



Saturday 21st March

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Re: COVID-19 Update

The Victorian State Government has announced *Friday 27th March and Tuesday 14th April* as pupil free days for State Government Schools. St Mary's is waiting on a response from the Catholic Education Commission Victoria (CECV). I would recommend preparing for the same dates.

There is a 'new normal' that may last for a period of time. The COVID-19 magnitude will bring anxiousness and unknowns. At the forefront of each College day at St Mary's is our Administration team who have been outstanding in dealing with the queries; phone calls; emotions and worries of many. They do this so professionally and wisely amongst all the 'other things' the team do in what is currently a very complex time. Hats off to the ladies!

NAPLAN

The College has received official notification that NAPLAN Tests for Years 3; 5; 7 and 9 are cancelled for 2020. A logical and sensible decision considering the current state of our world.

School Bus Travel

We will be consulting with Seymour Coaches this coming week to keep you informed of any changes for travel to and from school in respect to the end of Term One and the beginning of Term Two.

Hygiene

St Mary's is fortunate to have a very good cleaning team, who go above and beyond to ensure our environment is as clean as we can possibly provide for students and staff. There are hygiene posters in all classrooms and toilets and all rooms have hand sanitisers in place for students and staff. Students are reminded daily on good hygiene practices. Social distancing is impossible at schools, hence the government exemption from this expectation.

Student Attendance

The College has received many queries from parents as to whether children are best at home and or if families possibly come 'in contact.' There is no perfect answer and I do not pretend to be a medical expert. Catholic education is following DHHS/CECV guidelines who in turn are guided by State and National Medical Advisers.

Online Learning

Our staff are preparing for the possibility of a period of time of online learning. If there is a shutdown announced by State and National authorities, online learning will not be a completely seamless process. As stated in last week's update there are many variables that come into play. SIMON, Athletics and Sunshine Literacy Learning Space will be key components of this external mode of teaching.

If this 'new normal' is for an extended period of time we will see (as we do now) the best of people and what panic causes. Resilience will be tested. Nevertheless, the world is at a chaotic moment in time, which understandably affects life. May we all go gently and remember there are still roses to smell. Or as my 91 year old father said during a phone call Friday evening, "*we got through the depression, we'll get through this.*"

There will be a further update emailed to you before Friday 27th March.

Best wishes and stay well!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'W' and 'S'.

Wayne Smith

Principal

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