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St Paul's
Catholic College
Booragul

29 May 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Re: COVID – 19 Update No 35.

We have started to emerge from the absolute threat of COVID in our communities into a controlled return to some degree of “normal.” From Monday, we will welcome all our students back to the college for the first time since March 24th when the Government asked parents to keep their children at home if they could. From a peak of 460 cases Australia wide in one day (March 28th) to yesterday’s number of 18, the landscape is very different now to what it might have been. We watch the news about the US, UK and Brazil and if you are like me, you might wonder why things are so different for us and for New Zealand. I think the answer to that is very complex but perhaps it is quite simple. Australians have always been united when the chips are down. The recent bush fires suggest the same. It is true that we can be divisive on some matters, we can be ambivalent to some really important issues of social inequality, but by and large, we actually care about one another.

As students return to full time study at school, it is important that they use the time to focus on their learning. It is important that they return with a new-found respect for the great gift of Catholic Education that you are providing for them. It is certainly the reality of the human condition that we don’t realise what we have until it is gone! The gradual return to school has given students the opportunity to reconnect with one another and now that we are back full time, it is imperative that our students focus on the core business of learning and return to being the best learners they can be.

Mrs Shipman has developed a program called “Reboot”. This document will be sent to all students today and we will have copies in our classrooms. Teachers will be discussing it with students on Monday morning in their first classes of the day. I ask that you have a good look at the document that is attached to this update and have a discussion with your child about their goals and aspirations for the full return to study.

We have noticed during the staged return, a number of our students have been wearing non-uniform items, particularly hoodies and other jumpers. We ask that if your child has a need for a uniform variation, that you ensure they have a note from you explaining the issue. We worked hard in Term One to improve the wearing of our uniform and we will continue to do that from next week. Students will need to attend uniform detentions if they are out of uniform and do not have a suitable note.

A reminder that parents/carers are not permitted to enter College grounds to drop off/pick up their child.

Last week, two schools reported COVID cases and had to be evacuated and shut down for a period of time. The State Government has publicly stated that they expect it to be “common place” for this to happen as schools return to full attendance. We have a protocol here developed by the Catholic Schools Office in the event of a confirmed case. Part of that protocol is around the need to have parents collect their child as we close the school. We will also be liaising with local bus companies so that children can be transported home. I ask that you consider how you might manage such a call (or SMS) from the College and what you can do to collect your child if the situation arises. The key to such an event is not to panic. If we work together carefully and closely, we will manage the situation well. I hope and pray that this does not happen here but if it does, we will work with you to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Our library will be changing its processes in line with advice from the state and national health bodies. Please see the pictorial below:

WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO MAKE THE LIBRARY A SAFER SPACE?

Placed hand sanitiser at the front door – please sanitise your hands as you enter the library

Numbers in the library have been limited – one person per desk or beanbag

Provided disinfectant – please spray where you have been working with disinfectant before you leave

Resources are quarantined when returned
Any resources browsed are to be placed on the trolley near the counter – do not reshelve

The space is well ventilated
Shared resources – games, jigsaws, staplers etc – packed away

I have said this to all of you a number of times but I would like to state it once more. We have been overwhelmed by the support that you have given us during this crisis. The trust that you gave us has been so wonderful and I cannot thank you enough. We haven't always got it completely right but we have certainly tried to the best of our abilities. I likened this crisis to that of Apollo 13... "Houston...We have a problem." As a team, teachers, support staff, parents and care givers, and our students, we all worked together to make a solution to a problem that had never happened before. We had no rule book, no guide, no instruction manual. I thank you all for what you have done to help keep our special community functioning and safe.

Have a lovely weekend. Enjoy the last bits of autumn.

Go gently.



Mr Graeme Selmes
Principal