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23 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

In line with the State, we will be **concluding Term One classes today, Monday 23 March 2020, and commencing the school holidays early.** This short notice may cause inconvenience for families, but we need to follow State advice. At this point the students are due to commence **Term Two on Wednesday, 15 April 2020.** My apologies for any confusion through the past week as we follow the various directions of different governors and authorities.

Through the coming weeks please continue checking updated messages from the College through the various mediums. We will keep you informed of any new information and arrangements as the situation unfolds over the next few weeks.

One noticeable concern this morning has been the number of students who are not aware of the growing concerns and measures being taken to restrict the risk. Please read the relevant information from the Department of Health [Coronavirus](#). Please ensure that you follow the instructions relating to students not congregating through the holidays. There should be no visits, parties, sleepovers or congregating in shopping centres. The social distancing is a real challenge, as is the importance to remind students about safe hygiene.

Across Australia, and indeed the world, the global pandemic that is the Coronavirus – Covid19 - has revealed both the worst and the best sides of humanity. Whilst we have all seen images of shopping selfishness, we have also seen the kindness of friends and strangers.

Through the past week our student absences have rapidly increased with the number of students who have been unwell and those who have started to self-isolate. Some families have taken extraordinary measures to help support the wellbeing of others and we thank them for taking these actions and making personal sacrifices. If you ever needed a reminder of whether our community appreciates the Mercy Values, then once again they have been at the fore of our actions or praxis over the past weeks. It is a privilege to be associated with a school community that is so resilient and keeps rallying together. Our parent community has been amazing – you have supported each initiative to its fullest and I thank you. Our staff have been incredible, those who are vulnerable and have every right to distance themselves have presented, continuing their current work and actively planning for whatever form education takes next term under a cloud of uncertainty and concern.

Please remember to talk regularly with your children through the break. There are varying levels of understanding and interest about the challenges and only you will understand that context. It is important to be factual and talk about the changing emotions that will present in the coming months. There has been a growing level of uncertainty as students mirror the concerns of parents. Please try and keep them distracted when you can. The senior students will have work to complete through the break and at the start of next term we will be either at school or work will start online.

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COOLOCK

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ST MARY'S

Years 10-12
Barkly Street, Bendigo 3550

A Ministry of Mercy Education Ltd
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To those families that have been impacted by the financial and employment challenges associated with the Virus you are in our thoughts and prayers.

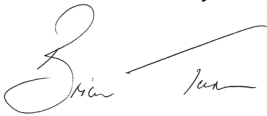
It is difficult to fathom that we are at the end of term and moving through Lent. On behalf of the staff and Mercy Education I wish all families a safe and hope filled break and Easter season. I encourage you all to make sure that Easter Sunday is extra special this year. Know that as a Mercy community we shall be celebrating together no matter how far apart we may be.

Easter Table Prayer

Creator God and Lord of Life,
You who call forth from the darkness of death
all those who love You,
we rejoice, on this Easter Sunday,
in the resurrection from the dead
of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Visit our home and this table
with Your bright blessing of peace and life.
We pause in the midst of this prayer
to remember all the holy dead of our family
who live now in You and who await
the final and glorious resurrection of the dead.

Pause for silent reflection to remember those who are suffering or grieving.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brian Turner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Mr Brian Turner
Principal