

PO Box 194 Boolaroo NSW 2284  
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**St Paul's**  
Catholic College  
Booragul

25 March 2020

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

**Re: COVID-19 Update No. 8. - Stage 6 Focus.**

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Board held a meeting yesterday, 24 March, and confirmed that the Higher School Certificate (HSC) is going ahead in 2020. NESA also recognises their commitment to providing clear and regular advice to the community about the HSC at this time and will continue to regularly provide information and advice to the education community.

Following the meeting, Chair of the NESA Board Professor Peter Shergold said he had three important messages for HSC students:

1. We know you are worried. While we recognise we are facing an unprecedented situation, we want to assure you that you will be able to get a HSC certificate this year, and that the certificate will facilitate access to university, further education and employment, as it has for students over the past 50 years.
2. Keep learning, do your assessments as advised by your school, make progress on your major projects where you can and, most importantly, look after yourself, whether you are at school or at home. Reach out to family, friends and your teachers if you need to.
3. If you get sick, your school and NESA have provisions to ensure you are not disadvantaged.

Principals or system authorities will be able to make decisions about the number and weighting of HSC formal assessment tasks for their school in 2020. As a result, there may be some adjustments to the assessment schedules that were issued at the beginning of the HSC course and students will be provided with due notice of any changes.

The NESA COVID-19 Response Committee is aware of and will urgently provide advice on the following issues:

- work placements for VET students
- students working on a group drama, dance or music performance
- students completing projects and major works.

Professor Shergold said the situation faced by schools was unprecedented and that in this situation the Board recognises above all else that the health, safety and welfare of students and teachers is paramount. The Board also acknowledges the issues of disadvantage, dislocation and social isolation that students are currently facing. Any decisions made by NESAs, systems and schools will be based on the principles of fairness and equity that have always underpinned the HSC credential.

NESA has advised that schools should continue implementing their assessment policy and associated processes. If a student is unable to undertake an assessment task due to Australian or NSW Government COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) restrictions, this would meet the school's criteria for illness / misadventure. In this situation, it is recommended that schools plan for substitute tasks.

### **What does this mean for our students?**

Although we are still waiting on further advice from NESAs in regard to examination projects, submitted works and performances, the message to HSC students is to keep learning. Students should engage in the learning and assessment opportunities that are presented to them. We would also encourage students to continually communicate with teachers and each other at this time through platforms such as Teams and email.

Earlier this week at St Paul's it was decided that the following arrangements would be made for Stage 6 assessments:

1. 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.
2. Stage 6 tasks for Term 2 will be issued at the beginning of Term 2.
3. 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.
4. Teachers will confirm submission arrangements and any other changes to assessment with their classes.

At this stage, when assessments are issued, students will be asked to 'please reply' and we expect students to respond so we can be sure all students have accessed assessment notifications. The assessment notifications will also be made available on Compass for student reference. As communicated previously, practical assessments will be postponed, or as advised by NESAs, a substitute task will be issued. Submission of assessments will be electronic and normal processes apply if a student is unable to submit a task by the due date. AIMS forms will be accessed through the College website at the following link: <http://www.booragul.catholic.edu.au/publications/forms/>

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For students to be able to gauge how they are going with their learning in HSC courses it is important for students to be continually checking in with their teachers and providing teachers with work for feedback. With most of our students now working from an online platform, we remind them that they need to send completed work as directed by their teachers so that they can receive feedback on their efforts. They are also encouraged to ask questions and clarifications as needed. This two-way communication is an important part of the learning cycle. Teachers will reply as soon as they are able. This might be in a direct reply to you or as a general reply to the class group particularly if the same question has been asked by multiple students.

Once again, we thank the school community for your continued support and patience as we move forward. We have appreciated the significant work teachers have done in making work available to students in a short period of time. Furthermore, we appreciate the way in which students have embraced this change and the resilience they have shown in such circumstances. We continue to pray for our teachers, students and their families and the broader school community during this uncertain time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Selmes', written in a cursive style.

Mr Graeme Selmes  
***Principal***

Mrs Anne-Maree Shipman  
***Assistant Principal C&W***

Mrs Amber Carter  
***Assistant Principal T&L***