

March 16, 2020

Dear Students and Parents/Carers,

RE: COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

Over the last couple of weeks we have been distributing information via Compass to support you in understanding the current Coronavirus issue and how to take steps to protect yourselves and others. While that information is still relevant we also know that the situation is changing rapidly in Australia.

This update contains information which will be important over the coming days and weeks. It's lengthy but please read it carefully. It's important that people don't panic, but it's also important to know what the College is planning and what advice we have. Firstly, some definitions we all need to be familiar with:

Self-isolate – remain at home and restrict contact with others for 14 days because you've either been confirmed with the virus or you have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Self-distancing – maintaining a distance between yourself and others to minimise the risk of contracting the virus, with a suggested distance of 1.5 metres. This includes limiting physical contact with others.

Close contact – having, within the last 14 days, at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact or the sharing of a closed space for more than two hours with someone who has been tested and confirmed as having COVID-19.

1. An important step all of us should be taking to help stop the spread of any disease is to practice good hygiene: cover your mouth or nose when coughing or sneezing, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water on a regular basis (particularly before eating and after using the toilet), avoid close contact with people who are sick and avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth. Self-distancing is also good practice, particularly if there are confirmed cases of the COVID-19 in the community.
2. The symptoms of the coronavirus include fever, breathing difficulties, cough, sore throat, fatigue or tiredness. Having a cough or snuffle doesn't mean that you've got the coronavirus. One of the distinguishing features of the virus in comparison with a common cold or flu is breathing difficulties. However, if you are unwell with the symptoms above you should stay at home and not attend school. We are a school, not a medical service, and we are not equipped to provide support to students who develop illness during the day. If you are not well enough to be in class you should not be at school. If students present with these symptoms we will do what we do with any illness: we will call parents or emergency contacts and we expect the student to be collected from school as soon as possible.

3. It is not appropriate for students to engage in unsafe behaviour, try to scare others or make a joke of the risks we all face. We have students and staff who have medical conditions which compromise their immunity, placing them at great risk if they contract the coronavirus. There seems to be some confusion and concern about the need for people to self-isolate if they perceive a risk through contact with someone who is being tested for the coronavirus. The government advice on this is clear: you only need to self-isolate if you have been in contact with someone who has been confirmed as having coronavirus.
4. All camps scheduled to commence from, and including, Tuesday 17 March must be postponed and rescheduled, or, if there is no other option, cancelled. No camps can commence from Tuesday 17 March.
5. All excursions outside the school for purposes such as visits to cultural institutions, art galleries, theatres and sporting events or facilities (other than those local facilities regularly used by the school) planned from, and including Tuesday 17 March must also be postponed or cancelled. This does not include student and staff travel between campuses of the same school (i.e. ADP students travelling to BSE).
6. No government school is currently closed or in the process of being closed. If a decision is made to close the college we are unlikely to have much notice of the closure. It could happen with just an hour's notice at the end of a school day or it could occur overnight. If this does occur we will advise students and parents via our usual means of communication – Compass, text message, email, website and Facebook. Please be monitoring these closely over the coming days and weeks.
7. Due to the current concerns we have assessed all of our upcoming college events and we can advise you that:
- a. Thursday's Athletics Carnival is cancelled.**
 - b. Tuesday's Interschool Sports Day is cancelled.**
 - c. Parent/Teacher Interviews scheduled for Thursday 26 and Friday 27 March have been cancelled. This means that normal classes will run on the last day of term with the regular end of term dismissal time of 2:30pm. I encourage you to monitor Compass for student achievements to date and please contact your student's teachers if you have any questions or would like to discuss learning progress.**
 - d. Year 7 Spectacular scheduled for Friday 20 March has been cancelled.**

There will no doubt be more information we need to share in the coming days and weeks. In the meantime, I encourage everyone to remain alert to the risks, to monitor advice through the media and from the college and to practice safe behaviours to prevent the spread of the virus.

Kind Regards



Jason Bysouth
Acting Principal