



Friday 27 August 2021

Dear Families and Friends of Geelong Grammar School,

## COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) – Update #44 as at 4.00pm on Friday 27 August

### Public Exposure Sites – Timbertop

Further to [Update #43](#) published at 3.30pm yesterday, the Timbertop operational staff member identified as having briefly visited a Tier 1 exposure site in Shepparton has returned a second negative COVID test result. The staff member will remain in quarantine for 14 days from the date of exposure. Given our high-risk context and out of an abundance of caution, asymptomatic COVID screening tests of all students and staff were conducted on-site at Timbertop this morning.

As ever, we strongly encourage our community to continue to monitor [public exposure sites](#). It is vital that if you or a close contact has visited a public exposure site and visited one of our campuses that you notify the School immediately via [C19questions@ggs.vic.edu.au](mailto:C19questions@ggs.vic.edu.au).

### Exemption to Travel to Victoria for Interstate Families & September School Holidays

Regrettably, last night we wrote to all interstate families who were seeking an exemption to travel to Victoria for the upcoming September school holidays informing them that the application had been rejected by the Department of Health (DoH). The DoH advised that despite its detailed review of the exemption application, it had decided that the current risk to public health outweighed the compassionate reasons for travel. Whilst we are incredibly disappointed by this outcome, we respect that the application was assessed at several DoH meetings, was reviewed by three Senior Public Health Advisers, and that we do not have access to the same level of public health information as the DoH.

Consequently, members of the School's Executive and Leadership Team (ELT) met this morning to progress scenario planning to support families for the upcoming September school holidays. This planning involves a delicate balance of numerous considerations, including assisting with vulnerable student needs, student and staff wellbeing, workplace health and safety, Government restrictions and guidelines, as well as reconnecting those families that can be together across the holiday break. We are very mindful that the DoH also advised that if students returned to NSW, "there would be a significant risk carried in repatriating the students back to Victoria after the school holidays".

The COVID situation in Victoria and the possible extension of lockdown restrictions remains uncertain, but at this stage we can advise:

- Our published [Term Dates](#) will not change (End of Term 3 – Friday 17 September);
- Corio Campus will remain open across the September school holidays as an "authorised provider" (boarding school context) of residential services for Corio and Timbertop students;
- We are developing an age-appropriate school holiday programme that will reflect the current COVIDSafe settings and optimise study (revision) and adventure education opportunities (within prevailing Government restrictions and guidelines); and
- We will ensure a continuity of care by our expert Corio and Timbertop staff.

We will provide further details of arrangements, including cost per student, as soon as practicable. In the meantime, given the strong likelihood that travel restrictions will present a challenge for all our interstate students, we encourage these families to carefully consider their school holiday arrangements. Families may wish to seek

support from their child's Victorian-based guardian or a COVID Emergency Contact; noting that all students are required to have these contingency arrangements in place in the event without notice, the School is ordered by the DoH to close.

It is a blessing too that we are a highly connected and supportive community. In addition to the provision of residential services/school holiday programme at Corio, we will support families to explore opportunities for students to reside with family, friends, guardians and COVID Emergency Contacts already in Victoria.

In the coming days we will invite families to indicate their intentions for care provisions during the September holidays.

### **Vaccinations at Corio Campus & Timbertop**

Upon the Minister's announcement on Wednesday, [Update #42](#) detailed the immediate steps we took upon confirmation of the availability of the Pfizer vaccine for children from 16 years of age. Importantly, given all the various needs within our broader community, we waited to pursue such an opportunity at the most appropriate time.

Following today's announcement that the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has recommended the Pfizer vaccine for children aged 12 to 15, we have expanded our plans for on-site Pfizer vaccinations at both Corio and Timbertop; as per previous Updates, this provision is for those families who provide consent for their child to be vaccinated.

As outlined in [Update #42](#), we are currently working with RMIT Medical Hub to secure a sufficient supply of Pfizer vaccines to establish an on-site vaccination hub at Corio. In addition, we are now also planning to establish a separate on-site vaccination hub at Timbertop to minimise movement of those students in and out of the community.

We will communicate further details as our planning evolves.

### **Athletics Carnival**


We are continuing to plan for a student-only Corio House Athletics Carnival for Saturday 11 September. The Athletics Carnival will be hosted at Corio for Year 5-8 and Year 10-12 students. We will adapt and update these plans as the COVID situation and COVIDSafe settings evolve.

### **Next Steps**

As ever, the School will communicate swiftly and accurately with our community; thank you for continuing to direct all COVID-19 related queries to [C19questions@ggs.vic.edu.au](mailto:C19questions@ggs.vic.edu.au).

I wish all families great health and hopefulness.

Yours sincerely,

  
Rebecca Cody  
Principal

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#### **Principal's Study**

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