

Dear Parents / Guardians,

16th March 2020

We wish to advise there are no known diagnosed cases of COVID-19 amongst our students or staff currently. Therefore at this time there is no reason for our students or staff to be absent from school. **We are requesting, in this current health crisis, that families keep students at home if they are unwell.** Please update your child/ren's absences via the Sentral app or contact the office.

COVID-19

You are required to notify the school in the event that your child:

1. Has a confirmed case of COVID-19
2. Is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days. 'Close contact' is defined by DHHS as someone who has had at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with a confirmed case, or shared a closed space with someone for more than two hours with a confirmed case.

As of Monday 16 March, everyone returning from overseas will be required to self-isolate for 14 days upon entering Australia. This includes not visiting the school to pick up or drop off students, or for any other reason.

Additional information for Parents and Carers can be accessed from the Department of Health & Human Services here:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>.

There is much speculation in the media about the Government closing down schools for an unknown period of time. We have not been advised of plans to close down schools, however, in the event that the school is required to close, plans are in place for all students to continue learning from home. The school is monitoring all developments on a daily basis and we continue to follow the advice of the Victorian Department of Education.

Please note that the decision to close a school must be a directive from the Victorian Department of Education and Training – individual schools do not have the authority to close schools.

Following the latest advice we have implemented the following procedures:

1. There will be no assemblies until further notice
2. Our weekly community breakfast each Thursday has also been cancelled until further notice

- 3 Camps and excursions are postponed until further notice
- 4 Parent helpers course cancelled until further notice
- 5 Book Fair postponed
- 6 The administration office is closed to non essential visitors until further notice. If you need to contact staff please do so by phone or email. If the matter is urgent, please use the intercom button at the reception entrance and a staff member will speak with you.
- 7 There will be no face to face meetings with parents, we will endeavour to have discussions by phone or email until further notice
- 8 As we already do, children will be reminded about personal space and about avoiding touching other children - keeping their hands, feet and comments (about the virus that might be hurtful) to themselves is even more important now – could you please reinforce this at home
- 9 Teachers will continue to remind students of basis hygiene expectations (sneezing into their elbow or tissue, disposing of tissues correctly, avoiding touching their face) and the importance of washing their hands.
- 10 Student drop off and pick up changes**
Only students to enter the school grounds during this time. Staff will assist with the process of ensuring all students go directly to their learning communities (including students that may need assistance and encouragement to go to class without parents) and parents may pick up students at the front gate at dismissal time of 3.10pm.

Soap dispensers are available in the toilets for student use. If you can, please provide your child with their own individual sanitizer or wipes – this will assist us greatly.

Families will be asked to collect students who have presented to First Aid if unwell – please make arrangements for either yourselves or the emergency contacts to be available to collect children from school if needed.

The school is currently working towards a plan in the event that we are advised of a school closure. The school and Department of Education will provide further updates on how learning will continue in the event of school closures.

The uncertainties surrounding the current health crisis may be difficult for children to understand.

This video link (https://schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-coronavirus) may be helpful when talking with children about COVID-19. It outlines how parents, carers and teachers can help children with any anxiety they may be experiencing as a result of the media coverage.

We apologise for any inconvenience or distress this may cause you or your children, but our main priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of all students, staff and community members.

We will continue to keep families updated as more information becomes available. Thank you for your patience and understanding at this time.

Pete Hansen
Principal