



23 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that the social restrictions placed upon us in response to COVID-19 has not prevented families from having an enjoyable and relaxing Easter break. As the start of Term 2 approaches, I would like to share with families how the College is responding to the constantly changing advice that we have been receiving from varying levels of Government regarding the delivery of education in the coming weeks and months. The important health advice that remained constant in NSW throughout Term 1 is that if students can learn from home, they are strongly encouraged to do so. While this advice may be changing in response to the reducing impact of COVID-19 in Australia, Term 2 will commence with Home Based Learning, during Weeks 1 and 2, with teachers working from home in delivering online learning activities.

If the occupation of parents is in the essential services or if a parent has returned to work and a student cannot work from home, supervision will be provided at the College. Students attending school will engage in parallel learning, following the same lesson structure and online learning activities as students working at home. I ask that **only** parents who intend on sending their son to school in the first two weeks, complete the survey available at: [School Attendance Survey](#) by Friday April 24, so that adequate supervision can be established. Please note that there will be no canteen facilities during the first two weeks of term and students will need to bring a reusable water bottle which can be refilled at our cold-water filling stations. The new hygiene restrictions placed on schools do not permit the use of water fountains.

The NSW Government, Catholic Schools NSW and EREA will continue to monitor the current health situation and liaise with schools in the development of a plan to reintegrate students to face-to-face teaching. Attached is a media release by Catholic Schools NSW outlining the position of the Catholic Sector of schools, in response to the NSW Premier's recent announcements regarding a return to face-to-face teaching. The College Leadership team is currently developing a reintegration plan for St Edward's and will inform parents and students of this plan during the early weeks of Term 2. The health and welfare of students and staff will continue to be paramount in any decision-making relating to a return to face to face teaching.

The College has reflected on the feedback received from students, parents and teachers during the transition stage to Home Based Learning at the end of Term 1. This feedback, combined with intensive planning and professional learning, has facilitated the development of an approach to Home Based Learning which is designed to establish a good balance between maximising student engagement in creative learning activities, guidance and time to promote their wellbeing and the maintenance of a connection with their teachers, friends and the College community.

A detailed guide to support parents in assisting their son/s with Home Based Learning is attached and I encourage parents to take time to read this advice. A similar document has been prepared for students which will be emailed to them today. The information below outlines the processes being introduced in response to the feedback received, to support students in managing their learning online.





1. The Pastoral Leaders will commence Term 2 with an online Microsoft Teams assembly for each year group on **Monday April 27 at 9.00am**. Students can access the link to this first assembly through the College Portal in the News and Notices Section. Students have been provided with a link to an instructional video explaining the process of downloading the Microsoft Teams App in a letter they will receive from me today. This assembly is compulsory, and the Pastoral Leaders will clearly outline the expectations of students in relation to Home Based Learning.
2. The timetable structure has been modified with students being required to engage in three double period lessons each day. Double periods will allow more time for teachers to engage with students, introduce each lesson, provide feedback on learning as well as reduce the stress for students having to focus on six different lessons in one day. On Wednesday, the timetable will consist of three periods with no lessons scheduled in the afternoon. This free time is designed to break up the week and allow students to have some free time away from their screens in the hope that they will engage in activities that will promote both physical and mental wellbeing. Senior students however are encouraged to use this time to devote to the completion of assessment tasks, additional reading, and research. Teachers will meet on Wednesday afternoons to evaluate and collaborate on future learning activities and therefore will not be available online for feedback. This new timetable is available on the Student and Parent Portal along with the work to be covered each lesson.
3. At the start of every lesson, teachers and students will participate in a live Microsoft Teams meeting. Student participation in this meeting is compulsory and attendance will be recorded. Parents will be notified on a cyclical basis if their son is not engaging in these live meetings or if work or assessment items are not being completed. Teachers will continue to use the meeting time created throughout the double period to be available to provide feedback to students when required. Access to these meetings has been made available to the boys via their class page for each subject in Canvas, our online Learning Management System. The work set for every lesson will also be available to students on the Student Portal.
4. The wellbeing of students during isolation has been carefully considered in our planning. The Pastoral Team have created a Pastoral page in Canvas for each year group as a means of connecting with students. The Wellbeing lessons will continue to be delivered throughout the term and the Pastoral Leaders, Director of Pastoral Care and the College Counsellors are available to all families if concerns arise.
5. It is important that each student's connection with the College and his peers is maintained during an extended period of isolation. To assist in continuing this connection with the community, live online assemblies have been timetabled to take place on Wednesday mornings at 8.40am. Whole school assemblies coordinated by the College Prefect group, and year group assemblies will take place on an alternating basis each fortnight. These assemblies will be coordinated via a live Teams meeting and students can access these in the modules section of their respective Pastoral Canvas page. The prefects





have been working throughout the holiday break developing a range of ideas, competitions, and presentations to engage students in the whole school assembly.

6. Regular communication with families regarding the College response to the changing restrictions and the impact on student learning will continue. An important component of this will be the provision of opportunities for parents to provide the College with feedback on how the approach to Home Based Learning is progressing. It is anticipated that depending on the length of time we are required to deliver Home Based Learning, parents will be invited to complete an online survey to provide feedback to assist ongoing planning.
7. If students experience technical difficulties, they can email our Information Services department at: support@stedwards.nsw.edu.au or phone 43216444 between 9am – 3pm.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at principal@stedwards.nsw.edu.au if you have any questions or would like to discuss the information outlined in this letter.

Yours sincerely

Mark Bonnici
College Principal

