



16 March 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

RE: COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

Last week I shared with you the Department of Education and Training (DET) Coronavirus webpage to provide you with information about Covid-19. In case you missed that message, here is the link to the webpage:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

While this webpage remains an important source of information and is being regularly updated, I am have also outlined some further important reminders and updates below.

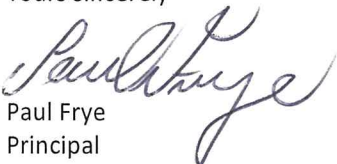
This update contains information which will be important over the coming days and weeks. It's lengthy but please read it carefully. **Advice about the cancellation of upcoming college events is contained under item 13 of this message.**

1. The symptoms of the coronavirus include fever, breathing difficulties, cough, sore throat, fatigue or tiredness. Having a cough or snuffle doesn't mean that you've got the coronavirus. One of the distinguishing features of the virus in comparison with a common cold or flu is breathing difficulties. However if you are unwell with the symptoms above you should stay at home and not attend school. We are not a medical service and we are not equipped to provide support to students who develop illness during the day. If you are not well enough to be in class you should not be at school. If students present with these symptoms we will do what we do with any illness: we will call parents or emergency contacts and we expect the student to be collected from school as soon as possible.
2. There seems to be some confusion and concern about the need for people to self-isolate if they perceive a risk through contact with someone who is being tested for the coronavirus. The current government advice on this is clear: you only need to self-isolate if you have been in contact with someone who has been confirmed as having the coronavirus.
3. It is possible that at some stage the college may be forced to close. If this is because of a confirmed coronavirus case within the college then a closure would possibly be very short; just long enough to identify others who came into close contact with the person who has tested positive to the coronavirus, so that those people can self-isolate and be tested.
4. It is possible that there may be a longer closure of schools as part of a broader campaign to prevent spread of the virus.
5. In either of the cases above (points 4 and 5) a closure of the college does not mean that students or staff need to go into self-isolation (unless they are known to have been in close contact with a confirmed coronavirus case).
6. If a decision is made to close the college, we might not be provided with much notice of the closure. If this does occur we will advise students and parents via our usual means of communication – XUNO, text message, email and website. Please be monitoring these closely over the coming days and weeks.
7. The college is developing a plan to support the continuation of students' learning in the event of any closure. It will include work being provided via email and online via Google Classrooms, which many teachers have already been using, and others are setting up today. To access Google Classrooms, students will require their school email address and school IT password. If students are unaware of this information, they should check with their teachers or school Library staff over the next few days to ensure they have these log-in credentials. We will commence by ensuring that Google Classrooms are firstly established for all VCE classes.

8. Obviously practical activities will be impossible but there is a great deal that can be done and we expect students will engage in this diligently. There will be adjustments to assessment arrangements as needed, most likely involving a delay of the dates of assessment. Further details will be provided at the time of any closure and much of the critical advice about learning activities and assessment will come from individual teachers to their students.
9. If the college closes and students are working from home, they should try to maintain their study for classes at the normal times shown on the timetable where possible to help maintain a routine. Students can expect that teachers will be available to be contacted during those times via email or other means that the teacher advises.
10. **Students need to be prepared.** Every day from now on students must be taking home their laptops, chargers and other important materials such as textbooks and workbooks, folios etc. A sensible step may be to have everything at home and bring in each day what you need for that day's classes and other study. A small number of our students may not have access to a laptop or other device to continue learning from home. If this applies to you then you should seek help immediately via our IT Helpdesk.
Because a school closure does not mean students are in self-isolation, anyone without internet access at home is advised to seek access via a public facility or through a friend.
11. In the event of a closure it's unclear whether there would be any staff on site to assist with inquiries or to provide access to buildings and lockers, hence the need for both staff and students to be prepared for a closure at short notice.
12. The Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) have been clear in their advice that no student undertaking a Unit 3&4 VCE subject will be disadvantaged in terms of their subject study score or ATAR as a result of any school closures. There are existing processes to recognise disadvantage caused by exceptional circumstances and in the event of widespread closures this would affect all or most of the students across the state. We will provide further advice on this if needed.
13. **Due to the current concerns, and DET directives about cancelling school camps and excursions, we have assessed all of our upcoming college events and we can advise you that the following events have been cancelled:**
 - French Film excursion (Tuesday 17th March)
 - VCE Theatre Studies Top Class excursion (Tuesday 17th March)
 - Loddon Mallee Swimming Carnival – (Thursday 19th March)
 - Year 9 French Spread Your Wings excursion – (Tuesday 24th March)
 - VCE Art Camp – (Wednesday 25th & Thursday 26th March)
 - Whole College Assembly – (Wednesday 25th March)
 - SOAR Adventures Beach Camp (Thursday 26th & Friday 27th March).
 - All interschool sporting events

There will no doubt be more information we need to share in the coming days and weeks. In the meantime, I encourage everyone to remain alert to the risks, to monitor advice through the media and from the college and to practice safe behaviours to prevent the spread of the virus.

Yours sincerely


Paul Frye
Principal