

Novel Coronavirus – COVID-19

Dear parents and guardians,

Further to my update on 12 March regarding COVID-19, the National Cabinet met today, and the Prime Minister confirmed:

- Schools will remain open and respond to local issues as required and on the advice of health authorities;
- All international travel arrivals will be required to self-quarantine on arrival back in Australia for a period of 14 days;
- Mass gatherings of 500+ people are not to proceed; and
- For other non-essential gatherings, consider the need to proceed and the issues of health and hygiene/social distancing as further mitigations to the spread of the virus.

The College has reviewed its sanitization and cleaning schedule, and is implementing important additional cleaning measures. Although the Government ban, relating to crowds of over 500, does not apply to schools we believe it is prudent not to hold our weekly Primary and Secondary assemblies until the ban is lifted. These are now cancelled for the remainder of the term. Our College Executive will hold a further strategic assessment meeting tomorrow (Monday 16 March) to evaluate the risk relating to a number of scheduled College events for the remainder of Term 1. These include (but are not limited to):

- Easter Service (1 April): Cancelled
- Ongoing Primary & Secondary Chapel Services: Cancelled
- Primary Morning & Afternoon Assembly: Cancelled (direct drop off and pick up from classrooms)
- Cross Country Carnival (2 April): TBA

Where possible we will endeavour to mitigate the risk to students, staff and parents by ensuring such events are rescaled (where feasible) to avoid inordinate numbers of participants. Understandably, some events will need to be cancelled or postponed. We will inform the community of any changes in order to accommodate any alterations.

Today I have contacted Ms Jessica Grounds (Head of Secondary) and Mr Grant Jakins (Head of Primary) to seek ways for how we can “formalise” and “restrict” all student contact/interaction to within their specific year levels from tomorrow (Monday 16 March) until the end of term. This formalisation will seek to isolate year levels from interacting with other students from different year levels at all times including break times. We hope this will further minimise the risk of possible infections and ensure that more accurate tracking of infections can take place and be limited to the specific year level; hence, minimising the spread of infection and the unnecessary isolation and testing of students. While we are implementing this as a mitigation strategy, we are not unaware that this will not be a foolproof measure. Many other factors regarding students interacting with students from other year levels are outside the College’s control for example outside school hours, pick up and drop off times, and OSHC (we will seek to work with OSHC).



We would encourage parents and students to use common sense and social distancing measures in such cases.

We will be contacting parents of our most vulnerable children to work through strategies to ensure extra precautions are taken to keep them safe. Vulnerable children include those who have moderate to severe respiratory illness, auto-immune deficiencies and other illnesses which would expose them to greater risk due to the virus. Please ensure that any significant updates regarding your child's/children's health (especially in relation to these areas) are communicated to Student Services.

Together with the usual hygiene practices, a number of additional social distancing measures will be implemented across the College from Monday 16th March:

- Avoiding physical contact including handshakes, fist bumping, high-fives and hugging.
- The usual practice of having students in our younger grades holding hands as they transit from the classroom to another venue within the school will be suspended.

I am conscious that these additional measures may have an emotional effect on some of our young children as they may feel a sense of rejection if someone doesn't hold their hand or give them a hug, please talk to your child/children about this to ensure they understand this is to protect everyone? Usual hygiene practices to remind your children:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick or have symptoms
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then dispose of the tissue in the bin.

If your child is unwell with flu like symptoms, please keep them at home and consult your relevant health care professionals. If you or your children have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or are being test for the virus, please ensure you communicate this with the College. As we have already seen across the world, this situation is likely to continue for some time and is evolving and as such, our preparations for the short, medium and long term will adjust accordingly. Please continue to pray for those around the world who have been affected and continue to pray for protection over our College community, especially the most vulnerable.

Regards,

Gary Cully
Principal