



## Bilingual Newsletter 1

### April 7, 2020

Dear families,

Welcome to the first edition of our Bilingual Newsletter which will become a regular communication throughout Term Two this year.

I want to keep you informed of what is happening in relation to our status as a bilingual school. I would like to start by acknowledging the long and emotionally challenging history that has come before my arrival and assure you that I have taken my responsibility in leading this piece of work very seriously.

I have researched the community response to changes over the last three years and can see that our community are invested in Bilingual Education. Throughout Term 1, I have been building my knowledge, meeting with DET, working with the FPS bilingual subcommittee, attending bilingual principal network meetings, and visiting a number of bilingual schools across Melbourne. I have been exploring various models of bilingual education and applying them to our context to set the parameters for school-based decision making and community consultation. From a financial and operational perspective, I need to ensure that any decisions moving forward are viable in the long term and in the best interest of our school and the students we teach.

Footscray PS has been the only school representing the western suburbs in the Designated Bilingual Program for a number of years. We know this is highly valued by the Department of Education and Training, as well as our community, and therefore **I am making a commitment to begin the re-establishment of FPS as a bilingual school from 2021**. This will be a gradual process, growing each year to ensure long-term sustainability of the program. We will research, partner, draw on experts, and review current best practice to design and implement a program that provides the greatest likelihood of improved student learning outcomes and bilingual language proficiency for our children.

There are so many elements to unpack and communicate with you. I am writing an extensive Q & A document covering all of these aspects and will deliver it in small pieces across Term 2 to allow time for you to understand each step and provide feedback along the way to ensure your voices are heard. When decisions have to be made based on financial or operational considerations, I will share the reasons with you as clearly as I can and create pathways for you to feedback your questions or concerns at every stage. The current health crisis will limit our capacity to physically come together but I will ensure this doesn't limit our ability to freely communicate along the way.

I know you will have many questions. Term Two will provide multiple opportunities for information sharing and community consultation on Bilingual Education at Footscray PS. For now, I wanted to share the overarching direction in which we are heading to stay true to the promise I have made as your Principal to communicate honestly and transparently in a timely manner. Please feel free to provide initial feedback to me directly at [briggs.jenny.r@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:briggs.jenny.r@edumail.vic.gov.au).

Thank you, stay safe and healthy,

Jen Briggs