



Friday 17 July 2020

Dear Families and Friends of Geelong Grammar School,

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) – Update #39 as at 2.30pm on Friday 17 July

Recording 428 new COVID-19 cases in 24 hours, today represents further challenges for Victoria; this is the largest daily increase of the pandemic so far.

COVID-19 Testing at Corio

Thank you to all of our Corio students and staff for participating in the recent COVID-19 testing. This testing is one really important mitigation measure to allow our students and staff to return to campus and to actively manage the risk of COVID-19 infection. We are yet to receive the results of these tests. We are hopeful these will be received either later today or over the weekend. Please be aware we need to continue with Remote Learning until these results are received.

In anticipation of receiving the COVID-19 test results, the School Executive, Leadership Team and Corio Management Team have been planning for a number of different scenarios. Please note if any staff or student returns a positive COVID-19 test result we must take our direction from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Consequently, the following scenarios have been considered:

- DHHS decides to isolate the whole campus and treat it as its own suburb/postcode;
- DHHS determines one boarding house is to be isolated with the students required to remain within the perimeter of the boarding house;
- DHHS determines one boarding house is to be closed and the students are required to return to their COVID Emergency Contact; or
- DHHS directs closure of the campus with all students and staff to be evacuated.

Of course, we remain hopeful all COVID-19 test results will be negative, and we can resume face-to-face teaching with all our students at Corio as soon as possible.

Risk mitigation

As the complexity of the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to intensify, our risk mitigation measures have continued to evolve and strengthen proportionate to our unique context as Australia's largest coeducational boarding school with campuses in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. Earlier this week the Premier, Daniel Andrews, reiterated the need for "flexibility at local school level to put in place the best arrangements", acknowledging that "local school communities know their circumstances better than anyone". For our School, these measures have included:

- undertaking daily temperature checking since 24 May 2020 (we recently updated the temperature checking from 38° to 37.5° to align with Department of Education and Training (DET) Term 3 guidelines);
- having students and staff completing our [Daily COVID-19 Health Questionnaire](#) since 24 May 2020;
- employing registered nurses at each of our four campuses;
- using masks in indoor settings since 8 June 2020 (the School will continue with the use of N95 masks for all students and staff in student-facing roles at Corio. We note DHHS advice that there is an ample supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) in Victoria. We are investigating the opportunity for the use of cloth masks, noting the use of masks other than N95 masks will require robust management with requisite risk management protocols);
- implementing 'internal group isolation' protocols between Houses/Units since 24 May 2020;

- intensifying cleaning protocols since 13 May 2020;
- testing and quarantining symptomatic staff and students since 16 May 2020;
- collating [Individual Action Plans](#) for boarding students at Corio for the start of Term 3;
- meeting or exceeding guidance within the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and DET advice;
- staffing a boom gate at Corio and Timbertop and restricting third party access to campuses, thereby reducing opportunity for potential exposure; and
- maintaining consistent education about effective hygiene practices since 29 January 2020.

Our risk mitigation measures have served us well. Our vigilance must and will continue. Victoria's Chief Health Officer, Professor Brett Sutton, has [recommended that people in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire should wear a face mask](#) if/when it is difficult to keep 1.5 metres apart from others (reiterating that excellent hygiene practices and spatial distancing are the best defence against COVID-19). We appeal to all members of our community to take the appropriate steps to keep themselves and our community safe. The current situation in metropolitan Melbourne highlights the complexity of this extraordinarily infectious disease and its pernicious spread.

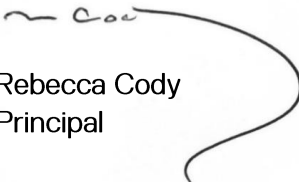
Stage 4 Restrictions

With the suggestion of increased/Stage 4 restrictions in Victoria, we are adapting various scenario planning models across our four campuses. As soon as we have any clarity on the numerous questions raised with the relevant authorities, we will advise families. Further details will continue via my Updates, our dedicated [COVID-19 page](#) and emails from our Heads of Campus.

Thank you

We acknowledge with deep gratitude our frontline workers; we are grateful for their care throughout this pandemic and honour the work they do to safeguard us. Thank you too for continuing to support our GGS community by responsibly working within new constraints. As the Premier has reflected, this is not an ordinary winter, and this has indeed not been an ordinary week. Having said that, we remain focused on what it is we can control, especially our own attitude and behaviours, and continue to hold in perspective our blessings.

Yours sincerely,


Rebecca Cody
Principal