



17 March 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers

I am writing to further update you on the changing situation in response to COVID-19 and the decisions we are making at Saint Stephen's College.

Yesterday some schools announced that they will voluntarily close their campuses. Whilst this is not in line with government or Queensland Health directives, there are no doubt many individual factors influencing each decision. Each school needs to ensure that the best plans for their community are in place. Boarding schools face greater risks and complexities as they manage this situation. All schools must act in a protective and preventative manner whilst continuing to deliver a quality education to students.

At Saint Stephen's College we are continuing to monitor this situation minute-by-minute, at this point in time we are open. The College will remain open and functioning with additional safety measures in place. Our absentee rate indicates that the majority of our families wish their children to continue on-campus learning. If you feel that you want to isolate your children and keep them at home, please do so. This is a family decision and also one where a number of factors will influence the outcome. You have my support and commitment that our teaching teams can continue to educate your child. If this is your decision, we ask that you inform our College via the appropriate absentee email (Junior or Senior) and title this 'Voluntary Isolation' and include the dates. If your child is to attend school for part of the day, I ask that they use the sign in and sign out procedure that has always been in place.

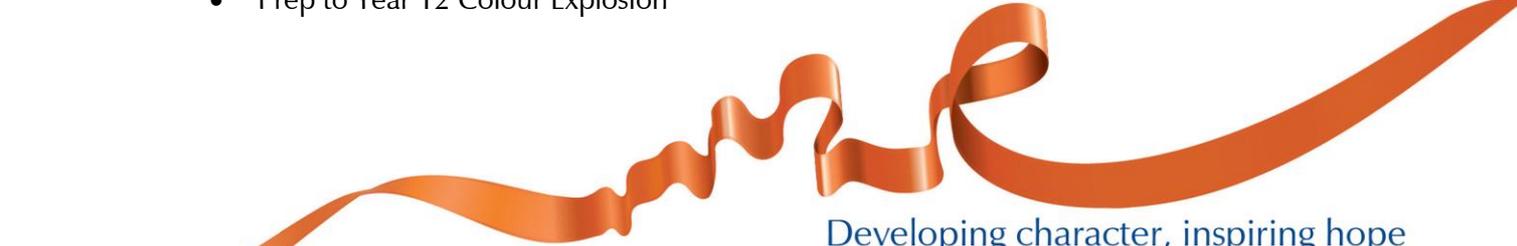
## **Cancellation of Events**

The Australian Government announced that all organised, non-essential mass gatherings of more than 500 people must be cancelled from Monday 16 March 2020. The announcement made it very clear that this does not apply to mass closure of schools, however it does apply to events that we hold.

In order to minimise the risk to students and staff, the College has taken the step of cancelling (and in some instances postponing) all excursions and tours scheduled for the immediate future. This includes the following events:

### Junior College

- Years 1 to 6 Inter-School Chess Competition
- Year 6 Canberra Camp
- All Chapels and Assemblies
- Year 5 and 6 author visit
- Grandparents and Special Friends Day
- Prep to Year 6 Disco
- Junior Choral Celebration
- Fuse Cup eSports competition
- Prep to Year 12 Colour Explosion



Developing character, inspiring hope

We will still celebrate Easter with the annual Hat Parade and the Year 2 Fairytale Day but these will be internal events for students only. The children can still enjoy the experiences whilst we place their wellbeing as the top priority. We will ensure photos of the events are shared.

### Senior College

- Year 7 and 8 author visit
- Year 11 Geography Great Barrier Reef Trip
- Year 8 Humanities excursion to the Abbey Museum
- World Scholars forum
- All rounds of Gold Coast Debating
- Year 9 Japanese and Spanish language excursions
- eSports competitions
- Year 10 STEAM
- Year 10/11 Philosophy Academy Conference
- Homestay Heroes Principal's Morning Tea
- Musical – postponed (new tentative dates in July)

Large gatherings that occur at the College, such as Assemblies, Year Level Meetings, House Meetings, Chapels and ceremonies including ANZAC Day have been cancelled.

Two upcoming events as organised by the College Parents and Friends Association have been postponed i.e. the Colour Explosion and the Prep to Year 6 Disco.

We understand these events take a lot of planning and the students have been looking forward to them. We are hoping to re-schedule them for later in the year.

### Senior College Musical

The Senior College Musical "Grease" scheduled for May has been postponed. New tentative show dates have been reserved for 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> of July. An amended rehearsal schedule will be released and sent to the Musical cast and crew. Tickets that have already been purchased will be refunded. Further details on this process will be communicated in the coming days. Tickets for the new show dates will not go on sale at this point in time.

