



Wednesday 29 April 2020

Dear Families and Friends of Geelong Grammar School,

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) – Update #24 as at 3.30pm on Wednesday 29 April

We are buoyed by the promising signs emerging from the national effort to counter COVID-19 and continue to work purposefully and proactively towards the resumption of on-campus learning. As the situation evolves, our decision-making is guided by our [key principles](#), which prioritises the health, safety and wellbeing of our students and staff.

Government Advice

In recent days, the Federal Government has stressed its desire for schools to fully resume classroom-based education.

- Australia's Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Professor Brendan Murphy, has restated that there is no evidence of significant infection among or transmission between children, and that the community risk of having children together in the classroom was low. He added, however, that schools could create a risk of adult-to-adult transmission between teachers, and between parents and teachers.
- Federal Education Minister, Dan Tehan, has noted: "If we keep flattening the curve, there is no reason why we shouldn't aim to see our students and teachers back in the classroom by 1 June."
- As at the time of writing, there is no changed directive from the Victorian Chief Health Officer, Professor Brett Sutton, on an early return to normal school operations; however, the Premier, Daniel Andrews, has indicated that the declared State of Emergency will be reviewed on 11 May. It is our understanding that this review may include a reconsideration of direction to schools, noting that yesterday the Premier also said authorities could not "flick a switch" for an overnight re-opening of schools.

We appreciate that the differing and sometimes contradictory commentary between Federal and State Government may be a cause for confusion and frustration. Please note, any decision relating to the School recommencing on-campus learning and teaching, either in part or completely as per pre-COVID-19 arrangements, needs to be made in the context of the advice from the Victorian Government. The range of issues for consideration include the Chief Health Officer's advice, Occupational Health and Safety legislation, applicable Education and Training legislation, as well as seeking to achieve equitable access for all students across our School.

Please be assured that significant and detailed work is being undertaken by the Executive and Leadership Team to scenario plan for all potential contingencies which will allow our School to respond in a timely, flexible and ultimately safe manner, when it is appropriate to do so.

Return to On-Campus Learning

In preparation for our return to on-campus learning, we continue to recommend strongly that families seek out flu vaccinations and download the new [COVIDSafe app](#) to assist with more accurate and timely tracing of exposure to COVID-19. This is particularly important for our unique, predominantly residential

context as Australia's largest coeducational boarding school, which has been identified as "high risk setting" with an elevated possibility of community transmission. The request to download the COVIDSafe app relates not only to our staff and parents but also to our students (where age appropriate), in the event of required tracing. In addition, flu vaccines can take up to two weeks to take full effect and therefore, should please be actioned as a priority with a local GP or pharmacy.

Overseas Students

We are actively working with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and other entities to safeguard the education of our overseas students who are enrolled at the School. For all our families whose children are currently based overseas (whether students are Australian citizens, residents or foreign nationals), you may direct any queries or concerns to our Overseas Students' Officer, Emily Scarlett. Emily may be contacted by telephone or by email +61 3 5273 9138 or by email to escarlett@ggs.vic.edu.au.

ELC Update

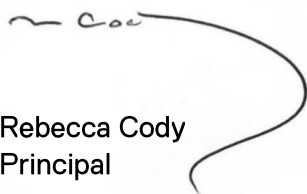
Our Heads of Bostock House and Toorak Campus have written separately to ELC families with further information about the expansion of our programmes and alignment with the recommendation of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) that early childhood education and care services remain open.

Counselling Services

We continue to offer Psychological Counselling to support our students' schooling and wellbeing during Term 2. Psychologists are available for contact during regular school hours. More detailed [Counselling Information](#) for students and parents is available on the School Portal.

Please also be aware that my [assembly messages](#) for Term 2, week 3, were published today. I trust this series of communications is helpful to support community connection and belonging for our students and their families.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Cody
Principal