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St Paul's
Catholic College
Booragul

19 May 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Re: COVID – 19 Update No 32.

Last night it was indicated on the news that State Schools in NSW will be returning to full face to face teaching from next Monday. It is interesting that this news was released before the Premier and the Minister for Education were scheduled to make the announcement this morning. I suspect my colleagues in the State system will be somewhat disappointed that the media were privy to this information before Principals and Teachers in State Schools! The Minister also said the decision for Catholic Systemic and Independent Schools rests with their own jurisdiction.

For Catholic Systemic Schools like St Paul's, we are governed by our Maitland Newcastle Catholic School system and Catholic Schools NSW. At this point, a decision to return to full time schooling has not been made. The current plan that we were assured was to exist for three weeks will continue until we are given guidance from the two bodies mentioned above. I understand that tomorrow, the Catholic Schools Office will be sending a letter to all parents and caregivers in the Diocese with an update as to the return of students to schools.

Train travel to school:

I have been in contact with **State Rail** to ask about the social distancing requirements for students travelling on trains to the College. The platforms have signage and there will be broadcast announcements reminding passengers to socially distance. On the trains, there will be signage showing where to stand and where to sit in each carriage. I ask parents to talk to their children about the need to obey these important signs and restrictions. Members of the public who are also using the trains will have a heightened sensitivity to social distancing requirements and it is important that our students are cognisant of that.

Bus Travel to school:

I have also spoken to **Hunter Valley Buses**. The situation is somewhat different. If students travel on a dedicated school bus, then there is no social distancing requirement. If students are on a normal public route bus, then social distancing requirements are to be taken into account, but it would seem that this requirement is for adults only. No school student will be refused a ride to school on a public bus. I understand that this seems to be counter intuitive. I suspect that the bus drivers will be put into some very uncomfortable positions as a result of this situation. I ask that you speak with your child about the need to be aware of social distancing so that members of the public are relaxed around young people. Tomorrow, I will be in a position to update you on the position of Catholic Schools in our Diocese in relation to full time, face to face return.

Stay safe and look after each other.

Go gently,

Mr Graeme Selmes
Principal