



From the desk of the Principal

3 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to begin by acknowledging all the medical, health and essential services workers who are working tirelessly to safeguard our community at this time. Thank you for your courage and selflessness. We are truly blessed.

Over the holidays, we plan to keep our student and families updated with news as it comes to hand. You will notice that I have included an update to our students in this letter. It is not our intention to overwhelm you with information but rather to keep you in our knowledge 'loop'. I am aware that this has been a challenging period for everyone so it is our way of accentuating the importance of community and connection. With that in mind, please be kind to yourself, your family, friends and neighbours.

TERM 2 COMMENCEMENT

At this point in time Term 2 is planned to commence with a pupil free day on Tuesday April 14 with students returning on Wednesday April 15.

Term 2 may start with school closure, but this has not been confirmed by the Department of Education and Training. As soon as we know that students are learning from home, we will confirm arrangements for staff and for children of essential services workers. We will monitor the situation over the next week and alert you as soon as there is a clear decision.

COVID-19 CLEANING GUIDANCE

Over the holiday break we are undertaking extended and additional cleaning in the college. The temporary 'no entry' signs posted at the entry point to each campus are to ensure that the process proceeds smoothly without contamination. This cleaning will focus on high touch points and to ensure that the risks of transmission are reduced.

BEWARE THE CYBERBULLY AND THE ONLINE PREDATOR

There is a possibility of increased risk to children as they spend more hours online due to COVID-19. The eSafety Commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, has called for a heightened sense of awareness as parents supervise their children at home throughout this period.

At the same time, there has been a distinct increase in the use of online apps in recent days; with more than two million downloads in the past seven days. Many young people use these apps to socialise with friends, meet new people and play games. The apps are the ideal place to hide explicit content from parents/supervisors. While the most common download is Houseparty, there are many others from which to select. The eSafety Commissioner warns that this is a perfect forum for contact by sexual predators. Click on the link and follow the prompts: <https://www.esafety.gov.au>

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COVID-19 VCE AND VCAL PROGRAM ADVICE

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is continuing to monitor the situation closely to ensure that no student is disadvantaged. Frequently asked questions:

How will this affect their VCE, VET or VCAL?

There is considerable flexibility for schools in the delivery of School-based learning outcomes and assessment. The VCAA will support schools to give each student opportunity to complete the requirements of their VCE studies.

If the college closes, what about SAC/SAT assessment?

Schools have flexibility to adapt its SAC/SAT calendar - and we will postpone and reschedule SACs/SATs as required. If a school closure extends – assessment and programs will be adapted. The college will keep students updated with advice and guidance from VCAA.

What about performance, practical or oral-based SACs/SATs if the college closes?

The college will be able to reschedule any tasks as required. Teachers will communicate guidance for tasks that students may take home to work on (such as art or technology pieces).

What if the college needs to close down during the GAT exam period or end of year exams?

We will be waiting for VCAA to provide guidance and advice as needed.

Will VCAA take prolonged absences/impact on learning into consideration concerning end of year results?

As stated earlier - the VCAA aims to ensure that no student is disadvantaged and will support schools to give each student opportunity to complete the requirements of their VCE studies.

OUR COMMITMENT

During these times, I am acutely aware of the hardships that have been placed on families in the workforce. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and changing financial circumstances, some of you may be concerned about your capacity to meet school fee obligations. I would like to assure you that no student will be denied a Catholic education due to inability or reduced capacity to pay school fees and costs.

It is very important that you know that we are with you and will work with you throughout this crisis. Please contact our Business Manager, Mr David Lim via email dlim@sjcmda.vic.edu.au if the above applies to your circumstances. Please be assured that your dignity and privacy will be respected.

FINALLY

I thank you for your trust and reiterate our commitment to standing with you during this difficult time. On behalf of all our St Joseph's College community, I wish you and your family all the best during these unprecedented times. I trust that you will find solace in this [beautiful reflection and prayer](#) of hope composed by Fr Richard Hendricks OFM.

God bless



Mrs Marg Blythman
Principal