



18 March 2020

COVID-19 Update and Distance Education Mode Trial Day

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The rapid evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak continues to be a challenge for everyone in education.

I am aware that it has caused concerns for parents, staff and students. This is an especially worrying time for those who are most vulnerable in our communities.

At present we have no reported cases of the virus at the College. If this situation changes, the College will inform you immediately.

Because the health and safety of school communities is our highest priority, the school's decision to stay open is based on advice from the Australian and Victorian Chief Medical Officers.

Currently, the advice of Dr Brett Sutton, Victorian Chief Health Officer, is that 'pre-emptive school closures are not likely to be proportionate or effective as a public health intervention to prevent community transmission of COVID-19 at this time'.

When advice from the Chief Medical Officers changes, we will communicate those changes to our school community.

We continue to actively monitor developments and are working closely with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV).

The CECV is partnering with the Victorian Department of Education and Training, and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services to ensure our practices reflect current advice and support the needs of our school community.

I am receiving regular updates from the CECV and ensuring school leaders and staff are aware of COVID-19 reporting and management practices and are well-placed to respond as circumstances change.

The school's leaders and teaching staff are committed to ensuring that learning remains available to students as part of our desire to provide equity and access to the Victorian curriculum for all students.

We are currently developing plans to support students to learn from home but while we remain open, the emphasis will be on the learning and teaching currently in place in the classroom.

On Wednesday 18 March, students and staff tested our capacity to connect and deliver online learning. 76% of students attended this trial and were able to connect with their teachers.

To prepare for a possible future transition to Distance Education Mode, the Leadership Team have decided to extend this trial.

Distance Education Mode Trial Day

Thursday 26 March will be a student free day for students in Year 7 to 11. Students will be asked to continue their lessons from home. Staff will be located at the College and will conduct all regular timetabled classes. Students will be expected to login to each scheduled lesson using Microsoft Teams.

This day will enable staff, students and families to trial the processes and procedures for students to ensure they can continue their learning at home should we be faced with any future school closures.

Year 12 students

In order to provide the greatest continuity of lessons for our VCE and VCAL students, all Year 12 students will attend classes from periods 1 to 3 on Thursday 26 March. Students are free to leave at lunchtime.

VET classes will also continue as scheduled on this day.

In the event of a forced school closure, we are committed to continuing high quality teaching and learning for our students. Students will be able to continue lessons remotely using our SIMON learning management system and Microsoft Teams. Should such an arrangement need to be enacted, parents/guardians and students will receive clear and detailed procedural advice.

Working from home arrangements for schools are most effective when students have access to the required resources, are given clear instructions and can communicate with their teachers.

In preparation for the Distance Education Mode Trial Day students should:

- have access to their IPAD or Laptop, charger and internet at home
- have access to digital and audio copies of the texts where possible
- download textbooks to PDF where possible
- take home non-digital resources i.e. novels, workbooks etc.

On Thursday 26 March Year 7 to 11 students will be expected to:

- login to Microsoft Teams at the start of the day during homeroom time
- follow their regular school timetable during the day, with the normal breaks
- complete work set for each lesson
- log out of Teams at the end of the day.

On Thursday 26 March teachers will:

- check in with students at the beginning of each timetabled lesson.
- provide learning activities, textbook activities and tasks which would usually be completed
- make available through Teams or SIMON any text-based and web-based materials, required.
- continue to regularly check their school email and Microsoft Teams during the day and be available during their regular timetabled classes to respond to any queries.

SIMON, Microsoft Teams and email communication between staff and students will occur during the regular school hours of 8.30 am to 4:30pm. Reception will be open on the day and the College Leadership Team will also be present.

The health and safety of our students and their families is the highest priority for us given the current climate of uncertainty around the COVID-19. We have decided to take the proactive stance of implementing a Distance Education Mode Trial Day to adequately prepare our staff, students and families for any future school closures.

Friday 27 March - Staff Professional Learning Day

All students in Year 7 to 12 will commence holidays on Friday 27 March.

Staff will evaluate the Distance Education Mode Trial Day and will prepare further materials

We thank you for your support and understanding as we continue to work together to support the needs of our students.

Please contact the school directly to discuss any educational continuity options.

Should you have any concerns relating to school operations, or the health and safety of students, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Marlene Jorgensen

Principal