
 Coolock (03) 5449 3466  
St Mary's (03) 5445 9100  
 [www.cmc.vic.edu.au](http://www.cmc.vic.edu.au)  
 [principal@cmc.vic.edu.au](mailto:principal@cmc.vic.edu.au)

21 May 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

Thank you for all your support during the period of remote learning. Your ability to adapt to a totally new way of schooling has shown your remarkable resilience and adaptability.

Further to our previous communication, following advice from the Chief Health Officer, schools can begin a phased return to onsite schooling. As we continue to receive updates, we hope this letter provides you with clarification on a number of points.

In the first stage, our senior students at St Mary's will return to school from Tuesday 26 May. All Year 10, 11 & 12 classes will be run from their timetabled classroom starting Tuesday 26 May. Most Year 10 students will be present in these classes as they will be onsite in order to attend their acceleration classes. Year 10 students who aren't attending onsite can join Year 10 classes via Google Meets.

To support all school staff to prepare for this transition, Monday 25 May will be a student-free day, so please take this opportunity to disconnect for the day in readiness for our start back at St Mary's on Tuesday 26 May. On this day, students are welcome to wear any form of the College uniform, i.e. they can choose to wear PE, winter or summer. Please avoid a combination of options. We will have a slightly altered timetable on Tuesday, including a slow start to the day to allow students to reconnect with their peers. Please keep an eye out for notices in Wright Street explaining how the day will look.

In line with advice from the State Government, there will be some changes to how we operate to ensure we are following guidelines and keeping ourselves and others safe. This will include an increase in cleaning and hygiene practices, such as hand sanitiser available in all classrooms. Please rest assured that we take this seriously and our staff are committed to healthy practices.

We do ask that students who are unwell do not attend and receive the appropriate medical care. Please continue your open communication with us regarding the outcome of health appointments, so that we can work together for positive outcomes for everyone. With your assistance, we ask that all visitors to the College call the general office on 5445 9101 beforehand to gain direction.

We really look forward to seeing you in person next week and know that we will continue to support each other as we learn and adapt to this next stage of the COVID-19 challenge. Please note that Mr Tim Edwards will be communicating similar information prior to Coolock students returning on site on Tuesday 9 June.

Yours sincerely

**Mr Ben Fitzpatrick**  
Deputy Principal - St Mary's Campus

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## COOLOCK

Years 7-9  
McIvor Highway, Junortoun 3551

## ST MARY'S

Years 10-12  
Barkly Street, Bendigo 3550

A Ministry of Mercy Education Ltd  
ABN 69 154 531 870



## What you Need to Know

### **Who goes back and when?**

**Monday 25 May:** All teachers return for a curriculum day. This is a student free day.

**Tuesday 26 May:** All VCE, VCAL & VET students. Year 10 students who take a VCE or VET class will also be expected to attend.

**Tuesday 9 June:** Year 7 to Year 10 in full.

### **Are students expected to socially distance?**

No. According to the Chief Health Officers this guideline only applies to adults. The staff on site, however, will be expected to observe all social distancing recommendations.

### **My child is feeling sick, although only moderately. What should we do?**

If your child has flu or cold-like symptoms, please keep them at home and seek medical advice. They can return to school only when symptoms have resolved.

If your child feels sick during the day we will ask you to come and collect your child.

### **How will we maintain hygiene?**

Students will be encouraged to wash their hands or use sanitiser regularly, including on arrival, and before and after classes. There will be sanitiser available in each classroom and hand wash soap in the rest rooms. Students are also asked to use their own water bottle.

Our cleaning company has a rigorous and extensive scope of works that involves daily cleaning and sanitation.

### **Will classrooms look different?**

No, class sizes will remain the same and students will not be expected to physically distance.

### **My Year 10 child does a VCE or VET subject. Are they allowed to go to school?**

Yes, they are expected to attend their VCE and/or VET classes. On those days, they will be permitted to attend the entire day. Year 10 classes will run from their normal classrooms, with the teacher sending out a "google meet" invitation to all members of the class at the beginning of the lesson, so that students can engage remotely when not on campus.

### **My child studies a VET subject off the St Mary's Campus. Will this still run?**

All cross-campus classes, such as the VET Agriculture, Animal Studies and Building and Construction classes will commence on site from Tuesday 26 May. Students will be transported between campuses as they were in Term 1.

Students studying classes at the Park Road Trade Training Centre will also be commencing their on-site learning and should travel to this Centre as they did in Term 1.

Bendigo TAFE are continuing with remote learning until further notice. Students studying VET Beauty are expected to connect to these classes remotely from the St Mary's library during their normal class time.

**I don't feel comfortable sending my child to school. Can they continue to learn remotely?**

Once a year level has returned there will be no provision for remote learning. All students who are able to go to school are expected to attend. The clear government advice is that teachers will not be expected to run both face-to-face and remote classes. There will be limited exemptions.

**My child/family has health complications related to COVID-19. Should they attend school?**

This will be dependent on the health medical advice for each individual. We will continue to support students with resources and guidance where they can't attend school for medical reasons related to COVID-19. Written medical proof of this may be required. Please contact your child's Year Level Learning Leader if you need to discuss or alert the school to this.

**What if my child is quite anxious about returning to school?**

For some this will be a very normal reaction based on feelings of safety or some social anxieties. Our Wellbeing team is acutely aware that some students may need some additional support to manage the transition back to school. If you feel like your child is in need of extra support, please contact the Learning Mentor.

**Will the canteen be open?**

Yes.

**Where did we get our information and advice from?**

All Catholic schools in Victoria are committed to following as closely as is practicable in their individual settings the guidelines published by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, the Department of Education and the Catholic Education Commission Victoria.