



RED BEND CATHOLIC COLLEGE

College Rd (PO BOX 312) FORBES NSW 2871

P: 02 6852 2000 F: 02 6852 3768 rbcc@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
www.redbendcc.nsw.edu.au

4 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you and your family are well and that your child/children are making progress with the online learning. We are mindful of the challenges remote online learning presents to the students and we will continue to refine and support the learning experience. Thank you for the feedback that was provided last week regarding the online learning experience to date.

From an academic and welfare perspective it remains our priority to return to face to face learning when it is safe to do so. There is a great deal of debate, however, regarding risks associated with students and staff returning to schools. Australia's Chief Medical Officer has repeatedly informed us that it is safe for children and staff to return to school for those who are not vulnerable. Health experts advise us that children are infected with COVID-19 at much lower rates than adults. Furthermore, data from around the world show that children very rarely get severely ill from COVID-19 and there is mounting evidence to show that children are not the primary spreaders of the virus. In Australian schools where cases have been diagnosed, there has been no reported case of secondary spread. However, the evidence is limited and in reality there can be no certainty while research continues to evolve. Be assured that we continue to be advised by Government and Health authorities in consultation with Catholic Schools NSW and Marist Schools Australia.

The College executive team has been developing a plan that considers the implications of returning students to face to face learning as per the guidelines from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and the NSW Premier. As you would be aware, each school has the authority, in consultation with relevant authorities and families, to determine how and when the students will return. Our priority is the health and safety of students and staff, and enabling students to return to classroom learning as soon as practicable.

We have developed our plan for the return of face to face learning onsite. This plan is subject to any changes or directives from Health or Government authorities. The plan below outlines when students will return to face to face learning:

Week 2, from Monday 4 May, online learning will continue for all students

Week 3, from Monday 11 May, Year 12 will return to full time learning onsite

Week 4, from Monday 18 May, Years 11 and 7 will return to full time learning onsite

Week 5, from Monday 25 May, Years 8, 9 and 10 will return to full time learning onsite

Therefore by week 5, all students (with the exception of some boarders) will have the opportunity to return to face to face learning onsite.

Supervision onsite for online learning will continue to be provided at the College in weeks 2, 3 and 4 for students. We will also continue to provide online learning for those who are unable to return to face to face learning for various reasons.

NSW Health and the AHPPC continue to advise of a heightened level of risk for students in residential or boarding care. Thus we are continuing to determine how we may be able to have a limited number of boarding students return to boarding. Considerations include the development of mitigations that lower the risk of transmission and promote good health, hygiene and physical distancing within boarding and thus seeking to protect the students, the staff and the community. Year 12 boarding students are our initial priority. We will be making contact with individual boarding families ASAP to discuss options for either a return to boarding (for more remote students) or ways that other boarders can attend temporarily as day students. The decision for students to return to boarding will be a shared decision that will involve our boarding parents, with a clear understanding and documented agreement.

The cooperation and professionalism of our staff, the patience and goodwill of parents and carers, as well as the enthusiasm of our students embracing learning in new ways for many, shows our Marist spirit is alive and well. Thank you for your continued support as we endeavour to meet guidelines of health and government authorities in aiming to provide the highest quality learning possible under challenging conditions.

We look forward to the day when we have all students, including all boarders, return to the normal learning, teaching and boarding experience.

Thank you for your trust and patience as we carefully move forward, to inspire the minds, hearts and spirits of the students in our care.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Dwyer
Principal