



Our Lady of  
Mercy College

16 March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

**RE: COVID-19 – COLLEGE RESPONSE PLAN**

I am aware that there may be some concern amongst our school community at the moment regarding the COVID-19 virus and the health of students. Therefore, I am writing to provide you with information relevant to the College operations and wellbeing of your child(ren).

Please let me reassure you that the safety and wellbeing of every one of our students is our highest priority.

We are working closely with CEWA support staff and following the advice of the Department of Health in dealing with risks posed by COVID-19. Our school is taking all reasonable measures to prevent the spread of the virus at school.

Attached, please find the College response plan and other associated information to reduce disruption to your child's education, should it be necessary to close the school.

Yours sincerely,

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**Rob Crothers**  
**Principal**



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES, STUDENTS AND STAFF REGARDING COVID - 19



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Mercy College

### RATIONALE

This document is intended to familiarise community members with the College's action plan, should it be necessary for the College to close for any length of time.

The College will be required to close if;

- The Government of Australia/Western Australia requests that all schools close to limit the spread of the corona virus.
- There is a confirmed case(s) of infection within the College, and CEWA has directed us to close the College. In this case, the College would usually expect to be closed initially for a few days only, while the Health Department assists in assessing the risk to the College community.

Please familiarise yourself with the following areas;

- Who can attend the College.
- The procedures for collecting students should the College close.
- How lessons/study will continue remotely.
- How the College will communicate with families during this time.
- What parents can do to help control of the virus.
- What the College is doing to combat the spread of the virus.

### WHO CAN ATTEND SCHOOL

The Prime Minister has introduced measures placed on international arrivals into Australia. This means a mandatory 14 day self-isolation requirement has been placed on all international arrivals into Australia effective from 9pm (WST) on Sunday 15 March.

From today, Western Australia schools are required to introduce new precautionary measures.

As with all Australian travellers, students and staff who return from international travel must self-isolate for 14 days. This includes all parents, contractors and school visitors. Ideally, students or staff members in the same house as a person self-isolating should make alternative residential arrangements to mitigate any possible spread of the virus. If this is not possible, staff and students residing in the same residence as a self-isolating person **MUST** ensure they do not have any contact with the individual.

- It is your responsibility to keep the College informed of the state of your child's health at all times.
- Err on the side of caution in this time of world-wide uncertainty.

## **THE PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTING STUDENTS IF THE COLLEGE IS REQUIRED TO CLOSE**

- Parents/Guardians will be notified of this as soon as we receive any directive to close the College. This will be via SMS, email (to your recorded email address) and via SEQTA direct message. Please ensure the College has your updated contact details.

### **If the College is required to close during the day;**

- Students will be notified of this in classrooms, to avoid large group contact.
- Students will be asked to collect their remaining belongings from lockers and then return to their classrooms. Students remain in their classroom until notified of parent arrival via text.
- If a student usually walks/cycles home, he/she will be allowed to do this at the allocated time.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to text their child their arrival time 5/10 minutes ahead to avoid congestion.
- Students to be collected from setdown/pickup driveway adjacent to the Oval.
- Students who have ordered food from the Café may be able to collect it, as managed by the College staff.
- Any student who is unable to be collected in the immediate future by a parent/guardian, will remain in the classroom until he/she can be collected.
- Parents/Guardians can notify the College front office if they have made alternative arrangements for their child to be collected.
- The College will notify the bus companies of this closure, as our students should not be using public transport under these conditions.

### **If the College is notified of a closure on the following day**

- Please make arrangements for your child(ren) to be supervised and cared for, since they will not be able to attend school.
- Please ensure the student(s) are set up and ready to follow their lessons online via SEQTA, Teams and OneNote.

## **HOW STUDY WILL CONTINUE REMOTELY**

- The College is well prepared to deliver lesson plans remotely via SEQTA and other online platforms. Parents are familiar with this learning management tool and are therefore encouraged to familiarise themselves with their child(ren)'s lesson expectations.
- Some teachers may choose to deliver their lessons via Teams and One Note; teachers will inform their classes of the preferred method of delivery. Your child will be familiar with this approach to learning, so please discuss this with him/her.
- The College staff will provide lessons in the 5 core areas, for Years 7-10.

- Those senior students pursuing the general pathway, including certificate courses, need to continue accessing their certificate units, as they do currently, in addition to completing their set lessons on SEQTA, for general subjects.
- Senior students studying ATAR courses are encouraged to do both planned lessons and independent research/study, as needed.
- Please be prepared for possible connectivity issues with so many students at home. Students should be prepared to continue lessons using their textbooks, as needed.
- Students must be prepared to upload responses, should their daily lessons require this.
- The support of parents is paramount in ensuring students access their lessons and continue with their studies.
- On Tuesday 17 March 2020, students will be addressed about the potential for a closure of the College. They will be asked to begin taking all their books home, in preparation for a possible closure of the College; for the foreseeable future it is best that students only bring required books and stationery to school.
- Strategies to combat anxiety /fear of the unknown will also be discussed.

### **HOW WILL WE COMMUNICATE IF THE SCHOOL IS CLOSED**

- The College will communicate via SMS, email and direct message.
- We anticipate we may be able to have a skeleton response team available at the College during the closure, to assist with any urgent queries or matters that arise. This may not be possible if we are advised against such a measure, however.

### **HOW PARENTS CAN ASSIST WITH CONTAINING THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS**

- Keep your child(ren) home, if they are unwell.
- Continue to emphasise good general hygiene measures at home, with your family.
  - Thorough washing of hands
  - Covering mouth when coughing or sneezing
  - Avoid touching their faces/mouths at all times
  - No sharing of drinks bottles or food
- Make children aware of the need to be extra cautious when using public transport or attending large gatherings. Always carry a small container of hand sanitizer on his/her person.
- Avoid unnecessary anxiety by discussing what the symptoms for coronavirus are, and emphasise that there are usually a number of associated symptoms to indicate the presence of the virus (fever, coughing, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty in breathing, amongst others).

## **STEPS THE COLLEGE IS TAKING TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT OF COVID -19**

- Speaking to students about the need for good hygiene practices, both verbally and in the daily notices.
- All students will be briefed about the protocols should the College need to be closed for a period of time.
- Signs in the toilet/change rooms that promote good hygiene practices.
- Additional cleaning of College grounds at the end of the day.
- Mass and liturgies - no shaking of hands during "sign of peace".
- The College Executive will consider postponing assemblies, large gatherings and excursions depending on advice from CEWA and the specific circumstances of the event.
- In the interest of health, our scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences will be cancelled until further notice. Staff will contact parents by phone/email/direct message to discuss students at risk.
- College assemblies have been cancelled.
- The Athletics carnival has been cancelled.

The College website provides additional information and is regularly updated.

- <https://www.olmca.wa.edu.au/>

Please find below links to the Department of Education and Department of Health websites for more information.

- <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/coronavirus-school-update>
- <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

The College is very appreciative of your ongoing support, as we continue to do whatever is necessary to ensure the wellbeing of students, staff and families.

Yours sincerely,



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**Rob Crothers**  
**Principal**