

CHRIST OUR LIGHT



# MACKILLOP

## Catholic College

### WARNERVALE

Monday, 16 March 2020

#### **Parent Communication Regarding COVID-19**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Earlier today all Principals in the Broken Bay Diocese joined in a video conference to discuss the current situation with Coronavirus (COVID-19). We received advice from Catholic Schools NSW, Department of Education and Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant PSM from the NSW Health Department.

In summary we can advise the following:

- There is no Government-mandated closure of schools (including boarding schools).
- The dates of the upcoming school holidays remain unchanged.
- The advice from the Commonwealth and NSW Governments is to keep schools open and operational which may be revisited on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March.
- All whole school assemblies, sporting events, incursions, camps and excursions are to be re-scheduled or cancelled. This means that Canberra and Bathurst for the Primary School students won't take place on the dates arranged.
- Whole school masses and liturgies should not take place.
- As of midnight, last night any person entering the country from overseas by sea or by air must self-isolate for 14 days.

Our school will act on the advice mandated to us from Catholic Schools NSW which is based on the NSW Department of Education's Pandemic Plan.

#### **School Continuity Plan**

Preventative and Ongoing Measures

The Three most important things each one of us can do to help manage the spread of the virus are:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, disposing of the tissue straight away and washing your hands.
- Keep children at home if they are unwell and that schools are to send home all children who show any signs of being unwell.

If parents are choosing to keep their children at home for an indefinite period, the advice from the government is that school is still on and that is a personal choice. The school may be able to provide you with some schoolwork, but this would not be supervised by us. In the event that the school needs to close then we would look at all options available to us to provide lessons in a virtual manner and as mandated by Catholic Schools NSW.

As you could well imagine schools are limited in the answers we can provide to specific questions regarding the pandemic. MacKillop School will 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 <https://www.who.int/>.

There are no reported cases of COVID-19 currently in the school. Staff have been asked to monitor, not only themselves, but students in their classes and if a student presents at school unwell, parents will be contacted. This will cause inconvenience to parents, but this is the advice we have been given from the relevant authorities and we must follow what has been mandated. We ask for your understanding if in fact your child is sent home for what may turn out to be a common cold.

All parents are encouraged to rely on reliable sources of information regarding the spread of the virus. The Australian Government publishes regular alerts. These alerts can be accessed via the Australian Government Health Alert <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>. Important information is also available at the NSW Government of Health <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>.

Social Media in many respects is a wonderful communication tool for our times, but it is also the tool for those who spread misinformation. Please don't rely on social media for your COVID-19 information.

As more information comes to hand from Catholic Schools NSW and other relevant authorities, we will communicate these to you. For now, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 in our school and school will remain open until otherwise advised.

Yours Sincerely,



Steve Todd  
College Principal



Frank Cohen  
Primary Principal



Mel McGuinness  
Secondary Principal