

18 March 2020



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Dear Parents and Carers

This message is to advise you that as a consequence of the developments in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19) a decision has been made to transition The Geelong College to a Remote Learning model with the conclusion of normal school classes at the end of Friday 20 March for all our students in EL to Year 12. This is a voluntary change to our operations and not as a consequence of any reported cases of infection in the College community.

The decision is to transition to this Remote Learning approach will commence on Tuesday 24 March. Monday 23 March will be a "Student Free Day" during which time teaching staff can finalise their preparation for the Remote Learning approach. At this stage, we are anticipating the approach continuing through to at least the first week of Term 2 (until Friday 17 April).

Remote Learning will have some practical and educational challenges but will also provide a unique opportunity for our community. This decision has been made after carefully considering the best interests of our students, staff and community. I respect and have listened carefully to the advice of Medical and Education authorities but the situation has changed significantly for us. I understand a number of local schools are in a similar situation, as are many schools in Melbourne and interstate. I have been in regular communication with a large number of Principals who are all assessing the needs of their students and community. We all seem to be at a similar point.

The voluntary nature of this action means we are able to respond calmly and in our own time. Some significant actions in this process include:

- commencing arrangements for boarders and international students to assist their orderly movement out of their residential accommodation to appropriate places of residence. Currently, we are able to manage this with access to the boarding house through next week, if necessary;
- cancelling Vacation Care and Out of School Hours care (OSH) next week and in the vacation period. I understand this is a significant disruption for families who normally rely on these services; and,
- communicating before the end of this week through the office of each Head of School the detail of how a Remote Learning approach will operate at College. The impact on assessment and necessary arrangements for our senior students (Years 11 and 12) will be addressed in this communication from the Head of Senior School.

While Remote Learning meets many aspects of student academic needs we are also looking to ensure social and emotional needs of our students can be met in this approach. This is not going to be easy to achieve. However, we have a strong pastoral system and culture of care at The Geelong College to underpin the approach developed. Details of how this will be undertaken will also be a component of the communication from Heads of School. The principles will be the same across the Junior, Middle and Senior Schools with the practices varying between schools to reflect the pastoral system in place.

I have greatly appreciated the feedback of many people in recent weeks as we have navigated our way through this unusual situation. Our commitment to our students' education, health and wellbeing now and in the long term is unchanged. Moving to a Remote Learning approach is hopefully a short term arrangement. It requires great patience and determination to make it work as well as we can, despite the obvious shortcomings.

Our students love coming to school. There are many reasons for this. I am hoping to have our normal school operations in place as soon as possible in Term 2. Developments towards that end will be communicated in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely

Dr Peter Miller
Principal

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