

16 March 2020

Dear Parents, Caregivers and Families

RE: UPDATE ON CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Overseas Travel & Self-Isolation Requirements

Yesterday, the Commonwealth Government announced that all travellers arriving in or returning to Australia must self-isolate for a period of 14 days. There are no exceptions to this. If you or your child has returned from overseas travel, please ensure that you follow the self-isolation requirements as outlined by the Australian Government Department of Health.

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-isolation-guidance>

Self-isolation requirements for travellers returning to Australia between 1 March and 15 March remain in place. This requires travellers returning from China, South Korea, Iran and Italy to self-isolate for a period of 14 days.

School Closures

Currently there is no Government-mandated closure of schools and the dates of the upcoming school holidays remain unchanged. Whether schools close will be determined by direction from NSW Health or other relevant State or Commonwealth authorities as follows:

1. If the school has a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis of a staff member or student;
2. If the school is unable to be adequately staffed to meet duty of care requirements due to staff absence or
3. At the direction of State or Commonwealth Government as part of a wider containment strategy.

If your child's school is required to close at short notice, this will be communicated to parents through the school's normal communication methods (SMS, App, newsletter, website, etc). Please ensure your contact details with the school are up to date.

Should your child's school close, the decision to re-open the school will be made in consultation between NSW Health and the Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Office.

The advice from the Commonwealth and NSW Governments to keep schools open and operational will be re-visited on **Friday 20 March**.

Education Continuity

All Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools have an education continuity plan in place to ensure, where practicable, student learning continues in the event of school closure.

Preventative Measures

All schools have reviewed their cleaning protocols and the Catholic Schools Office will provide funding to increase cleaning services in all schools.

Health and Hygiene

The three most important things each and every one of us can do to help manage the spread of the virus are:

- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly.
- Sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, disposing of the tissue straight away and then washing your hands.
- Stay home if you are unwell and in schools, staff or students who show signs of being unwell through the day will be sent home.

Masks are not an effective measure in protecting students, staff or the community from the virus and therefore no member of staff or student should need to wear a mask at school.

We are taking all possible measures to implement social distancing in schools.

If your child is unwell or displaying influenza-like symptoms, please do not send your child to school.

Pastoral Care

The Catholic Schools Office continues to provide schools and staff with resources to support the students.

Resources for Parents

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention have resources and factsheets available to parents on how to talk to children about the COVID-19 virus.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

The Australian Psychological Society have factsheets with Tips for coping with Coronavirus Anxiety.

<https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/38073179-4701-48bd-afd9-988c560ee2f9/20APS-IS-COVID-19-P1.pdf>

The safety and wellbeing of all our students and staff is paramount and central in our considerations and decision making. As you may appreciate, arrangements will be responsive to the changing circumstances. We will continue to communicate with parents through your school Principal and via the Catholic Schools Office website <http://www.lism.catholic.edu.au/>.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Sally Towns
Director of Catholic Schools