



Tuesday 3 November

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you and your family enjoyed the day together yesterday. I visited a number of classes today and saw students engaged in a wide range of theoretical and practical studies, which was great to observe. It demonstrated to me the importance of all students returning to on-site learning now this is possible.

I understand there has been some concern about the recent covid positive case at Castlemaine Secondary College. Rest assured, once this case was identified, all families involved were contacted as soon as possible. This demonstrated the strong processes in place for contact tracing, should the need arise again. It is also vital that we respect the privacy of the students and families involved.

This update provides reminders about the important COVIDsafe practices in place at the college to keep everyone safe. Please discuss these with your child to continue supporting us; we remind all students of these often as well. There is also information about our Year 7 Supportive Friends Program.

Students should continue to practise physical distancing where possible. Signage is on display, reminding everyone of the importance of physical distancing as well as regular hand hygiene. Staff have also been encouraged utilise outdoor spaces for teaching and learning where possible.

For all school settings, the Victorian Chief Health Officer:

- Directs secondary school students to wear a face mask indoors at school, unless a lawful exception applies.
- Directs students aged 12 or older must always wear a face mask when travelling to and from school on public transport, taxis or ride share vehicles.
- Directs school staff to wear a face mask while teaching wherever practicable, except where removal of a face mask is necessary for effective communication.

There are a [number of lawful reasons for not wearing a face mask](#), including for students who are unable to wear a face mask due to the nature of their disability, medical or a mental health condition. Parent/carers of a student/s who meet the criteria for an exception should provide their approval in writing for their child/ren to not wear a mask to the school.

Outside of lawful exceptions, we will treat any deliberate and persistent non-compliance with the face masks direction as a serious matter. Usual procedures for managing unexpected behaviour will be followed.

A face mask must cover the nose and mouth. Face shields, scarves or bandanas do not meet these requirements.

Where events are allowed to be held, these will be outdoors where possible. We will once again be holding assemblies but these will be for staff and students only.

Formals, graduations, and other ceremonies (including events held off school premises and/or with parents/carers and other guests) can resume, however they must align with community settings. Indoor events will remain subject to the obligations such as caps and density quotients. All eligible adults who attend any indoor events held by the college must be fully vaccinated. Outdoor events can be held with up to 500 people, with a density quotient of one person per two square metres applied.

We have also increased fresh air flow into indoor spaces (including shared spaces, staff areas and thoroughfares) whenever possible.

Any visitor or volunteers performing work in schools are required to either have had their first dose by the 18 October or are fully vaccinated by 29 November (unless a medical exemption applies) to attend on site.

Year 7 Supportive Friends Program

Our Year 7 students will be participating in the Supportive Friends Program tomorrow, Thursday 4 November. The program encourages students to talk about what it means to be a good friend, and supports them to develop the skills to navigate friendships and peer dynamics in a meaningful way, including

- developing connections with others
- managing conflict and difficulties with peers
- understanding their own emotions
- talking about and managing big feelings

This opportunity is timely, coming after a difficult year for our Year 7 students, who have had limited opportunities to develop new friendships and to feel well connected to the school. It will run for the whole day, instead of timetabled classes, and is free of charge. Students will work in mentor class groups for the lessons and activities throughout the day, providing an opportunity for the development of stronger peer relationships and social cohesion.

It continues to be important that if there is a COVID positive case in our student population, the college is notified of it immediately.

I will continue to provide updates when there is information which needs to be shared with you all.

Take care of yourselves and each other.

Regards,

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

Simon Wood
Acting Principal – Castlemaine Secondary College