



Monday 9 August

Dear parents and carers,

We are very much looking forward to seeing all students return to on-site learning tomorrow. As I indicated previously, the advice about returning is in line with last time. I have included some key reminders at the end of this document.

Also in this update is information about various events which will need to be adapted due to the restrictions currently in place. These include the VTAC Information Evening, General Achievement Test and our upcoming Parent Teacher interviews.

### **Parent Teacher Interviews**

Our PT interviews were originally scheduled to take place on Thursday 19 August, this has now shifted to Wednesday 18 August from 12pm-7pm. It is unlikely these interviews will occur on-site but this important event will still occur. Bookings will be available soon with the format to be decided upon and advice sent to families in the coming days.

### **VTAC Information Evening**

Castlemaine Secondary College normally conducts a VTAC Information Evening each year, for Year 12 students and their parents/carers .

#### *Parents/carers*

Ongoing COVID-19 restrictions prevent us from hosting this event for parents/carers in 2021. However, VTAC themselves provide briefing sessions on their processes that you can access.

A pre-recorded presentation can be viewed here -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lydeb0Scvc>

Alternatively, you can register on the VTAC website for up-coming webinars, where you can ask questions directly of VTAC staff.

<https://vtac.edu.au/events>

#### *Students*

We are hosting a WebEx event for students at 2:30pm, Thursday 12 August (after the GAT) to explain

- Setting up a VTAC account
- VTAC timeline
- Recognition of disadvantage
- Early access schemes
- Scholarships

An invitation to this event has been emailed directly to all Year 12 students' school email accounts. Note -- the session time and date was updated after this invitation was emailed, but the link will work at the new time.

Bus travellers who are still at school after the GAT can view the presentation from the VCE study room in the library.

#### *Support with applications*

If you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss anything involving VTAC and applying for tertiary studies, please feel free to contact Mr Cook on 0438890280 or [ian.cook@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:ian.cook@education.vic.gov.au)

## **2021 VCE General Achievement Test (GAT)**

When: *Thursday 12 August 2021*  
*Students should arrive 9:00 - 9:30 am*  
The GAT starts at 10:00 am.

Where: *Students will need to check in on arrival at the Performers Precinct building verandah.*

Students will enter the Performers building through the Kitchen classroom. All other doors will be locked.

Who: All Year 11 or Year 12 students undertaking a scored VCE or VET 3-4 subject.

What: The GAT is a 3 hour exam that consists of 2 writing sections (approx. 30 minutes each) and a range of multiple choice questions that cover general knowledge across maths, science, technology, humanities, the arts and social sciences.

Why: VCAA uses students GAT results to ensure that study scores are fair and to derive study scores for students who cannot attend a final exam due to unexpected circumstances. It is especially important this year when students may be forced to isolate during the exam period.

### **COVID-19 precautions**

All students must sign in, and sanitize their hands on arrival. They should check the seating plans to find their allocated seat number. All equipment must be checked by a teacher before entering the Performers building. Please make sure that you have a transparent water bottle, no more than 1.5L, filled before arrival.

Seating for the GAT is distributed across several rooms to allow 4 square metres per person, with a minimum of 1.5m between seats.

Students must wear a face mask during the GAT, in line with current guidelines.

Any students who have COVID-19 symptoms, or are waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test, on the day of the GAT should stay at home and contact the school.

Students who have COVID-19 symptoms when they arrive at school will need to be collected and taken for a COVID-19 test. Students who develop symptoms during the GAT will be moved to a quarantine room and allowed to continue the test. Hayfever symptoms can appear similar to COVID-19. Students who experience hayfever should consider taking appropriate measures to minimise their symptoms.

### **How to complete the GAT**

Information has been provided to students by their mentor teachers. More information about the GAT can be found on the VCAA website. <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/general-achievement-test/Pages/HowtoCompleatetheGAT.aspx>

If you have any questions or concerns about how the GAT will operate this year, please contact Kate Young. [katherine.young@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:katherine.young@education.vic.gov.au)

## **Return to on-site learning reminders**

### *Face Masks*

**It is important that students bring their own mask to the college each day.** *For the purpose of this time period, face masks are considered part of CSC uniform. As such, students who do not have a face mask will be managed in line with our uniform policy.*

School staff and secondary school students aged 12 or older must wear a face mask **indoors and outdoors** at school, unless an exemption applies. This includes during all classes and breaks, except when students are engaging in strenuous physical activity or eating food.

Children under 12 years of age are not required to wear face masks when at school.

Families should also be aware that, for the purposes of communicating, teachers and education support staff are not required to wear face masks while teaching, but those who wish to do so, can.

**Face masks are mandatory for all school staff and school students aged 12 or older when travelling to and from school.**

#### *Face Mask Exemptions*

If your child has a face mask exemption this should be communicated to the college. We have a clear process for informing staff of students who are exempt from wearing a mask at school to ensure this effectively managed.

#### *Density Limits*

The density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metre applies in spaces used only by staff and to publicly accessible areas. It does not apply in classrooms.

#### *Staying home when unwell*

The most important action we can take to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, is to ensure that any unwell staff and students remain at home and get tested, even with the mildest of symptoms.

#### *Underlying Medical Conditions*

If your child has persistent symptoms due to an underlying condition such as hay fever or asthma, they should still be tested for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms that are different to or worse than usual. You should also consider getting a medical certificate from their treating GP to confirm that it is safe for them to attend school with persistent symptoms that may overlap with some of the symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough or runny nose.

## **Providing a COVIDSafe Space**

As well as the Return to on-site learning requirements, Castlemaine Secondary College will continue the following measures:

#### *Signs*

Students will notice significant signage at entry and exit points around the college. These signs include instructions about wearing face masks, reminders about staying home if unwell and maximum occupancy limits for spaces used by staff and visitors.

#### *Practising Good Hygiene*

Sanitiser is available at all major entry and exit points throughout the college. All staff, students and visitors to schools should undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet.

Students must be aware that sharing of food is not permitted and they should use non-contact greetings (not shaking hands, hugging etc).

#### *Cleaning*

COVIDSafe routine cleaning arrangements will continue. This involves daily end-of-school-day cleaning, with a particular focus on cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces, and the inclusion of some elements that were not cleaned every day prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### *Limiting outside visitors*

Non-essential visitors will not be permitted to attend the college until further advised. Some meetings will be allowed to continue as long as COVIDsafe protocols are adhered to.

#### *Accurate Record Keeping*

Any visitors to our site must sign in at the office prior to entering the college. All visitors must also utilise the QR code signs to register their attendance at the college.

### **Camps, Excursions and other School Events**

Advice about school camps will be provided in a future update.

It is important that any student who experiences COVID-19 symptoms stays at home until these symptoms abate.

The symptoms to watch out for are:

- fever
- chills or sweats
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- runny nose
- loss or change in sense of smell or taste

Please contact the college via the absence line (5479 1150), if your child is unwell, to notify us of their absence. If the absence is going to be longer than 3 days, please make contact with the appropriate Precinct Manager to discuss the provision of work.

My next update to parents and carers will be on **Tuesday 10 August**.

Stay safe and I look forward to welcoming all students back on-site tomorrow.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Wood', written in a cursive style.

Simon Wood  
Acting Principal – Castlemaine Secondary College