

08 April 2020

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Dear Parents and Carers

Greetings during this holiest of weeks in the Christian calendar, and the celebration of the Triduum (Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday) which contain the essence of the mysteries of our faith. And it certainly is a time of great mystery across these days of the Covid-19 pandemic. This Holy Week my prayer for the Loreto College Ballarat community is that meaning will be found in these autumn days of isolation, gratitude, creativity, family, reflection and a different type of Easter celebration. Our God calls us to live a faith that believes love will triumph over death, goodness will overcome greed and light will quench the darkness. My sincere prayers are with each one of you and those you love ... and any of our friends in Ballarat who long for love and light.

End of Term 1

Term 1 finished a little earlier than expected as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The College has been communicating regularly with you in what is, and has been, a rapidly evolving situation. We thank all staff and students for their efforts in Term 1, in what has been very difficult circumstances. These are troubling times, not just for our school community, but for our nation and the entire world.

The College's Leadership Team and Board have met regularly to discuss the potential impact on our school community. Our priority is always the health and safety of our students and staff. The early closure at the end of Term 1 has enabled staff to work safely and productively, in preparation for the move to online learning in Term 2. We are confident that we have the infrastructure and resources in place, to ensure the continuity of a quality education for all our students. Parents will likely play a greater role, in partnership with our teaching staff, ensuring students maintain their continued learning journey.

I would like to take this opportunity reassure you that the safety of all member of Loreto College and our responsibility to the wider community have been of the highest priority in all decisions made by College Leadership Team and the Board. I would also wish to acknowledge that we are living in ever changing and difficult times and doing all we can to ensure your daughter's education continues as seamlessly as possible.

Term 2 State Government & CECV Directives

At a recent press conference, the Premier, Daniel Andrews and Education Minister, James Merlino announced that if students can learn from home, then they must learn from home in Term 2.

<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/victorian-students-to-learn-from-home-as-vce-timelines-revised/>

To this end at the conclusion of Term 1 all staff at the College worked tirelessly to prepare for this possibility, that we would deliver our Teaching and Learning program remotely. As a result, we have developed a *Loreto College Online Lesson Delivery Manual* to support our commitment to the education of your daughter. A copy of the manual accompanies this correspondence and I am confident you and your daughter will find this manual to be of great assistance at this time.

The College has remained opened over the Term 1 holidays from the of hours of 10am to 12pm. This service was made available to ensure all laptops are in full working order and to answer a range of queries. We are grateful to the IT team at the College for providing this service and we will continue to deliver this service for as long as we are able.

Loreto College will commence remote Teaching and Learning for all students at the beginning of **Term 2, Wednesday 15 April**. Tuesday 14 April is a staff Professional Learning day.

Remote Learning & Limited On-Site Supervision for Students

As per the Government directive, it is expected that all students will engage in remote and flexible learning with the exception of those who meet the following criteria as specified by the Department of Education and Training (DET).

- Children of families of essential services workers on days when they are not able to be supervised at home and no other arrangements can be made. This will be available for children of parents who cannot work from home, and vulnerable children, including:
 - children in out-of-home care;
 - children deemed by Child Protection and/or Family Services to be at risk of harm;
 - children identified by the school as vulnerable (including via referral from a family violence agency, homelessness or youth justice service or mental health or other health service and children with a disability).
 - families who have previously notified the College about poor or limited internet services

The College will provide a limited number of students (from the above list of exclusions) the option to attend the College for supervision (not teaching) during school hours 8.45am to 3.25pm in Term 2. For those students attending Supervisors will not be actively engaged in teaching; the student's regular teachers will continue to deliver their work remotely.

Families are requested to provide notification to the College **if their daughter requires supervision on-site at school** no later than **Thursday 9 April** with the following information:

- Student's name and mentor group
- Student's year level
- The reason why their daughter is unable to learn remotely
- The days your daughter will be attending
- Confirmation if student requires bus services to and from school, and if so, which bus route.
- Confirm the results of the Australian Government approved symptom checker at <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker/tool/basic-details>

Please email the above details to attendance@loreto.vic.edu.au by **Thursday 9 April**.

As per the Government directive, all students who can learn from home, must learn from home. Please only reply to this email address as a matter of urgency if your daughter will need to attend supervision at school.

To ensure the safety of all members of the College we will be working to minimize the number of people onsite. Once we ascertain the number of students who are seeking supervision, we will then be in a position to provide more information on how this will be structured.

Music and Performing Arts

For the applicable students, private / group music and speech & drama lessons will be delivered remotely. Bands, choirs and ensembles will still run however they will be delivered using a different method.

More information will be provided to families from the Music and Performing Arts Faculty early next week.

School Fees

The College is aware of the dramatic impact that COVID-19 is having on our community, not just from a health perspective, but also in relation to the economy. We recognise that many families potentially now have reduced employment security, and some may have already been stood down from their work or their business closed. This will clearly have a major impact on household budgets and has the potential to impact the ability for some families to meet their school fee commitments.

We want to assure families that in genuine hardship cases, there will be an understanding around this unprecedented situation that we now find ourselves in. We believe that stability in education for our valued students and their families, is crucial at this challenging time. If you currently find yourself in a situation of financial hardship as a result of COVID-19, please contact our finance team by e-mail (accounts@loreto.vic.edu.au) who will deal with your concerns in a confidential manner.

At this stage, there is no planned fee rebates for 2020 in respect of any alterations required to the educational program or the method of curriculum delivery, for example, on-site versus home-based learning. The expenses of the school year are largely locked in at the start of the academic year, and the school is incurring significant additional expenses to manage COVID-19.

We are committed to working with all our families throughout this complex time. Please do not hesitate to contact me, the Business Manager or the Finance team, to discuss any of these items further.

VCE and VCAL

I also know there are myriad of concerns regarding Year 12 students and for students enrolled in VCE and VCAL certificates. The Premier provided a range of changes and concessions today to ensure students will receive an ATAR and their senior certificates. The Victorian Curriculum and

Assessment Authority will inform us of any alterations over the coming weeks and we will make sure they are passed on to students and staff. A letter to all senior students and their families informing you of what we know to date will also be sent out.

These are indeed difficult and unprecedented times may we seek comfort in our God and one another, may we find joy in the ordinary and may we remain hope filled.

Sandra Diafas

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be the initials 'SD' or 'S.D.' with a stylized flourish.

(Interim Principal)