



Penola
CATHOLIC COLLEGE
EST. 1995

7 April, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This is the first Holy Week in my life that I have not attended Mass. It is quite surreal to reach my 50th Easter and to experience it so differently. So much of what has been our normal experience is changing at the moment and I hope that you as Penola families are well and coping with this significant upheaval.

It is important that I reiterate from the outset of this communication that the safety of the Penola Community is our first priority in decision making. I also wish to reiterate that we are aware that life has become challenging for many within our school community and that this Christ-centred school community wants to provide the best support and connection that we can achieve in these difficult times.

This morning at a press conference the Premier, Daniel Andrews and Education Minister, James Merlino announced that if students can learn from home, they must learn from home in Term 2. That is from Wednesday 15 April until Friday 26 June.

The Penola Catholic College staff team worked very hard at the end of Term 1 to prepare for this possibility, and have developed the Penola Remote Learning plan to support continuity of learning for Penola students. Penola Catholic College will work hard to ensure the best opportunities for our school community through this time of change.

There are a number of implications of today's decision. Our College Leadership team is working through the announcement and how this will impact our delivery. I will provide another update to families on Thursday afternoon. The majority of staff are currently on holidays and they will return virtually, next Tuesday 14 April. On Wednesday 15 April, Penola will begin remote learning.

Penola Catholic College supports the Government's position to provide educational supervision to the dependents of essential workers who cannot work from home and/or vulnerable students throughout Term 2. These people play a critical role in the safety of our community. **If you believe your family is unable to facilitate remote learning due to being essential workers or for other specific reasons, could you please complete the following link by midday Thursday 9 April to enable us to plan appropriate supervision and support. Later requests will be considered, but we are trying to ascertain the level of current need for next week.**

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=MKDhY9_0AEWzThV2yb6SDwrXCtFBq5ZDoacFWMJYm9RUNjhFMTZRujg1SERSR1VCSTlwSIA5VU0xNSQIQCN0PWcu

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I must reiterate that for those students who come to school, Penola can provide supervision only, to support these students accessing the remote learning plan. The supervisors will not be actively engaged in teaching; the student's regular teachers will do this remotely and will not be on campus. A member of the Leadership team or Wellbeing team will contact each family seeking supervision, to discuss your specific needs. Penola will continue to provide the other faith, wellbeing and academic support outlined in the Remote Learning Plan accessed through our external website or <http://penola.vic.edu.au/download/Remote-Learning-Plan.pdf>

Once we ascertain the number of people seeking supervision, we will provide more information about what that will look like. I can let you know that supervision of these students will take place at the Senior Campus, 29 Gibson Street, Broadmeadows, as there is more space to ensure that students are socially isolating effectively. The Junior Campus will effectively be closed to all staff and students. In the interest of community safety, we will be working to minimise the number of people who need to come on site at the Senior Campus which will mean that the gates will be closed and students will need to enter through reception.

I am aware of the concern that exists for senior students, particularly Year 12s for their VCE and VCAL certificates. The Premier provided a range of changes and concessions today to ensure students will receive an ATAR and their senior certificates. I will provide a specific vodcast to senior students and their families over the coming days.

I am aware that many parents will have lost significant employment or business income due to coronavirus. At this time our position as a Catholic school, in the Josephite tradition, is very clear that families will be supported in times of need. The school's immediate priority is to provide as much stability as possible for your young person/people and with this in mind, we are committed to providing flexible and confidential financial assistance to support you with managing your school fee commitments for 2020. If this is an issue for you, please get in touch with us to discuss the options. We do care and if you need help, please reach out by contacting schoolfees@penola.vic.edu.au

Finally, today will be a difficult day for all those impacted by the scourge of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church with the High Court's decision regarding Cardinal George Pell. We remember and pray for all the victims at this difficult time.

We move towards Easter as people of hope and I hope that all within our Penola Catholic College community remain safe and well.

Regards

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Principal

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