



MOUNT BARKER
WALDORF SCHOOL

23 March 2020

Dear Parents and Friends,

As I sit on the verandah from the Innovation Resource Centre looking out over the sunny green oval with the birds chirping, it is difficult for me to imagine the drastic measures being taken around the world and here at school to combat the spread of COVID-19. At MBWS we are affected by these new measures and I realise the events around the world create a fear of what may come here.

Meanwhile, the school remains open and we are adjusting to the new protocols of social distancing and hygiene. We have a myriad of alternative ways to greet each other besides handshaking and hugs. Our celebrations of Autumn in the Kindergarten and Primary classes occurred within each classroom without parents and classes had to distance themselves from each other outside to watch the Class 3 play of Michael and the dragon. A special thank you to Emily, Joanne and Anna, the Eurythmist for the many hours preparing the children and their dragon costume to present the play. The experience of overcoming the dragon seemed appropriate for what we are facing now and it felt like an opportunity for students to regain some hope in the current circumstances.

Many of our parents have chosen to self-isolate and the teachers are busy preparing materials for students who are at home. These remote learning materials are planned to be ready for parents soon. An email will go out to parents when they are ready to be picked up. The choice to self-isolate is understandable in the current circumstances and everyone is supporting each other albeit at a distance. Class numbers are reduced and students at school are noticing that some of their peers are missing. On Friday, Liam and I went into each class to reassure students that the school remains open even though some students are away. We were able to remind them of the changes in place to help make school a safe place.

Please note that all activities including assemblies, excursions and incursions are cancelled as of Monday, 23 March. Unfortunately, that means the morning parent classes of Eurythmy, Speech and Yoga as well as Craft group and the knitting evenings must be temporarily stopped. Whole school events such as the Autumn Trading Table, Class 9 camp to Canberra and NAPLAN are cancelled. Upcoming community events such as Willunga's Autumn Fair, Groundswell for Waldorf Education and Vital Years are all postponed. Alternative plans for parent teacher meetings may include the possibility of phone or online virtual meetings instead of face to face meetings.

These are challenging times and when faced with a challenge, I am inspired by what arises out of it. I mentioned to Cathy, our Science teacher that we could not get hand sanitizer so she was industrious to look up the recipe to make some from WHO, the World Health Organisation. Last week, the Class 9 students were fascinated with gathering the sticky inside of the aloe vera leaves to add to their concoction to make our very own hand sanitizer.

I am sure there are many more opportunities where we, individually and as a community, can help to overcome the hardships we may face. I imagine that with so many group gatherings cancelled that we will all have more time to think; to slow down and be; to keep connected in new ways. The situation has made me think about the importance of self-sustainability and I am moved to think of ways we could, for example, make toilet paper ourselves or get more chickens for eggs. Perhaps to keep us connected while we are separated physically, we can all learn a new poem, song or story that is the same.

MOUNT BARKER WALDORF SCHOOL - A SCHOOL FOR RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION INC.

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Please see one of my favourite verses for this time of year is below and can be sung or played on a recorder.



Michael the Victorious

*Thou Michael the Victorious,
I make my circuit under thy shield.
Thou Michael of the white steed
And of the bright, brilliant blade!
Conqueror of the dragon,
Be thou at my back.
Thou ranger of the heavens!
Thou warrior of the king of all!
Thou Michael the victorious
My pride and my guide!
Thou Michael the victorious
The glory of mine eye!*

For the latest information on COVID-19, Please refer to the following links:

<https://www.dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/news-media/current-alerts/novel-coronavirus>

We are affected by the news of what is happening around us and this news affects our well-being. We are here to help, however, there is some delay in responding to the many calls and emails. Thank you for your patience awaiting a response. Look out for a frequently asked questions sheet to help answer some of them for all. We are focusing on getting the Remote Learning packs ready so that the Kindergarten and Primary families who are self-isolating and away from school can continue with their education as well as getting ready for online learning in the high school. Updates will continue so please check your emails regularly and watch out for the invitation to sign up for our Mount Barker Waldorf School App.

An education for your child will continue whether at school or remotely. Fees are due as usual, however, if you are experiencing financial hardship due to the current government restrictions on businesses then please email our business manager, mlucas@mtbarkerwaldorf.sa.edu.au with subject: Covid-19 hardship. Please use this subject line so that your email can be quickly identified.

Also, if you are choosing for your children to stay at home then please be reminded that you are solely responsible for their supervision and maintain the self-isolation guidelines. Please fill an ED175 form for our records available from the front office or on our website.

Kind regards,

Helen Platell, JD
Principal