

16 March 2020

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COURAGE



Dear Parents and Carers

The circumstances and information relating to the situation across the nation presented by Coronavirus (COVID-19) are moving quickly. This item of correspondence will provide an update on the position of The Geelong College on a number of key issues.

First, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 in our community. This is an important fact.

Second, in a statement today on school closures in Victoria the Chief Medical Officer of Victoria, Dr Brett Sutton has said: "Pre-emptive school closures are not likely to be proportionate or effective as a public health intervention... at this time". The full document can be read using this link

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/departement/CHO_advicetoschools_16March2020.pdf In line with this statement, the College's current position is to continue a normal school day. This is under constant review.

Nevertheless, I understand a small number of students are in a particular situation which means they are not at school or have left before the end of Term. In the event of it becoming necessary we will communicate promptly and appropriately any changes to our normal school arrangements for all students.

As a precaution we have advanced planning to provide online facilities to our students, which will differ for students in various Year levels to reflect their age and needs. A clear priority is to ensure continuity in support for our Year 12 students as well as meet all student needs in an unusual environment. This is a challenge for all schools and one which we are facing with a mixture of quiet confidence and apprehension. Although we believe we have the tools and facilities in place our students and staff have never done this before. Therefore, we have to adopt a willingness to be agile and flexible in our approach. This is a new experience for all of us. More information about this will be circulated as and when required.

Third, there is the pressing issue of events scheduled for the next two weeks. In short, we have determined to remove activities from the College calendar until the end of Term 1 that involve larger gatherings and are not central to the learning of students. This action will ensure our students, staff and wider community are safe while our students are still fully involved in activities in their school day. A list of cancellations is available using this link <https://www.geelongcollege.vic.edu.au> If you have concerns about practical aspects of these cancellations please contact the office of the relevant Head of School.

Fourth, if you are contemplating overseas travel in the near future, you need to be aware of the following Federal Government requirements outlined on the Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment <https://www.dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19?cv>

Finally, the College continues to promote good health and hygiene among the students. We ask that unwell students are kept at home until symptoms resolve and seek medical assistance as required. We are asking the same of our College staff. The following advice may be helpful for families <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/> 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.

There will be further updates via email to the community in the days ahead. I do not wish to inundate you with messages but it is important you are aware of the COVID-19 developments as they relate to The Geelong College community.

Yours sincerely

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