

From the desk of the Principal

1 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I know this is a challenging time for our whole community and I thank you once again for your support for our students and staff and your understanding as we go forward.

In my update today I honour our Police force, remind everyone of the college hospitality program, include a message from our Wellbeing Team, a useful video, news of the Year 12 rugby jumpers and an excerpt from our recent student survey.

UPDATE ON FLEXIBLE AND REMOTE LEARNING

We are all aware of media reports speculating about an end to the current requirement for students to learn flexibly and remotely. The Catholic Education Commission Victoria (CECV) is following the advice of the Chief Health Officer and working with the Victorian Department of Education and Training on developing a state-wide process for all schools to transition back to in-person teaching, and will provide an update once an approach has been agreed. We want to be consistent and deliberate in our actions so that we take into account the needs and safety of students, staff and families in any return to school. I believe we are best placed to continue focusing our attention on the current arrangements and our growth as an education community for the remote learning context.

IN MEMORY

The college has been placing regular weekly advertisements in the Sunraysia Daily with special messages to the wider community. Last week we focused on ANZAC Day and this week our focus will be on the Victoria and South Australia Police community and their families.



We pray that God's loving comfort and strength be ever present in the homes of the families of police who have given their lives for the sake of the community.

Leading Senior Constable **Lynette Taylor**
Senior Constable **Kevin King**
Constable **Glen Humphris**
Constable **Joshua Prestney**
Detective Chief Superintendent **Joanne Shanahan** (South Australia)

As a mark of respect the flags at the front of the college will be flown at half-mast during school hours from Wednesday April 29 until Wednesday May 6.

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ST JOSEPH'S
COLLEGE MILDURA
VIRTUE CONQUERS

ENRIGHT CAMPUS
154 TWELFTH STREET
MILDURA VICTORIA 3500

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CORNER RIVERSIDE AVENUE
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MILDURA VICTORIA 3500

VCAL CAMPUS
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A REMINDER OF OUR COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS HOSPITALITY PROGRAM

In conjunction with our catering and kitchen team, the Mercy Action Group are pleased to announce the Community Connections Hospitality Program. Families now have the opportunity to order a soup, main meal and sweet treat for someone who, at this time, may be socially isolated or vulnerable in the community – perhaps a grandparent, friend, family member, relative or a loved one. There is **no cost for this service** and we will arrange for contactless delivery (local addresses only). We ask parents to discuss the importance of this outreach initiative with your children. If you wish to nominate a person or family, please complete the accompanying order form and submit online as per the instructions. With the launch of this program we are initially limiting the order to one per family.

The program has been very successful and we have been overwhelmed with positive feedback. Here is just one example.

Just a quick reply to thank you all for the lovely gesture of a meal... it was delivered last night and (the recipient) was very surprised and grateful.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR WELLBEING TEAM

It is a different time in which we find ourselves. We would like to acknowledge the amount of work that parents, students and staff have put into continuing learning and teaching during this time. We are all trying to make sense of what is happening and with all the mixed messages from the various levels of government, and other commentators, it can be even more difficult to make informed decisions about the best thing to do. What we must remember is that this will pass and life will return to 'normal' one day. We must all keep as a key priority our relationships with each other. We must work at limiting the amount of stress in these relationships, especially at home. We can, in fact, attempt to strengthen them while we are spending this extra time together.

As parents, it may be difficult to ensure that your child is completing their school work, especially while you are also trying to also complete your work. Please make sure that you are aware of when things get difficult for yourself and your child/ren. Spend some quality time with them, making some great memories that you can treasure for a long time to come.

No doubt there are many websites that you can visit to help you develop some coping strategies and relaxation techniques, but we would like to remind you that there is nothing better that you can do for your child/ren than to have a great relationship with them.

Building trust and mutual respect is of prime importance at this time. If they can't talk to you when they have a problem, then who can they talk to? Make time for them in the *busy-ness* of an online school and work home.

Make sure that you and the children take regular breaks, make time for non-school 'stuff': walking the dog, gardening, cooking, connecting with friends, watching a favourite show, reading, etc. Students do not work 100% of the time they are at school.

If you are worried about how your child is coping, contact Wellbeing wellbeing@sjcmda.vic.edu.au or their Homeroom Teacher for a chat.

