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16 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: COVID 19 – Week 1, Term 2

We have started Term 2 and are making some great progress as we try to understand how this is all going to work. The most important thing to remember for the next term is please be patient, be flexible and try not to be reactive. There will be mistakes and criticisms of decisions made right through the term. We will try and be reflective and anticipate as many of these concerns as we can. Some students and families want more contact and communication, some want less, some have not read anything. It is a real balance to keep everyone happy. What has been noticeable is the level of tension and anxiety that is across the board.

We have staff at Coolock and staff online. We have the students of parents in Essential Services at Coolock every day. They are being supervised and doing the online work. If you need this service, please see the student supervision information on PAM.

Please remember that these is lots of information on [PAM \(for parents\)](#) and [SIMON \(for students\)](#).

What do we know?

We know that the Victorian State Government had confirmed yesterday that we are staying online with remote learning and are making adjustments as noted in the information later in this update. The VCE dates are significant so please take note.

Interventions

All of the services and interventions we usually provide are still being provided in accord with [eSafetyCommissioner](#) guidelines and other authorities. If your son or daughter was accessing these services that will continue to take place. Where there are changes to that PLP (personalised learning plans) you will be notified and included in the conversation. There are some students who find the online experience very challenging in relation to content, technology, language and access. We are working towards solving some of these challenges. It is the first week and new issues are emerging every day.

If you are uncertain about service or supports, please contact your child's Learning Mentor as the first contact. The Learning Mentors are in regular contact and will be asking a list of questions frequently around learning and teaching, wellbeing and any other issues or concerns.

Online Learning

All of the online discussions should be through [Google Meets](#). That is the College's direction. We will not be contacting through Zoom or any other mediums. Google Meets and College email are the general modes. Refer to the [Online Learning](#) poster or the [Remote Learning Plan](#).

Buses

All bus services are running. They might be empty in some instances, but they are running their services and as always are very flexible to support you.

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COOLOCK

Years 7-9
McIvor Highway, Junortoun 3551

ST MARY'S

Years 10-12
Barkly Street, Bendigo 3550

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ABN 69 154 531 870

College Fees

We are well aware of the financial and employment challenges families face as the economy has been impacted by COVID 19. Please remember we are here to support, we are a Mercy College and our Foundress Catherine McAuley is the fundamental to our praxis. Thank you to those families who have been in touch and so open and honest during a difficult time. Once again, the information is on PAM for families to access information.

Changes to the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) in 2020

In a release from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) on 15 April 2020 the Victorian Government has announced that, on advice from the Chief Health Officer, all Victorian government schools will move to remote and flexible learning and teaching for Term 2.

The Victorian Government has also announced the following adjustments to the delivery of the VCE:

- The GAT test will move from June to October or November.
- End-of-year exams will be postponed until at least December.
- School-based assessment tasks will be reduced where possible to relieve some pressure on students as they move to remote and flexible learning arrangements.
- Universities will be asked to delay the start of the 2021 university year to account for impacts of coronavirus on senior secondary students.

VCAL students will have more time to complete their courses and this will be consistent with the revised dates for the VCE. The VCAA has been asked to consider a compressed end-of-year exam schedule in recognition of the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Confirmation of changes and timelines:

VCE Unit 3 – The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) recommends that schools extend the indicative dates of the end of VCE Unit 3 by two weeks to 26 June 2020 in recognition of the disruption to the end of Term 1 and the move to remote and flexible learning in Term 2.

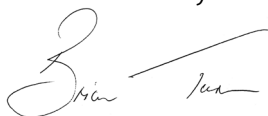
As Unit 3 is in the process of delivery there will be no changes to the teaching and assessment program as outlined in the Study Design. Teachers should proceed with their current teaching and learning programs to allow Unit 3 to be completed as designed. VCAA will provide advice in the week commencing 20 April 2020 on which Unit 3 school-based assessments can be completed remotely, and those needing to be completed on site in recognition of their practical nature and the facilities required for an authentic assessment. On-site assessments will need to be prioritised with appropriate timetabling and arrangements to ensure adherence to social distancing measures. Further advice will be provided to assist teachers in authentication and verification processes for remotely delivered assessments.

VCE Unit 4 – We are currently reviewing all VCE Study Designs, with a particular focus on Unit 4, to reduce, where possible, school-based assessment tasks to relieve some pressure on students as they move to remote and flexible learning arrangements. This review will include the small number of studies where the assessment item is across both Unit 3 and Unit 4, as there may need to be adjustment to both Units to adequately account for the disruption. We are working with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to expedite accreditation of all Study Designs and will make them available by 25 April 2020.

VCAL – There will be no change to VCAL content or assessment, except in relation to the mandatory Vocational Education and Training (VET) requirements.

Again, we thank you for your patience.

Yours sincerely



Mr Brian Turner
Principal