



COVID-19 update

Current as of Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March.

Dear Parents / Caregivers,

With every passing day, we are being updated and advised by the Education Department. When a new update comes through and these effect our school operations, I will send home an update. With every decision being made, my priority is the health and well-being of our students, staff and community.

The latest updates from the Department are as follows:

### **International travel**

The [Smartraveller](#) level advice for all Australian's travelling overseas has been upgraded to a level 4 – 'do not travel overseas at this time'. This is the highest level of advice (level 4 of 4).

### **Front line services and mass gatherings**

On Wednesday, 18 March the Australian Government announced that all organised, **non-essential mass gatherings attended by more than 100 people for indoor events and more than 500 people for outdoors events** must be cancelled from Wednesday 18 March 2020.

Please refer to [Healthy WA](#) for more information on the Prime Minister's announcement.

These updates have led to the following decisions being made:

- **Year 12 Ball postponed to Thursday July 23rd.**
- **School Photos postponed** to a later date. Parents are to keep the student photo order envelopes for use later. If you have already made payments online, this is okay as orders will be processed once photos are completed. If we are unable to complete photos in 2020, Fotoworks will refund all payments.
- **Year 7 Immunisations postponed from 25<sup>th</sup> March to the 28<sup>th</sup> May**
- **All non-essential camps and excursions cancelled.** All events that are not an essential part of a course assessment structure will not take place. This will be reviewed regularly.
- **Progress Report Parent Evening cancelled and replace with a School Planning Day for online resourcing.** This will remain a student free day so staff can work on planning and implementing online resource solutions in case of a school closure. Parents can still contact teachers at an agreed upon time to discuss progress report.
- **Open School Board Meeting postponed from 24<sup>th</sup> March to 19<sup>th</sup> May.** A normal Board meeting will still occur on the 24<sup>th</sup> March for Board Members.



### **Choosing to keep your kids at home**

At present, our school will continue to remain open as directed. Therefore, my priority is to provide a safe and engaging learning environment to those students at school. We will focus on our core business of education. If you make a decision to keep your child/children home due to COVID-19 concerns without seeking medical advice, please understand that we are not providing an online alternative. Whilst students are at school, my staff are directing all their effort and resources to the students in the classroom. We cannot run a school and a “virtual school” at the same time. Our teachers are amazing and are doing all they can to support learning but they are not equipped to do both. They are all under enormous pressure to teach and plan for potential closures and I ask at this time you respect this decision and support us through this extremely difficult time.

As always, we will continue to place outlines and resources on SEQTA to support the learning happening in class but it will not be in place of what occurs at school. We cannot replicate assessments or provide alternative tests if you choose to keep your child/children at home. It will not be possible for Senior School ATAR students to study their courses from home for an extended period of time.

### **What you can do to help and support the school**

We have had a number of toilet blocks closed during the day due to student damage. Soap is being thrown around and toilets blocked. Can you please reinforce at home the message we have discussed at school to look after the bathrooms and report those who do the wrong thing. During this challenging time, we cannot afford to have bathrooms closed.

Can I also reinforce the message to keep your child home if they are sick. We have had a number of students present to Student Services during each day as sick. We are trying to ascertain the nature of their sickness but we are not a medical centre. If your child presents to Student Services as sick, you will be contacted to pick them up immediately. If you are unable to do so, we ask you organise a family member to do so for you.

### **The Importance of Self-Care**

During this time, we hope that all our students, families and extended community are applying self-care routines and good mental health processes. Anxiety levels are high and this can cause other issues, including stress, panic and exhaustion.

With this in mind, please take a moment to look through the following suggestions and commit to making your mental health and wellbeing an equal priority to your physical health:

- You may choose to incorporate meditation, mindfulness and relaxation into daily life, using online videos, tutorials or apps such as Smiling Minds and Calm.



- Take a break from watching the news or reading articles online.
- Connect with family, friends and loved ones through safe avenues, such as phone calls, texts, social media and email.
- Undertake some physical activity, even if it is light stretching or a personal Yoga practice at home.
- Create something new – art, music, etc.
- Watch a movie or read a book.
- Continue to do the things you enjoy, in a safe way.
- Take care of your basic needs – stay hydrated, move your body, sleep well and eat healthily.

Young people can be very impacted by the stress and anxiety levels around them. If you're having conversations with your family about current affairs, please be mindful of the tone of the conversation, ensure you are up to date with the facts from reliable sources (such as the World Health Organisation) and explore some of the links below about how to unpack the current climate with young people:

- Australian Psychological Society - <https://www.psychology.org.au/>
- Live Science - <https://www.livescience.com/coronavirus-kids-guide.html?fbclid=IwAR3rD-V7ngHuz-g0KykTQeUCIWPpj4p7XkpDr0PWcpLYuKJIrgcjKA1T3Os>
- WHO Resources - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
- CDC Resources - <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/handwashing-family.html>
- Autism Educator (Social Story) - <https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>

Take care of yourselves and each other.

Peter Lillywhite

Principal