



MACKILLOP

Catholic College

WARNERVALE

18 March 2020

Preparing for School Closure

Dear Parents & Carers,

This week has been a very challenging one for us all and, I offer our appreciation to all our parents for their support and understanding for what has been unfolding with changes to the operation of Schools in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The College has started this week by adopting the recommendations for not holding large gatherings and minimising risk by cancelling and rescheduling a number of activities. There has been a good response from students and staff with these matters and we are grateful to both groups for their cooperation and flexibility. There is much goodwill here at MacKillop and wanting to support students with their learning remains paramount. Above this remains the health and wellbeing of everyone here at the College. We are deeply concerned about the implications of keeping schools open.

It is true to say, that the absentee rate among the students across the School this week has significantly increased, and this is quite understandable considering the factors that each family is taking into consideration for their needs. We totally respect the reasons why parents have made these decisions.

The College's leadership team in association with a number of our specialist support people have been working through how we can continue learning away from the College. In today's world, modern technology offers us other avenues for connecting students with their teachers for learning. There are a number of platforms available here and the vast majority of teachers are somewhat familiar with and have been using the Google Classrooms platform. The new Compass program also allows for students, staff and parents to access information to support the learning process. Both of these platforms can be accessed remotely by computer devices and communication backwards and forwards can happen over a reasonable time frame.

If, and when it is decided by the Australian Govt in association with State Govt and our Educational Authorities that schools may have to close for a period of time, it will be at this point we will mobilise learning via Compass and Google Classrooms. The details for this roll out will happen with a short period of time (no longer than a week) of the decision for closing schools. The teachers are preparing for this and information will be circulated to students and parents via Compass and by email.

In fact, we will be operating a virtual school. For Kinder to Yr 6 Primary students they will be able to see what their daily learning blocks are in subject areas that have been made available via Google Classrooms. For our Secondary students, all learning will be arranged in timetable order for each day. This means that students can be attending each lesson remotely from home. The day can start and end when it suits each student and family. There will be communication links available for students to contact their teachers. Processes for submitting assessment tasks will also be available for students.

This reality is very different from the perception in the community that our students will be idle or out wandering around the Shopping Centres. It is important that learning continues as teachers and students will be engaging in this learning remotely away from the College Campus.

There will be all types of questions and enquiries from students and parents for how this will work. Our teachers and coordinators will be available during normal school hours to answer these questions and enquiries.

Parents with young children who have to work and do not have support to supervise their children are a big concern for us. We will endeavour to see if something can be arranged across the working week to support any family that needs support in this way. Technology access will be another problem that some families may struggle with and we will also look to how we can make some arrangements to support student learning.

So, in the interim please be aware that once we have been informed about pending closures of schools, we will respond via our social media to all parents outlining how our MacKillop virtual learning community will operate.

I thank you for your ongoing support,



Steve Todd
College Principal



Frank Cohen
Primary Principal



Mel McGuinness
Acting Secondary Principal