

13 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

The last few weeks of *Learning from Home* have been challenging for everyone as we have adjusted to new ways of learning, teaching and parenting during this period of physical isolation.

On behalf of the school and our staff, I would like to thank families for all the support you have provided so far. All you have done, and the energy and creativity of staff has been inspiring, as has the commitment of our students. Their resilience, ability to adapt and willingness to engage is a credit to them and the work of families and teachers.

Yes, it has been harder for some than others, but we can all be really proud of how we have approached this time. There are things that we have learned and new ways of doing things that we will take into the Post COVID-19 world. At the same time, this period in isolation has also highlighted what is important and what we miss most about being with others. Thank you to everyone.

Our last newsletter gave great insight into the many wonderful things happening during this *Learning from Home*. It is worth a look, if you haven't had a chance to read it. The link was forwarded to all parents / carers and the newsletter is up on our website.

Certainly my highlight last week was the Mothers' Day breakfast. What a lovely morning! Terrific guest speaker, yummy breakfast, great Q and A and just so good to see the students and their mums. Thank you to our School Captains, Ms Laura Cioccia, Mr Kevin Quinn, Ms Kristy Liberatore and all who helped in delivering the breakfast packs.

Wellbeing Day: Tuesday 19 May

As I indicated in last week's newsletter, students and staff are finding online learning and teaching to be quite intense, stressful and tiring so next Tuesday, 19 May will be a **Wellbeing Day** for students and staff. It is the mid-point of the term and on this day, there will be no online learning/teaching, no classes for students who are coming to school and no expectation that students/ staff are catching up on work. It is a day to get away from screens. Time to just be, to rest and recharge; time to get outside and/or to pursue non screen activities.

Return to Classroom Learning

Following advice from the Chief Health Officer, the Victorian Government and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) have advised that schools can begin a phased return to onsite schooling.

As our students are all in Years 7 to 10, we will be part of Phase 2 and have another three and a half weeks of *Learning from Home*. Our students will return on **Tuesday 9 June**.

Year 10 students taking VCE studies, including VCE VET studies, will receive further information from Sydenham about their classes as these will begin in Phase 1, the week beginning 25 May.

To support all school staff to prepare for this transition, the Government and CECV have designated **Monday 25 May** as a student-free day.

As teachers will be planning and meeting on this day, there will be no online classes but it is a good opportunity for students to catch up on work they have missed.

Students who need to be supervised at school

For those students who cannot be supervised at home and vulnerable children, the existing model of onsite schooling will remain in place until we return on the 9 June.

As more parents / carers return to work there may be additional families who will need this support. If this is the case, please let the school know so that we have adequate staffing in place.

- i) Email enquiries@crcstalbens.com.au
- ii) By phone on the normal school number 9366 2544
- iii) Vietnamese Multicultural Aide: Mr Tung Phan on **0428 045 680**
- iv) Arabic Multicultural Aide: Ms Louna Ghawi on **0437 210 544**
- v) Dinka Multicultural Aide: Mr Deng Alier (Dinka) on **0428 158 780**

Up until the **9 June**, students who are supervised at school will continue to do the same work as those learning remotely and need to meet the following criteria:

- a) Parents / carers are working and cannot make other arrangements for their child.
- b) students who are vulnerable and unable to work or learn from home.

Key information about the Return to Classroom Learning

Once we return to classroom learning, all students will be expected to attend school as normal. This means if you choose to keep your child/children home after their year level has returned to onsite schooling, we can no longer support their learning from home.

This does not apply to children who need to be absent for health or medical reasons. For those families, please contact us so we can make an appropriate plan.

This same approach is being taken by all Catholic and government schools in Victoria.

To support the health and wellbeing of all students and staff, our school will continue an enhanced cleaning routine and will encourage frequent handwashing.

If your child is ill or is feeling unwell, they must not attend school. They must remain home and seek medical advice.

While the Chief Health Officer has advised that students will not be required to maintain physical distancing at school, there will be a number of important changes to our school operations, consistent with health advice to all schools that will be made available in coming days. These will apply until further notice. I will provide more details about our local school context as soon as possible, but it is important to note that changes will include:

- restrictions on access to the school site for anyone other than immediate school staff and students.
- the way we conduct meetings and interviews with families.

We understand that families will have mixed feelings about this return to classroom based teaching and learning. Some may feel anxious. I can assure you that this decision has been taken on the basis of the best health advice available to our state.

More information about the return to school and coronavirus (COVID-19) can be found on the CECV website, which will continue to be updated: www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Coronavirus-information-for-parents.

Thank you for your continued support and patience during this time. We look forward to welcoming students back to the classroom.

Yours sincerely



Christina Utri
Principal