

Dear Parents and Caregivers

## **COVID-19 UPDATE 17 MARCH 2020**

On Sunday, the Prime Minister made three announcements concerning the Coronavirus measures that have direct relevance to schools:

1. All international travellers returning to or entering Australia from any destination will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.
2. Static gatherings of more than 500 people will be banned.
3. Educational facilities, such as schools, will remain open

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the measures that we are taking as a College to ensure that we are consistent with these government restrictions along with other measures that we feel are prudent for the protection of our GCC community.

### **School exclusions and self-isolation**

Due to the change in the advice from the government yesterday the following will apply to our students and parents:

- Students who have returned to Australia after international travel and after March 15 will be in self-isolation for 14 days after their return. As such, they are not permitted to attend the College.
- Students who have been in close contact with someone who is in self-isolation will need to be excluded from the College until they have received medical clearance.
- Students who have been in close contact with someone and that person, subsequent to that contact, tests positive to the Coronavirus, then that student will need to be excluded until they have received medical clearance.
- Students who are living with someone who has been tested for Coronavirus will be required to isolate until the test outcome has been determined. If the test is positive, then the student will need to isolate until they have received medical clearance.

Under most circumstances, medical clearance will be after 14 days of self-isolation.

In all of these circumstances, it is vital that you inform the College. Likewise, if you are intending to return your child to school after an exclusion period you must receive clearance from the College first.

Further to what I have been saying in previous letters to you, if your child is sick with any illness, do not send them to school and do not let them participate in community activities that could infect our students. This is not the time to adopt a "she'll be right" attitude. This is the time to exercise a more cautionary approach to what we may have done in the past.

### **Changes to school events, camps and excursions**

Until further notice, we will be suspending usual assemblies, chapels and any other gatherings that are greater than one year level.

We will be considering excursions on a case by case basis. We perform a risk assessment on any excursion before they are allowed to go ahead and as part of our processes, we are including potential exposure to Coronavirus. Some activities will be riskier than others, for instance, any excursions that would expose our students to the greater public without social distancing measures in place would be considered an unacceptable risk.

Unfortunately, we have had to postpone our Year 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 camps and we hope to reinstate them later in the year once we are in more certain times. We are a great believer in camps and our outdoor program but at this point, it presents an unacceptable risk to have students and staff living so closely together for a period of time in light of the current merit of social distancing.

Year 10 Work Experience has also been postponed. This is because there are enough burdens on business now during this crisis. Work Experience may also necessitate travel on public transport and other things that may increase the risk of infection for our students. It is a great enhancement to our school program, but it is not essential.

Our involvement with SCISSA sport on a Wednesday afternoon for Middle and Senior students has been suspended. This has been a decision reached by the whole association. Regional sporting trials will continue until further notice.

There may very well be more cancellations that we will need to announce in the future but we will do this after the Easter holidays.

### **School Closure**

On point 3 Prime Minister Scott Morrison says Australian schools should remain open for the time being, despite some calls for them to shut to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The Prime Minister said shutting schools down would do more harm than good.

*"People are naturally anxious about the issues of schools," he said.*

*"As the British chief medical officer observed over the last couple of days, the issue of wide scale closure of schools, and it may seem counter-intuitive, but the advice is this could be a very negative thing in terms of impacting on how these (epidemic) curves operate, for two reasons.*

*"When you take children out of school and put them back in the broader community, the ability for them to potentially engage with others increases that risk. That's the understanding we had."*

*"Also issues of herd immunity which relate to children. The other is the disruption impact that could have and put at great risk the availability of critical workers such as nurses, doctors and others who are essential in the community because they would have to remain home and look after their children."*

*"So while it may seem counterintuitive, there (are) very good reasons why you would not be moving to broadscale closures of schools. That could make the situation worse, not better.*

*"The states and territories are not moving in that direction."*

The PM said the matter would be reassessed on Friday, 20 March.

For this reason, we have no intention of closing the College. However, should that situation arise and the closure is a lengthy one, we have explored scenarios of continuing educational delivery despite physical classes being suspended. If GCC was to close, we are very well placed to provide a high-quality educational program through video conferencing software, and our learning management system Gateway amongst a plethora of other tools at our disposal.

### **Self-isolation by choice**

Some of you are choosing to keep your children home. This is something we neither encourage nor discourage so that decision will be up to you as parents. If you choose to self-isolate, please email [admin@glasshouse.qld.edu.au](mailto:admin@glasshouse.qld.edu.au).

It is our intention to support your child as best we can in their learning journey away from class. Please understand that it may take a few days to collate learning materials and for your child's teacher to set some work, as their usual classes must be their first priority.

As always, I would like to thank you so much for your cooperation in these difficult times and we will continue to keep informed as the need arises.

Warm regards  
Mike Curtis  
Principal