Try to relax and enjoy. You are not the teacher, so don't feel that you have to be, but you are a very important part of their lives who is there to support them and to work with them.

PERSPECTIVE, ACCEPTANCE AND GRATITUDE

I found this [eight-minute video](#) to be a valuable tool for reflection when it was shared with me this week. Ben Crowe - mindset coach and director of Mojo Crowe – explores the challenges people face when they are confronted with events that are out of their control. He helps us understand how we can find perspective, adapt and grow through adversity. You may find it useful in the current situation.

YEAR 12 RUGBY JUMPERS

I am happy to announce that these have now arrived. The college acknowledges that remote learning has presented challenges to many students at St Joseph's College and across the state. We have been impressed with our students' positive attitude and dedication to their academic studies. As recognition of their efforts, and in light of current circumstances, we have decided to allow the Year 12 students to wear their Rugby Jumper **any day** during the remote learning period over the top of their winter uniform. On their return to school, the normal uniform rules apply so they are expected to wear the Rugby Jumper on Tuesdays and Thursdays (if an assembly is on either of these days they must change into their blazer).

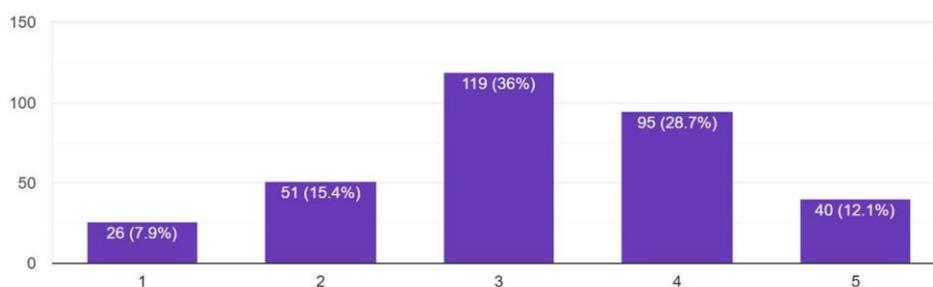
If students are [well](#), they are invited to collect their Rugby Jumper from the Mercy campus during Academe or Study periods on Monday May 4 or Tuesday May 5. They will also be available for collection after school until 4.30pm on these days. As per the collection of the Year 12 tie and cookies, we ask students to enter the campus near the Holland room. Please enter via the Eleventh Street carpark and remember to apply the hand sanitiser located at the entrance to the salon. Social distancing rules apply. If you are unable to attend please email [Mrs Aston](#) and we will arrange to deliver your rugby jumper.

STUDENT SURVEY

We had 331 students complete a survey on wellbeing and academic progress during the remote learning period. Here is an excerpt.

4. How are you feeling about your online learning at the moment?

331 responses



1 – I don't like online learning to 5 – I enjoy online learning

5. What have you enjoyed the most about online learning so far?

- ✓ Finding new ways to learn outside of school.
- ✓ That we can still see our teachers and classmates.
- ✓ Being able to go at my own pace and being able to have quietness while doing my work.
- ✓ I really enjoy it, I like doing things at my own pace and I feel like I am getting so much more work done.
- ✓ We get to zoom our whole class and it feels like we have more time to get assignments done.
- ✓ There are recordings of classes so you can go and review classes. This is also done at uni most of the time so it helps you get used to it. I believe that we should be doing more online learning.
- ✓ The ability to have my own personal work space and to be able to work without distractions
- ✓ English and Math and my family being home.
- ✓ Keep it up, SJC is doing an amazing job :)
- ✓ I just want to go back to school.

FINALLY

Thank you so much for all that you are doing to lead through and navigate the challenges of remote learning. With regard to the last few weeks we have had our share of challenges, setbacks and struggles. I have also seen the very best of humanity and kindness. Let us resolve to share who we are as members of a Catholic school community, with the wider community through gentle words of encouragement and thanks, a phone call, an email, a smile, a prayer – it will be received with gratitude.

In closing I include an image from one of our Mercy Action Group members. These personalised artworks are accompanying the meals we are delivering with our Community Connections Hospitality program.



Blessings

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mrs Marg Blythman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail.

Mrs Marg Blythman
Principal