GEELONG GRAMMAR SCHOOL®
EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

Tuesday 24 August 2021

Dear Families and Friends of Geelong Grammar School,

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) – Update #41 as at 2.00pm on Tuesday 24 August

We continue to closely monitor the rapidly evolving COVID outbreak in Victoria and particularly the expanding list of public exposure sites. We are regularly meeting with our Senior Medical Officer, Professor Fergus Cameron, to review our COVIDSafe protocols to prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of our students, staff, and their families. We also acknowledge the relatively seamless transition to our Remote Learning @ GGs programme via the Hive to enable continuity of learning for our students.

Public Exposure Sites
The Department of Health (DoH) is actively identifying and updating its list of public exposure sites. There are now more than 660 exposure sites listed across Victoria, **including Tier 2 exposure sites at Corio Village Shopping Centre between 12.15pm-2.00pm on Saturday 21 August.**
- We have promptly identified students and staff at our Corio Campus who visited this location during these times;
- As per DoH advice, those identified are being tested (priority one testing having been conducted today on campus by our Kennedy Health Centre team), isolating until confirmation of a negative result, then continuing to monitor for symptoms (and test again if symptoms appear);
- Out of an abundance of caution, all Houses with impacted students are now in isolation, together with staff who have worked in the Houses since the time of the identified potential exposure; if this circumstance involves your child, you would have already been alerted.

Given our context, we continue to take a highly precautionary approach, appropriately exceeding DoH guidelines. We are also liaising directly with Barwon Health for support.

We strongly encourage our community to monitor risk locations. It is vital that our community follows the DoH guidelines for testing and isolation: if you have visited a public exposure site during the times listed and/or if you are experiencing any of the COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, please test and isolate until further direction is provided. It is also vital that if you or a close contact have visited a public exposure site and visited one of our campuses that you notify the School via C19questions@ggs.vic.edu.au.

Vaccinations
We continue to monitor the COVID-19 vaccination programme phases and priority groups. The current Australian Government eligibility guidelines are:
- People aged 18 to 59 can currently choose to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine following an appropriate assessment of suitability by a qualified health professional, and with verbal or written consent;
- People aged 16 to 39 will be eligible for the Pfizer vaccine in Victoria from Wednesday 25 August; and
- People aged 12 to 15 are eligible for the Pfizer vaccine if they meet strict eligibility criteria (vulnerable and high risk from COVID-19).

Given our unique residential context, we continue to advocate for the timely and appropriate access to vaccinations for our staff and students who seek to access this opportunity. For families of boarding students at Corio wishing to have their child/children vaccinated at participating medical clinics and vaccination centres (e.g. Barwon Health Community Vaccination Hub (old Ford Factory) in Norlane), the School will manage this

process in a safe and orderly manner in coordination with Heads of House (to arrange a staff member to accompany vaccination appointments) and our Kennedy Health Centre (to monitor potential side effects). Our oversight of this programme is essential so that we can adequately attend to the varying needs of the students in our care.

We are adapting our processes as information and eligibility are updated. We will continue to communicate more details as the situation evolves.

Please be aware that responding to individual correspondence about vaccinations cannot be accommodated at this time; properly, our focus is required on the immediate safety and wellbeing of our students and staff.

Please also note that our School does not currently hold a policy position on enrolments/attendance and vaccinations; if and when that time arises, it will be informed by the prevailing context and current medical advice.
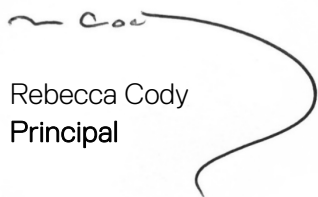
Upcoming events

We acknowledge the disappointment that accompanies the delaying, modifying and cancelling of events due to COVID and constantly changing restrictions. Such decisions are considered deeply and are only reached after balancing the competing risks and priorities. As ever, our overriding concern is to keep the community safe and keep the provision of our residential and on-site services open for as long as possible. Please be assured that as soon as opportunities arise to review events, we will be delighted to pursue them. We remain hopeful that Term 4 will bring new possibilities.

Next steps

As ever, the School will communicate swiftly and accurately with our community as the situation evolves and more information is provided by the Victorian Government. The COVID-19 page of the School website will be refreshed as required; we encourage you to check this site and thank you for continuing to direct all COVID-19 related queries to C19questions@ggs.vic.edu.au. As ever, Heads of Campus will provide further details, as required, through the Hive.

Lastly, thank you for the part you play in supporting and sustaining one another through these complex and ever-evolving times. We would also value dearly that ongoing communication with staff about unfolding complexities remains respectful and with an acceptance that we cannot respond to the volume of enquiries immediately. What unfolds for us each day to manage is highly dynamic, and as such, answers and certainty are not always readily available; we need the space to take advice, make informed decisions, plan and then implement processes in a measured way. Our staff teams are working tirelessly and expertly to attend to all needs; we ask for your patience and understanding please.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Cody
Principal