

12 March 2020

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Dear Parents and Carers

The circumstances and information relating to the risks presented by Coronavirus (COVID-19) are moving quickly. I am communicating with you to reassure you that we have been monitoring this closely with the view to constantly reviewing our practices to ensure the safety of students, staff and our College community are maintained.

At the outset, I need to be clear that at this time we have no cases of infection among any members of The Geelong College community. We are proceeding with a "business as usual" approach in all things, assessing risk and making decisions as required. Nevertheless, we are planning for a number of scenarios that may eventuate but we are hoping for the best.

In light of this situation, the current course of action is to keep our activities as normal as possible for the benefit of all our students. A decision for extreme action such as closure of College for any period or an extension of the Easter break would be on the advice of appropriate external health and education authorities. On the information we have at this point in time closure of College for any period is not anticipated. At this time we are expecting to operate to the normal term dates and arrangements in the immediate future.

In response to the heightened risk we have taken a number of steps such as postponing overseas trips for Year 10 scheduled for the final week of this term, cancelled a number of domestic trips for our students and we are maintaining a process of constant review about every activity that takes our students off site, mindful of the risks to safety and wellbeing for everyone involved. Most recently, the APS Heads have taken the decision to have only immediate family of competitors and the competitors themselves as spectators at the upcoming APS Swimming Carnivals (boys' and girls') as well as the APS Head of the River. Other activities here at College and sporting fixtures have continued, as normal. The classification of the situation as Global Pandemic by the World Health Organisation overnight may have an impact on future events.

Each activity involving students and staff off-site has unique needs and circumstances to be considered as we evaluate the risks involved. At all times, decisions are informed by facts and reliable information in conjunction with a sense of community support. Each response needs to be proportional to the risk here and now. It is also important to understand this can change quite quickly over time.

It is also important to remind everyone of the normal precautions around health and attending school. If children are sick, it is important to ensure they receive appropriate medical treatment as soon as possible. In the event of you or a member of your family receiving a positive test to COVID-19 please advise the College by telephoning the Executive Assistant (Mrs Jenny Ryan) on 5226 3107. The most reliable information about prevention is available on the Department of Health and Human Services website. This link provides access to the information [https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/202003/Ten ways to reduce your risk of coronavirus_0.pdf](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/202003/Ten%20ways%20to%20reduce%20your%20risk%20of%20coronavirus_0.pdf).

I hope you find this information reassuring and useful. We will continue to face many challenges in the coming weeks and perhaps months as we remember the ongoing commitment to the wellbeing and success of our students defines the actions we take.

Yours sincerely



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Principal

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