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St Paul's
Catholic College
Booragul

23 March 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Re: COVID – 19 Update No. 6.

The announcement from the Premier of NSW Gladys Berejiklian is that public schools in NSW will continue to be open until at least the school holidays in 3 weeks' time. At this point, Catholic Systemic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland Newcastle remain the same.

In saying that, the State Government has also asked parents to keep students at home and that schools are open if they are not able to organise suitable supervision during the school day for their children. This is particularly important for parents who work in frontline employment in the fight against this virus.

St Paul's will remain open for this purpose. Teachers will be present on site preparing for the delivery of online work for all students. Some teachers will be absent as they grapple with the need to have child care for their own children as well as teachers who might be in the higher risk health category. We will continue to employ Casual teachers to replace staff as needed.

St Paul's teachers are committed to fair and consistent delivery of the curriculum. Teachers are working to develop their skillset in the preparation of online delivery of their courses for all stages. We have been holding in service sessions over the past few weeks but the reality is that we are still in the early stages of our development. In Update Number 4, I spoke about the inability of staff to set individual work for students who are not at school. That situation has not changed but we will endeavour to have basic work available for students via Compass. Students still have access to our online platforms such as Education Perfect for most KLA areas, Maths Online and Hot Maths.

Teaching and Learning

Tomorrow will be another unknown for all of us. We will not know how many students we will have in attendance until the start of the day. I suspect that we will have a large percentage of families electing to have their children stay at home. Our plan is to have a meeting with each year group separately (social distancing principles to apply) and then move the students into learning areas where we can spread them out more effectively. Students will stay in those designated areas and teaching staff will move to them so that there is less movement once again in keeping with social distancing principles. Students will engage in online learning supervised by teachers from the specific KLA. The student's normal timetable will continue through the day which will allow us to have the appropriate staff in with them in most cases. Please note that TAS, CAPA, Science and PDHPE lessons will not have practical components at this point. This will allow us to release staff to continue to develop online learning for all students so that all will have access to the curriculum as we go forward. Obviously if we have large numbers of students present we will continue with the normal teaching and learning schedules.

Assessment:

At the meeting of the Leadership team this morning, we have made the following decisions in relation to Assessment.

1. Stage 4 and 5 assessment (Years 7-10) – All assessment tasks that would be used for formal assessment in all KLA areas have been cancelled. This includes the CSO Religious Education Literacy Tests for Year 8 and Year 10. Tasks that students are currently working on can continue as learning tasks and feedback will be given by teachers on their completion. Teachers will use such work as a guide to overall grades of student performance in the same way any class task might be used. Students are asked to continue to make the most of these learning opportunities.
2. Stage 6 Assessment is much more complex. We will continue to assess student work in stage 6 in a formal capacity but with modified conditions.
 - a. If tasks can be submitted online (e.g via email) then students will be required to do so. Practical tasks/drama and music performances and presentation style tasks will be postponed. If there is a written component to these tasks then there might be a requirement to present these via an online platform. KLA areas will continue to adjust tasks in the coming months as is needed.
 - b. Stage 6 tasks for Term 2 will be postponed until we have further clarity from NESAs.
 - c. Students who are unable to submit a task are asked to use the normal processes for accident and misadventure. Please note that the need for Doctor's Certificates will not be strictly adhered to as the demand on medical services may preclude this from happening.
 - d. NESAs have a major meeting tomorrow evening and I suspect that we will have more direction from them very shortly.
 - e. Teachers will confirm submission arrangements and any other changes to assessment with their classes.

Obviously, like everything else surrounding this pandemic, things will probably change in regard to assessment and teaching and learning. We will continue to try to make sense of it all and try to keep things as even and fair as we can for all students.

The Canteen will continue to operate normally during the day. Please note that some items might not be available due to supply issues that might arise.

Information from Hunter Valley buses this morning indicate that they will continue to run normal school services and that they are complying with all Health Department directives in terms of cleaning and sanitizing buses every day.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and patience as we move forward. I will endeavour to keep you informed as things develop. Please stay safe, continue to counsel your children on the importance of social distancing both here at school and in their broader world. We are all in this together and our response to the advice needs to be closely adhered to if we are to save lives. We continue to pray for all our leaders that they make sound decisions and that we all come out of this crisis safely.

Your sincerely



Mr Graeme Selmes
Principal