



- Try activities that make breathing quicker and your heart beat faster:
- Fast walking
  - Riding a bike or scooter
  - Organised sport



MAKE  
HEALTHY  
NORMAL

This resource has been developed by  
Western Sydney Local Health District,  
published October 2017



24 March 2020

PARENTS & CARERS  
Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta

Dear Parents and Carers

We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the financial circumstances of many families in a sudden and unprecedented way. Our long standing principle remains that **no child who meets the enrolment criteria will be refused enrolment or disadvantaged because of a family's financial circumstances.**

In view of the current situation, it will not be possible to follow our usual process for validation of these circumstances. In good faith, we are taking the following actions:

- if your family is experiencing financial difficulties due to COVID-19, we ask that you pay what you can when you can
- we will be suspending any follow up activity with respect to outstanding fees
- we will not be sending statements for Term 2 until there is greater clarity about the duration of the pandemic
- for excursions that may have been paid for and cancelled, we will be refunding these payments irrespective of whether or not CEDP is able to obtain a refund from the excursion supplier either by crediting back to your account or reimbursement, depending upon what method was used to make the excursion payment
- in relation to excursions that are merely postponed, we will not take any action at this stage.

Thank you so much for your assistance as we continue to support not just our students in their continued learning but also our dedicated staff.

Yours sincerely



Mark Holyoake  
Director Enterprise  
Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta

LEARNING FOR TODAY'S WORLD



***Congratulations to students who received Gold Awards in  
Week 9***

<b><i>Kinder</i></b>	<b><i>Josephine Steele</i></b>
<b><i>Year 1</i></b>	<b><i>Aaliyah Moussa</i></b>
<b><i>Year 2</i></b>	<b><i>Abel Mathew</i></b>
<b><i>Year 3</i></b>	<b><i>Maanvi Nimmagadda</i></b>
<b><i>Year 4</i></b>	<b><i>Tino Kama</i></b>
<b><i>Year 5</i></b>	<b><i>Latai Kama</i></b>
<b><i>Year 6</i></b>	<b><i>Naveen Panakkal</i></b>

**Congratulations to students who received Merit Awards presented in class in  
Week 8:**

***KB: Sophie Hlentzos, Meharmmeet Kamboj, Harpa Moss, Peter Palmiotto, Austin Guo***

***KW: Gerard Sleiman, Janelle Hoang, Evelyn Zaw, Olivia Bong, Constantine Aspiris***

***1B: Rosemary Laker, Ava Liaros, Jordan Un, Rafael Williams***

***1W: Summer Sindel, Jonathan Getahun, Charlize McLoynes, Kiyana Cassiniti***

***2B: Jude Park, Saanvi Mistry, Sabareesh Srisankaran, Bobby Li***

***2W: Sienna Bayeh, Lachlan Osborne, Vivaan Marikanti, Isaac Abdel-ahad***

***3B: Thomas Liaros, Thomas Cadavid, Tahlia Herczeg, Bianca Fiorenza***

***3W: Tyrell Crisostomo, Juliana Zhu, Ava Nowak, Amber Patel***

***4B: Dylan Cortis, Leo Cullili, Laumanu Kama, Aaron Shrestha***

***4W: Charlotte Byrne, Ashley Lo, Sophie Shaw, Nathan Bayeh***

***5B: Demi Tsakos, Rebecca Mou, Chloe Sibilant, Valerie Sulaiman, Jesse-James Crane***

***5W: Rhys Williams, Zac Osborne, Richard Zhuang, Georgia Andrew, Mia Lal***

***6B: Samuel Thoms, Philip Park, Jaylene Bong, Isabella dela Cruz***

***6W: Liv Lal, Jacob Sammut, Uno Bautista, Wyatt Hornyak***

Our main methods of communication at OLOL with parents are through our fortnightly online newsletter and via the Skoolbag app that can be downloaded to your mobile device.

Our School Newsletter is available each fortnight on a Wednesday. It includes a message from the Principal and information about teaching and learning, school events and our school/parish community. Please take the time to read the newsletter each fortnight with your children. To subscribe to our newsletter visit our school website <http://www.ololshills.catholic.edu.au/Community/Newsletters> and enter your email address to receive the newsletter as an email.

Alternatively you can visit our school website <http://www.ololshills.catholic.edu.au/> to download the newsletter and see our latest photos from school events in the photo gallery.

