



16 March 2020

PARENT UPDATE REGARDING COVID-19

Dear Parents and Carers

We continue to be provided with advice from the Australian Federal Government Department of Health, NSW Department of Health and Education, Catholic Schools NSW and Edmund Rice Education Australia in relation to the COVID-19. As the virus continues to spread throughout the country the advice for schools is constantly being updated and we will continue to respond appropriately.

As noted recently in the media, there have been cases of COVID-19 reported across some schools in NSW and Victoria over the past week causing these schools to close for varying lengths of time. There are some health advisory services calling for schools to close to assist in containing the spread of the virus and this remains a matter of considerable debate within the community. Catholic Schools NSW and the Department of Health and Education are in regular meetings with Australia's Chief Medical Officers. Currently, the closing of schools is not considered a proactive measure that must be taken for NSW schools. If or when school closures become the best way to manage the spread of the virus in NSW, we will be ready to do so. Measures are currently being put in place to ensure continuity of teaching and learning in an online environment in the event of a forced school closure for an extended period. I have every faith that we will be able to continue to provide students access to their teachers and learning opportunities if forced closures eventuate.

A range of other measures have and will continue to be put in place to minimise the potential for infection. All school extra-curricular activities, such as the upcoming Years 7-9 camps, Year 10 Retreat, sporting events, excursions and large internal activities have been either postponed or cancelled. Further information regarding the rescheduling of events will be provided in due course. Whole school assemblies, liturgies and other large gatherings within the College have been cancelled and students are constantly being reminded of the importance of hygiene and appropriate coughing and sneezing etiquette in reducing the spread of the virus. Various measures are being considered to allow greater distancing of students during recess and lunch breaks and an increased cleaning regime has been introduced for high touch areas within the College, with regular checking and refilling of soap dispensers in student bathrooms.

We will continue to take a strong stance on sending home staff and students who have symptoms of illness. Information regarding the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and basic protective measures are available at [World Health Organisation Website](#). We ask parents to monitor their son's and immediate family health. If concerns arise please keep your son home from school and seek medical advice. Teachers have been asked to monitor, not only themselves, but students in their classes and if a student presents at school unwell, appropriate staff are informed so that parents can be contacted. This approach is precautionary in nature and not intended to alarm members of the community and is in line with the current advice provided by the NSW Government Department of Health. There are no reported cases of COVID-19 currently in the school.





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I encourage parents to rely on reliable sources of information regarding the spread of the virus. The Australian Government publishes daily alerts with the latest medical advice and official reports. These alerts can be accessed via the [Australian Government Health Alert](#). Further information is also available at the [NSW Government Department of Health](#). These are far more reliable sources of information than what may be reported on social media.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 4321 6400, if you have any questions or would like to discuss the information outlined in this letter.

Your sincerely

Mark Bonnici
College Principal



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