

13 March, 2020

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Loreto Ballarat Limited  
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Dear Parents and Guardians

Our first priority at Loreto College is the health and safety of our school community.

I want to reassure you that the school is well-prepared for the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus).

We are being provided the latest advice from the Australian and Victorian Chief Medical Officers by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd to ensure that our school practices are helping to keep our school community safe from the outbreak.

Any incidents that arise will be addressed in accordance with our Critical Incident and Emergency Management Plan. We will also have access to resources and support from Catholic Education Melbourne and the Department of Health and Human Services.

I am aware of concerns about the disruption to teaching, especially among families of students in Year 12. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, which is responsible for the VCE, is aware of the situation and has advised that it will work with schools to ensure continuity of learning for all students.

As parents, you have a critical role in helping the school manage this situation:

- Exercise good judgment by keeping children home if they are feeling unwell for any reason
- Talk to children about the situation, as they may be feeling anxious or stressed. You have a key role in helping students feel prepared and safe
- Encourage children to be proactive and committed to their schoolwork, and to stay connected with the school and their teachers.
- The Department of Health and Human Services has a number of resources on its website, which explain the virus, detail risk-reduction practices and behaviours, and answer frequently asked questions. These are available at [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus).
- You can also find information about Catholic education's response at <http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Coronavirus-information-for-parents>.

We also refer families to the Department of Health and Human services guide on **Ten ways to reduce your risk of coronavirus:**

1. Wash hands often with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds. Dry with paper towel or hand dryer.
2. Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
3. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.
4. Isolate yourself at home if you feel sick. If you take medication ensure you have adequate supplies.

5. Phone your GP first if you need medical attention. They will tell you what to do.
6. Continue healthy habits: exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep, and now is the time to quit smoking. Call the Quitline 137 848.
7. Don't wear a face mask if you are well.
8. Buy an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with over 60 per cent alcohol.
9. Get the flu shot (available April).
10. Shaking hands is optional!

This is an evolving situation, but we will keep you updated as things change.

I ask that you continue to work closely with the school and to contact my office should you have any new concerns.

Thank you for your support as we work to keep our students safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SD' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Ms Sandra Diafas

Interim Principal