You can also access the Newsletters via the Skoolbag app, which also gives you regular up-dates and information for upcoming events. To download the app follow the instructions here

Please ensure you have notifications for the app turned on for the latest updates. You can also subscribe to the OLOL Parent calendar here <http://www.ololshills.catholic.edu.au/Community/Events>

Clare Willemse

**LTST- Learning Technology Support Teacher**

## How to install the SkoolBag app

instructions for parents and community

1. Get your favourite mobile device
2. Open the App Store/Play Store
3. Search for "SkoolBag"
4. Download the free app
5. Open the app and add your school(s)

for Apple users



for Android users



for more info visit [skoolbag.com.au](http://skoolbag.com.au)





# OUR LADY OF LOURDES

Primary School Seven Hills

**OPEN DAYS** 25 February 7:00pm-8:30pm,  
2 March 9:30am-11:00am

T 8869 6800 [www.ololshills.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ololshills.catholic.edu.au)

We look forward to welcoming  
you to our school

# Enrol Now





**ONLINE UNIFORM ORDERS CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE**

**PLEASE BE ADVISED THERE WILL BE NO TRY-ONS FOR SCHOOL UNIFORMS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. WE APOLOGISE FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE.**



*Dear Parents/Guardians*

*As of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Our Lady of Lourdes Seven Hills Uniform Shop will be run online by Oz Fashions. Orders are to be placed on the 'QKR' app by MasterCard.*

*Please follow all instructions on the attached flyer to download the app and set up your account. No phone orders or messages will be accepted!*

**Delivery to the school will be every Thursday during the school term free of charge and orders must be placed by 4pm Tuesday for delivery on Thursday.**

*Try on samples will be at the school for your convenience. Please try on the sizes before ordering to avoid disappointment.*

*Please note: Always read the terms and conditions on the app before ordering.*

*Please choose carefully as we do not refund if you simply change your mind or make a wrong selection. However, we gladly exchange within 14 days of the purchase date. Returned merchandise **MUST** be in its original condition with all tags still attached and accompanied by proof of purchase otherwise the exchange will not be honoured. Any item that has been worn will not be able to be exchanged. **Please email all swaps to [elle@ozfashions.com.au](mailto:elle@ozfashions.com.au)***

**Please note that Oz Fashions warehouse in Granville DOES NOT sell the Our Lady of Lourdes Uniform.**

*If you have any other concerns please email Elle [elle@ozfashions.com.au](mailto:elle@ozfashions.com.au) or call 0421 216 414.*

*Yours sincerely  
Oz Fashions*



masterpass

For quicker, hassle-free school payments, try Qkr! today

Introducing Qkr! (pronounced 'quicker') by Mastercard, the secure and easy way to order and pay for school items from your phone at a time and place that suits you.

With Qkr you can:

- Pay for a variety of school items;
- See your receipts on the app and get them sent by email if required.



Getting started is easy - try it yourself today

### Step 1 Download Qkr!

on your Android phone or iPhone. iPad users can download iPhone app



### Step 2 Register

Select your Country of Residence as 'Australia' and follow the steps to register

### Step 3 Find our school

Our school will appear in 'Nearby Locations' if you're within 10kms of the school, or search for our school by name.

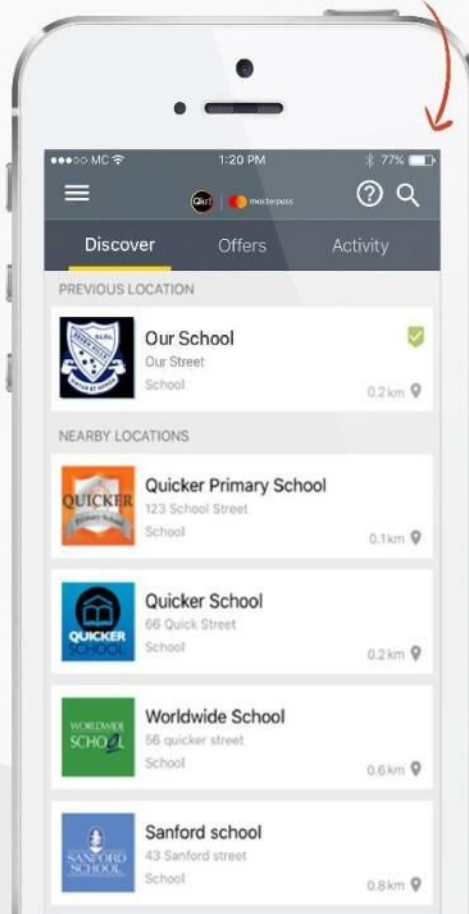
### Step 4 Register your children

When first accessing our school you will be prompted to add a student profile for your child. This allows you to make orders and payments for them.

If you have made a purchase you can select our school from 'Previous Location'

If you're within 10 kms of the school, you can select our school from 'Nearby Locations'

Search for our school name



## Add your children's details in Student Profiles

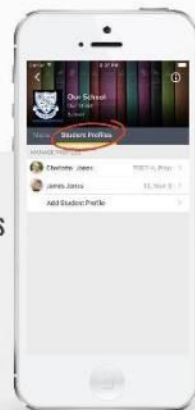
Select  
'Add student profile'



Add each  
child's details



Manage each  
child's details in  
Student Profiles

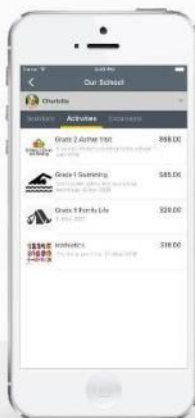


## Purchase school items

Select a menu  
from our school



Select child  
you are  
ordering for



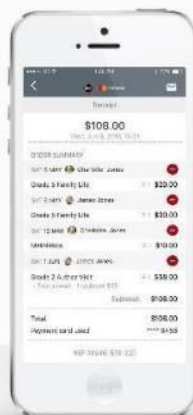
Select your items



Tap 'Checkout'  
then confirm and pay

## Making payments

Add up to 5 cards to your wallet



At checkout select which card to  
pay with.

