



Friday 27 November 2020

Dear Families and Friends of Geelong Grammar School,

### **COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) – Update #68 as at 3.30pm on Friday 27 November**

We are aware of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) notification of fragments of the COVID-19 virus having been detected in a wastewater sample collected from the Oyster Cove treatment plant at Corio. As previously noted, earlier this month we commenced our own sewage surveillance programme to test for fragments of the COVID-19 virus at Corio and Timbertop. I am both relieved and pleased to report that all test results received to date have been negative for COVID-19. We are closely monitoring DHHS advice regarding the wastewater finding with the direction for residents and visitors to Geelong's northern suburbs to be tested if they have any symptoms being consistent with the School's ongoing, highly precautionary COVIDSafe practices.

#### **End of Term arrangements**

Heads of Campus will provide specific information about End of Term 4 arrangements next week. We will again be implementing a carefully planned departure process at Corio and Timbertop, utilising multiple buses to transport students to and from campus where appropriate. There will also be a detailed collection schedule for students who are unable to travel by bus, with COVIDSafe protocols in place for collection from each campus.

#### **Interstate Travel – border restrictions**

We continue to monitor interstate travel and are buoyed by the continued easing of restrictions across the country. Please refer to our most recent summary of [State and Territory Border Requirements](#). Please note that as these requirements are evolving, we encourage you to check with the relevant State or Territory authority before making travel arrangements to ensure you have the relevant permit or exemption approval. We also appreciate the ongoing complexity that COVID has represented for our interstate families.

#### **2021 Planning**

We have commenced our 2021 planning with grounded optimism. We are delighted that Victoria has now recorded 28 consecutive days of no new COVID-19 cases, that there are now no active cases in the State and that we are progressing to the last few steps on [Victoria's Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) roadmap](#) towards COVID Normal.

The safety, health and wellbeing of our students, staff and their families will remain our primary concern. We will continue to take a highly precautionary approach based on the latest and best medical advice from the Australian Government Department of Health, the DHHS, the School's risk management partner, SOS International, and our Senior Medical Officer, Professor Fergus Cameron. Our decision-making will reflect our high-risk boarding environment at Corio and Timbertop and the diversity of our student cohort, representing every state and territory of Australia, as well as 16 overseas countries.

We anticipate our 2021 planning will:

- align as closely as possible with DHHS and Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) recommendations;
- treat the entire student population on each campus as one entity and avoid bespoke arrangements or subsets of students;

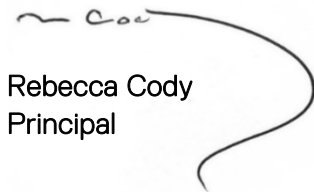
- include the testing of asymptomatic students where it is possible and practical for those students to enter a 'bubble' (i.e. test students going into Timbertop but not Corio, if exeats, interschool/APS sport, and so on are permitted); and
- enable all students with a foreseeable need to quarantine (e.g. overseas students) enough notice to do so off campus prior to the start of Term 1.

We will continue to work purposefully and proactively towards plans for 2021 which identify, manage and mitigate the risks unique to our context and relevant to our students, staff and wider School community. These plans will seek to achieve minimal interruptions to the academic year and enable access to the broadest range of cocurricular activities as safely as possible.

2020 has been an incredibly challenging and disruptive year. We are tremendously grateful for the patience, cooperation and care of our students, staff and families. In terms of agility, the response has been exceptional and we should be proud of all we have achieved during this "once in a century crisis".

Throughout 2020, the School has endeavoured to communicate swiftly and accurately with our community. Unless the situation requires an urgent alert from the School, this will be our final COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Update for the year. Thank you for working with us so positively to make the most of the challenges at hand.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Cody  
Principal