

20 March 2020

## Mercy Education School Arrangements during Coronavirus Pandemic

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians of students from our Mercy Education Ltd schools.

Mercy Education, on behalf of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, is the governing authority for twelve Mercy schools, including your child's school. Mercy Education undertakes this role with your Principal in leading this school and supporting the dedicated staff in partnership with the Catholic Education Office.

The current coronavirus pandemic is extremely unsettling for all and I feel it is important to explain the position that Mercy Education has taken in supporting our schools.

The health and safety of our staff and students is our paramount concern. In the context of an international pandemic; however, these considerations are much more complex.

Mercy Education relies on the advice from the Australian Government, who in consultation with their experts, are qualified to assess the evidence, weigh up conflicting opinions and make recommendations. Mercy Education also acknowledges the guidance provided from the National Catholic Education Commission. Based on advice from these sources, and in concert with the Catholic Education Office, Mercy Education is continuing to keep all our schools open.

I appreciate that despite this advice, some parents have chosen to keep their children at home or have special circumstances to consider. As parents, you have a critical role in helping the school manage this situation:

- Exercise good judgment by keeping children home if they are feeling unwell for any reason.
- Talk to children about the situation, as they may be feeling anxious or stressed. You have a key role in helping students feel prepared and safe.
- Encourage children to be proactive and committed to their schoolwork, and to stay connected with the school and their teachers.

Our schools continue to prepare to provide for student learning in the event they are required to close. Our school communities will seek to minimise the impact on student learning as much as possible with excellent preparation for online learning and for study at home.

It is likely to be an extended time of academic and social disruption, of anxiety and confusion, of fear and grief. Nevertheless, we try to stay positive and look for the new opportunities and different ways of living and working that may arise. By working together and supporting each other, hopefully this will be a year where we learn what is truly important in our lives and where we are able to model the values of community and concern for others. We are called to such action as people of Mercy, as Christians and as Australians.

On your behalf, I thank all the teachers and staff members of the College who are working tirelessly to provide this example for your children. I am confident that you are providing them your full support.

Your Principal will continue to provide regular updates as new information comes to hand.

Yours sincerely



**Christopher Houlihan**  
Chief Executive  
Mercy Education Ltd