Pay with any cards accepted  
by the school.

Once your payment is approved you  
can continue to the home page, or  
view your receipt.





**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen** OFM Conv DD STL

Bishop of Parramatta

Level 2, 12 Victoria Rd, Parramatta NSW 2150

PO Box 3066, North Parramatta, NSW 1750

☎ 02 8838 3400 📠 02 9630 4813

✉ [bishop@parracatholic.org](mailto:bishop@parracatholic.org)

🌐 [parracatholic.org](http://parracatholic.org)

## **Pastoral letter to the clergy, religious and people of Parramatta during the coronavirus crisis**

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Many of us feel powerless in the face of this corona virus pandemic. We see in a devastating way how widely a virus spreads person to person and the immense damage it is doing to our community.

We are indeed living in a time of great crisis locally and globally. So, it is only human that we will experience considerable fear and anxiety.

However, as people of faith in Jesus of Nazareth, we are called to place our trust in our God who promises to be present with us even in these times of great suffering and sickness.

Even in his seeming absence, we still place our hope in the One who loves us tenderly and with great mercy. And so, as responsible citizens and faithful Catholics, in solidarity with our wonderful doctors and health professionals, our first rule must be: **"Do no harm."**

That means not doing anything that might spread the virus to others with whom we live in community. We need to listen to our medical experts and not to conspiracy theorists who use any crisis to profiteer or stir up hatred and division.

We must also comply with the directives of our government authorities for the sake of the common good. The gospel calls us to practice such solidarity in these difficult days.

As many of you already know I have [issued a statement](#) which involves the closure of churches and the curtailment of our regular worship practices until this crisis abates.

Please adhere strictly to these directives that I have given. Further updates can be found here: [www.parracatholic.org/covid19](http://www.parracatholic.org/covid19) as the situation we are in is so fast changing and complex.

All of us in the Diocese of Parramatta must follow these guidelines without exception, so that we can be like St Joseph: 'Protectors of Life'.





**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen** OFM Conv DD STL

Bishop of Parramatta

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Becoming 'Protectors of Life' will certainly demand of us sacrifices. Let's especially not forget the suffering in our midst: the elderly, the weak, the disabled, the homeless, the unemployed et cetera. Let us not forget vulnerable groups and communities: the indigenous, the asylum seekers in detention, prisoners et cetera.

Then there are also those whom the Catholic Church through the traditional Lenten Project Compassion supports.

In previous ages before germs and viruses were understood, people blamed strangers, Jews and 'outsider's' for sickness. Anyone who was different could be the target of people's fear.

So, let us in these days be especially mindful of caring with compassion and charity for any persons in community who are on the 'margins': be they the aged, the chronically ill and all those living in poverty and isolation. Let our love for them be real and concrete.

May we also use these days to deepen our prayer and spiritual lives. Even as we mourn our losses, Pope Francis encourages us, "Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our message empty." (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 259)

So please visit our diocesan website at: [www.parracatholic.org/covid19](http://www.parracatholic.org/covid19) for some good and helpful information about how we can follow this path of deeper prayer. It includes online liturgy resources for personal and family prayer and various options for viewing Mass on-line and meditating on the daily scripture readings.

The coronavirus crisis strikes fear and anxiety into people across the globe. It also reveals deep cultural prejudices and divisions against the elderly, the weak and even those of certain race and ethnicity.

Our faith makes us step beyond these human boundaries. It expands our horizons and pushes the limits of our capacity to love.

Through the example of Jesus, we are called to embrace those vulnerable in our society and reach out to them. It is not the time to look after ourselves only but to care for others, through our prayers, acts of kindness and deep communion with them.

May these days of suffering and fear draw us ever close to Christ and let's all pray with Pope Francis to Mary, our mother:



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### **Pope Francis' Prayer to Mary during the coronavirus pandemic**

O Mary,  
you always shine on our path  
as a sign of salvation and of hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,  
who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm.  
You, Salvation of all People,  
know what we need,  
and we are sure you will provide  
so that, as in Cana of Galilee,  
we may return to joy and to feasting  
after this time of trial.  
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform to the will of the Father  
and to do as we are told by Jesus,  
who has taken upon himself our sufferings  
and carried our sorrows  
to lead us, through the cross,  
to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of  
we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

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*Given at Parramatta on 25 March 2020*  
*The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord*