



St Joseph's
College
TOOWOOMBA

March 18 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to provide an update on the latest coronavirus advice, including the possibility of a school closure. Our overall priority remains with the safety of all staff and students and the continuity of student learning. Working in partnership with you will minimise the impact of these changes on students and their learning.

School closures:

Our national and state authorities continue to make it clear they will look at appropriate measures, as necessary, to slow transmission rates to limit the pressure on our health system. It is clear that broad school closures will (and are) being weighed up as a part of the containment strategies. We will continue to closely monitor and be guided by the advice of our state and national authorities which (to date) have not proposed broad school closures. The two most likely eventualities are:

- school specific (spot) closures as a health response to a critical incident (eg a school is closed for 3 days after a student or staff member returns a positive test); and/or
- potential broader school closures as part of an emergency or disaster management response (likely coupled with other community restrictions).

Parents will be advised immediately in the event of a school closure.

Continuity of student learning – Pupil-Free Day:

If our school is closed for an extended period, students will be asked to continue their learning from home. **A pupil-free day has been scheduled by the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Diocese for Friday 27th March** to allow staff to prepare necessary work and undergo training for the possibility of a school closure. I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause. I have no doubt that this day will benefit all students in the long-term.

Local school excursions and events:

A reminder as per my earlier correspondence this week that in order to meet the suggested guidelines around reducing the chance of contamination the following procedures are being put into place.

- Full College assemblies and house meetings have been ceased.
- Future full College events are being cancelled / postponed.
- We are endeavouring to split our lunch break into smaller groups.
- All excursions are cancelled until further notice.



- All sport, cultural or mission participation is ceased until further notice – eg band practice, footy training, Rosies, breakfast club.
- You Never Walk Alone (options) – students will be not leaving the College to participate in recreational activities.
- All professional development participation is ceased.
- Non-essential face to face meetings are to be postponed. Alternative methods are to be explored.

Travel:

Please reconsider any unnecessary overseas travel in the coming months. While we understand that in some cases this travel might be unavoidable for family circumstances, overseas travel for holiday purposes should be postponed. Overseas travel arrivals now require two weeks mandatory self-isolation on return to Australia and overseas destinations are adding similar requirements at their end. Two weeks self-isolation means a significant loss of learning time for your children.

Some tips for keeping your children safe and well:

- If your child shows symptoms of a cold or flu, keep them home. If those symptoms persist, and the symptoms are more than a 'cold', you should seek medical advice.
- If your child is well they should attend school. It is likely the pandemic will be with us for months, not weeks.
- Talk to your children about hygiene and model the recommended behaviour at home – hand washing and sneezing protocols in particular.
- Respond appropriately to issues relating to student anxiety. Some tips for talking to your child can be found [here](#). Please talk to your child's House Leader or pastoral care teacher if assistance is required at school to manage anxiety levels.
- Reassure your Year 12 student that he/she will not be disadvantaged by assessment changes due to coronavirus.

We greatly appreciate the support and goodwill already shown by our parent community. If you have any further concerns or questions, please contact the College.

Kind regards



Mr Kort Goodman
Principal

