



Friday 2 October 2020

Dear Families and Friends of Geelong Grammar School,

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) – Update #60 as at 11.45am on Friday 2 October

We are excited and energised by the imminent return of students for Term 4. Since my last Update, we are especially delighted that the positive progress of Victoria's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) roadmap to reopening](#) has resulted in all of our Toorak Campus students (Prep-Year 6) now returning to on-campus learning from Monday 12 October. Consequently, the start of Term 4 arrangements for each of our campuses summarised in [Update #58](#) has been updated with reference to the Department of Education and Training (DET) [Term 4 arrangements](#):

- **Bostock House Prep-Year 4 students** will commence on-campus learning from the start of Term 4 on Tuesday 6 October;
- **Toorak Prep-Year 6 students** will commence Term 4 on Tuesday 6 October with our Remote Learning@GGS 2.0 programme before returning to on-campus learning from Monday 12 October;
- **Middle School Years 5-8 students** at Corio will commence Term 4 on Tuesday 6 October with our Remote Learning@GGS 2.0 programme, with boarding students returning to our Corio campus by Wednesday 7 October, COVID-19 testing for all Middle School boarding and day students on Thursday 8 October, before face-to-face classes resume on Monday 12 October;
- **Timbertop Year 9 students** will commence a staggered return to campus from Monday 5 October, allowing for a period of 'internal group isolation' before face-to-face classes resume on Monday 12 October;
- **Senior School boarding students (Years 10-12)** will return to our Corio campus by Tuesday 6 October (with those travelling from interstate and rural/regional areas able to return from Sunday 4 October), with the General Achievement Test (GAT) to be held on Wednesday 7 October, before face-to-face classes can resume on Monday 12 October; and
- **Senior School day boarding students (Years 10-12)** will commence Term 4 on Tuesday 6 October with our Remote Learning@GGS 2.0 programme, with the General Achievement Test (GAT) to be held on Wednesday 7 October, COVID-19 testing on Thursday 8 October, before face-to-face classes can resume on Monday 12 October.

Our Executive and Leadership Teams have completed significant and detailed planning to identify, manage and mitigate the risks posed by COVID-19; particularly those risks that are unique to our context as Australia's largest coeducational boarding school. We remain buoyed that Victoria's 14-day rolling average and number of cases from unknown sources continues to trend down as we move towards a COVID normal, ever conscious that until there is a vaccine available, we are all learning how to live with this virulent disease. We will continue to closely monitor any changes to public health advice in consultation with our Senior Medical Officer, Professor Fergus Cameron. As ever, we will prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of our students and staff as we evolve our wide-reaching risk mitigation steps.

COVID-19 Testing and Risk Mitigation

As was implemented for students returning in Terms 2 and 3, we will employ a range of preventative strategies for the staggered return to on-campus learning and living in Term 4. These measures will be campus-specific and will include an emphasis on spatial distancing, excellent hygiene practices, daily temperature checks, wearing of face coverings/masks and the completion of our [Daily COVID-19 Health Questionnaire](#), as appropriate. For your convenience, GGS light blue cloth masks are now available to purchase from the [Uniform Shop](#).

We have cancelled the Term 4 exeat at Timbertop and will be extending weekend exeat/leave restrictions at Corio to reflect the high-risk residential setting at those campuses. Whilst we will continue to adapt our responses in the usual two-week planning cycle and weekend exeat/leave restrictions at Corio will be reviewed during the course of Term 4, we are focussed at this time on the important opportunity to re-establish the routines of our unique boarding culture and experience for our students. We acknowledge your continued support in this regard.

Students and staff at our Corio and Timbertop campuses will also be required to undertake a COVID-19 test and an initial period of 'internal group isolation' until the receipt of a negative test result (with test results anticipated within 48 hours). Testing will be conducted on-site through a private provider and the associated cost (\$110 inclusive of GST) will be included on the Student Fee Statement when issued. Testing is required on-site in order to provide the most up to date test results, particularly as some students will have travelled through transport hubs and arrived on campus from communities all over the country. In addition, this allows for asymptomatic testing, which is not currently accessible through public health services, coupled with the expedited turnaround of results, which is a significant protective factor for our staff and students. Our [COVID-19 Specific Conditions of Return to On Campus Learning and Living](#) have been updated for the commencement of Term 4.

Travel from metropolitan Melbourne

The Department of Education and Training (DET) [Term 4 arrangements](#) reiterate that students and staff who live in metropolitan Melbourne and are enrolled in or work in a school in regional Victoria can attend on-site consistent with the Term 4 arrangements for regional schools.

The School has received further notice this morning that for students returning from metropolitan Melbourne to school boarding premises in regional Victoria, that parents or guardians must provide a statement attesting that in the period of 14 days prior to departure from metropolitan Melbourne:

- the student has not displayed one or more symptoms of COVID-19; and
- the student has not been a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Heads of Campus will provide a templated statement for provision to the School.

If you are in metropolitan Melbourne and require a letter from the School to assist your travel to and from one of our campuses, please email C19questions@ggs.vic.edu.au with the relevant details (student name, campus and name of person/s who will drive the student to school).

Interstate Border Restrictions Update

We are extremely pleased by yesterday's announcement by the NSW Minister for Health of the creation of [a new Public Health Order](#) that includes a [Permit](#) allowing NSW students and accompanying parents and guardians to "[cross the NSW-Victorian border to attend boarding school](#)".

Returning NSW students will require a letter from the School confirming their name and enrolment details. Please email C19questions@ggs.vic.edu.au to request a letter. Please note: you will need to do this even if you have already been provided with a letter from the School, as NSW Health have requested a specific letter for this purpose.

We are hopeful that this announcement is a positive step towards the further relaxation of border restrictions for other states and territories, and we will continue to advocate for a nationally consistent approach.

Thank you

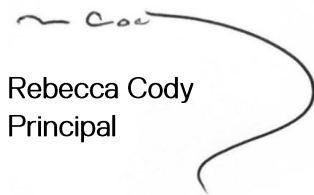
Thank you again to our families for working within the ongoing constraints of COVID-19. We are mindful that for a variety of reasons beyond our control, some boarding students will be unable to return to campus in Term 4. We absolutely understand the difficulty and disappointment that this represents. I have written separately to our overseas and interstate families, commending their courage, commitment and resilience during this extremely difficult time.

As ever, the School will communicate swiftly and accurately with our community as the situation evolves. As such, the [COVID-19 page](#) of the School website will continue to be refreshed regularly during Term 4; we encourage you to check this site frequently and monitor email alerts from Heads of Campus. Similarly, a reminder to please direct all COVID-related queries to C19questions@ggs.vic.edu.au

The preparations for the start of Term 4 represent yet another significant body of work for our teaching and operational staff. Again, I thank them for their tireless efforts and care.

I am grateful for the opportunities we have now for a staggered return to on campus learning and living in Term 4. It will be a joy to have students back on our campuses and for our learning community to be together again.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Cody
Principal