



From the desk of the Principal

17 April 2020

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Dear Parents and Carers

Each morning I think of the disruption experienced by our students this year. There are many experiences and opportunities that are now on hold and we are required to approach life in a different way. In my letter today I have included an interesting article from Gabby Stroud as well as news of a practical way in which we can support our friends and family during this challenging time.

MERCY IN ACTION

Our Mercy values of compassion, hospitality, community, service, justice, spirituality and excellence guide us in all that we do. Social Justice at St. Joseph's College is led by the Mercy Action Group – a group of dedicated staff and students who are passionate about making a difference in the local and global community.

The founding Sisters of Mercy in Dublin were known as the 'walking nuns' as they were without the usual strict convent enclosures. The Sisters were inspired to meet local needs and it is in this tradition that the college offers a variety of outreach experiences. Our students are encouraged to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and Catherine McAuley to explore practical ways to express God's mercy.

During this time of online learning, the Mercy Action Group, in conjunction with our catering team, are offering a Community Connections Hospitality program to those who would appreciate support. Students have the opportunity to order a meal for their family or a loved one in the community – perhaps a grandparent, friend or relative who is socially isolated. There is no cost for this service and we will arrange for contactless delivery. An order form will be sent out at the beginning of next week so please stay tuned.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AT THIS TIME

Merimbula author and former teacher [Gabby Stroud](#) has appeared on ABC's Q&A program to provide some timely advice for parents assisting their children's learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When Q&A's host Hamish Macdonald asked Ms Stroud how parents could balance delivering home-schooling while also working at home, she said she had to clarify the situation the country was in right now was not actually home-schooling.

"What we're seeing right now are students learning from home, just like adults are working from home, so no-one's actually expecting parents to teach their child as a teacher would in a classroom," she said.

"Teachers are working very, very hard to deliver curriculum online and remotely in many varied forms so that their students can still access it.

"[Teachers] know mistakes are going to be made, we know kids are going to miss out on essential learning that should have been covered this year, we know that there's going to be a disruption to learning," Ms Stroud said.

"We just can't do it all, no matter how hard teachers work and with what integrity parents go at this learning from home with their own children.

"We need to start asking 'what matters', 'what matters right now'. And what matters right now is that our families feel harmonious and safe.

"Children can't learn unless they feel safe and there's high anxiety in the air around them all the time at the moment, especially related to this pandemic that we face."

"What our kids are actually learning right now is how we deal with a crisis," she said, which she described as a "massive life skill".

She advised parents to ask their children's schools for hints and tips, and that their children's teachers would also be willing to provide direct encouragement, either through email or their school's online learning platform. [Albert McKnight](#) Bega District news

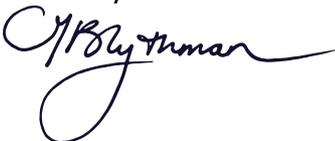
IN CLOSING

Since 1906, St Joseph's College has survived many challenges; with every one of these, we have come out the other side, bigger, better and stronger. It is a very different time for us and we face some interesting times yet it is my unwavering belief in each and every one of you, when I say we **can** do this and this moment in time shall pass.

Thank you to all those parents who have supported us with positive feedback at this time – you are a true blessing.

Stay safe and stay positive.

Sincerely



Mrs Marg Blythman
Principal