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Dear Parents/Carers, Staff,

As you will be aware, the situation surrounding COVID-19 (coronavirus) is changing daily. The Department of Education and Training is endeavouring to ensure Principals are updated each evening, on how schools may be affected and the support that has been put in place. Last night's update I received outlined nothing of significance/no new developments after yesterday's announcement that schools will remain open for the foreseeable future.

Presently, we are seeing approximately 17% of our students not attending school here yesterday and today, which I can understand. This level of absence is mirrored by most other schools I have been in contact with, though slightly higher in inner city.

I understand that discussing this matter with your child/ren may be challenging, given the media attention that COVID-19 now commands and the changed behaviours of people, either out in the community, or in particular, down at the shops.

The link below may be useful in helping you to discuss the issues around staying calm and safe, with your child/ren. I watched this clip last night, presented by one of the country's leading child psychologists, Michael Carr-Gregg. You may even find it helpful to watch together with your child.

https://schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-coronavirus

For those children away currently, our staff have been putting together work for children that will mirror what we are doing in class. It is challenging as we have deliberately moved away from worksheets in differentiating to your child's needs. Should our school close at some point, we have been preparing an additional broad range of learning activities, which TPS staff have been working on over the past few days. This is while we await a '*Learning from Home*' portal from the state government.

Although the school has needed to cancel or postpone a number of events, for both the immediate and longer term future, it's important to note that it's still 'business as usual' here at school, as much as we can. Our school remains open (when independent schools are closing) as we do not have any confirmed cases here at school. Should this change, other procedures will take effect immediately.

For the meantime, we are still focusing upon the many other normal practices that make our school great, being:

- Daily literacy and numeracy classes are occurring and engaging the children.
- All specialist classes are running as normal.
- Teachers are attending to their normal responsibilities, but also preparing in case we do close.
- We have plenty of toilet paper and hand soap!
- Lunchtime Clubs are operating.
- Instrumental music classes/tuition is still occurring.

- Before and After School Care is running.
- We have established a backup booking for the grade 3/4 camp at Ferngully Lodge of August 31 to September 4, should we not be able to use our April 20-24 date.

As you can see above, our school remains very busy each day. We are trying to limit the number of visitors to the school (i.e. no science fair tonight) and quite sensibly, I notice some of those more vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 virus are not doing the drop off and pick up. Most importantly though, I speak to the children both in the classroom and outside whilst playing, who all appear very happy and keen to get on with their studies.

For those parents who continue to send their child/ren to school, thank you and do not feel guilty for doing so (as I've had a couple of people mention this to me). For parents who are exercising their rights to keep children at home, that too is ok, but please list COVID-19 as a reason when lodging an absence through Flexibuzz. It is important we continue to track our student absences accurately.

Any student exhibiting these symptoms (fever, breathing difficulties such as breathlessness, coughing, sore throat and fatigue or tiredness) **should not attend school.** If we see these symptoms in any child at school, we will do the following:

- Reassure the student if they are anxious
- Move the student to a single room away from others, being mindful of the student's wellbeing
- Contact the child's parents/carers, to inform them of the advice from health authorities and ask them to come and collect their child.

I will continue to update families on this matter when I am made aware of developments. Thank you everyone for your understanding and calm approach moving forwards.

If you have further queries or concerns, please contact the school.

Take care,

Rohan Thompson
Principal