

23rd March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,



Re: The term break starts tomorrow, Tuesday 24th March 2020

In line with the State Government recommendations, we will be **concluding Term One classes today, Monday 23rd March 2020, and commencing the school holidays early.** This short notice may cause inconvenience for families, but the College is obligated to follow State advice. At this point the students are due to commence **Term Two on Wednesday 15th April.** My apologies for any confusion through the past 48 hours as we attempt to follow the various directions of governments and authorities.

Through the coming weeks, particularly the week prior to Easter 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. A letter to the community will be issued in the week prior to Good Friday.

One noticeable concern that has been communicated by our political leaders is the number of people in the community who have not taken the social distancing measures seriously. This concern has now been expressed to include our students throughout the holiday period. ***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 practices.***

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. At this point, as we enter times never experienced before I think it is worth remembering the values of St Francis of Assisi. ***'Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words.'*** We will always be judged by our actions and it is important that we conduct ourselves with compassion, mindfulness and empathy for others.

Thank you to our community for your support through these times and thank you to our staff. Our staff have been incredible ensuring the wellbeing of the students in our care, delivering face to face learning and planning for the on-line delivery when it is required. The on-line platform / structures will be ready, when needed in the new term.

Let's not forget our students, your sons and daughters during this time. 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. Furthermore, at some point this week your son / daughters Learning Advisor will 'check in'. This check in will be via an email or phone call.

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The senior students will have much 'Holiday homework' to complete throughout the break and other year levels may also have a few tasks to undertake. At the start of next term, we will be either at school or work will start online, from home. We have asked our students to take all of their belongings home this afternoon. As the College is open this week, you are welcome to come in and collect your child's belongings if they are not present today.

To those families that have been impacted by the financial and employment challenges associated with the Virus you are in our thoughts and prayers. I am sure we will communicate with each other in the coming weeks and months. At St Mary of the Angels College nobody travels alone through difficult times.

It is difficult to fathom that we are at the end of term and moving through Lent. On behalf of the staff at the College 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 in the knowledge that as a 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 at this most difficult time.

With Peace and Goodwill,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt" followed by a stylized flourish.

Matt Carver
Principal