### **Sport**

#### APS Sport

The APS Heads and I have made the decision that APS Sport and related activities are suspended until further notice. Students in Years 7 to 12 will not have after school training and will pick up classes on Friday afternoons that will replace sport. A decision when after school training recommences will be made when the restart date of APS Sport is known. Students in Years 4 to 6 will have APS training this Thursday in periods 7 and 8 as per usual. Rugby will run a modified program that will limit the contact between students. Decisions about future Years 4 to 6 APS training will be made at a later date.

#### Representative and QLD School Sport

The attached advice has been received from the Department of Education today.

*As our response to COVID-19 is all about containment, a decision has been made to cancel:*

- *the representative school sport program which includes district, regional, state, national, interstate and international competitions*
- *Queensland School Sport team participation in any national, interstate or international events organised across Australia or internationally.*

*This decision is effective as of 17 March 2020 and will continue until further advice.*

### **Self or Mandatory Isolation**

I draw your attention to the Australian Government's announcement that all people arriving in Australia must now self-isolate for 14 days. If anyone in your household is planning on travelling overseas or is currently overseas, please provide us with the anticipated date of re-entry/entry into Australia. This includes anyone who entered Australia after midnight on Saturday 14 March. **We request in the interests of our community safety that if anyone in your household is in mandatory isolation you please keep your children (who attend Saint Stephen's) at home for the same period of time.**

### **Hygiene**

Please have conversations with your children about the need for personal hygiene which includes regular handwashing and no physical touching of others, for example shaking hands. I draw your attention to further details on basic protective measures on COVID-19 as outlined by the World Health Organization. There are some great videos and responses on this website and I ask that you please address this in your homes and echo the messages that we are giving the students on campus.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

### **Off-campus Learning (OCL)**

As we have already seen across the world, this situation is likely to continue for some time and is evolving. As such, we are preparing for the management of this in the short, medium and long term. If the Australian Government directive changes and we need to close our campus, we are more than prepared to do so with minimal interruption to student learning. Our staff are ready, our blended learning and first-class IT infrastructure can accommodate this effectively and our students are used to learning in this manner.

**I would like to invite you to an information webinar that will be run by our Director of e-Learning, Mr Matthew Jorgensen on Wednesday evening (18 March ) at 7:30pm.** During this webinar, Mr Jorgensen will discuss Off-Campus Learning in further detail and there will be an opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification. This webinar is mainly designed for parents of students in Years 7 to 12, however, parents of our younger years are also welcome to join. If you would like to register for this webinar, please click here [Parent Registration - Off Campus Learning](#). For those of you unable to attend the webinar, a recording will be made available. You will find attached to this email some further information regarding this learning process.

### **OCL in the Junior College (in the event of government directed closure)**

Off-campus learning in P-6 will take a number of different forms and approaches. Prep to Year 3 students will be provided with activities across the subject areas which students can work through in accordance with a daily plan. Students have access to online programs where teachers will set tasks. Activities will be emailed to parents for printing. If this is not possible, paper copies can be provided on request. Communication from the teacher will take place via email and Class Dojo which enables teachers to upload videos for particular lessons or to stay in contact.

Years 4 to 6 students will continue to be able access OneNote, online programs and lessons as per their usual practice. The teachers will provide a daily plan and students will be able to communicate with them throughout the day via their devices. Specialist teachers will also provide activities for students to complete at home. If you have any further questions about what off-campus learning may look like for your child, please contact their class teacher and I am confident that they will be able to give you more detailed information.

If you choose to self-isolate your Junior College child prior to the College being directed to close, please contact their classroom teacher to set up OCL.

### OCL in the Senior College

All students in Years 7 to 12, will be able to continue with their studies via the College's learning management system (D2L). Students must continue to follow their weekly timetable and are encouraged to maintain regular daily routines as much as possible. Weekly plans for each subject area will be emailed to students, and students can communicate with their teachers and classmates through live video streaming (Microsoft Teams) and online discussion forums. Depending if/when the school closure occurs, there may be some interruption to published assessment schedules. Any changes to assessment will be communicated to students and parents.

If we are directed to close we are fully prepared for Off-campus Learning, but even so, this will undoubtedly be a challenging time, as students and families juggle remote learning and family circumstances. Some students may find this change difficult to begin with; time-management, working independently and a change to routine can be difficult. However, please remember that College staff will continue to provide support and help navigate students and families through this unique time. Attached are two important documents for parents and students in Years 7 to 12: they outline the roles for parents and students if Off-campus Learning is required. Please take the time to read these documents and familiarise yourself with the expectations prior to possible closure.

I apologise for the length of this letter, Saint Stephen's College is a very busy place! I wish to re-state that Saint Stephen's College campus remains open and our classes will maintain focus and rigor. We are in the middle of a rapidly changing global situation and it is important that we keep calm, informed, proactive, positive and productive. You have my word that I will continue to keep you informed as thoroughly and as regularly as possible. I thank you for your trust and support as I make decisions to keep our College community safe.

Yours sincerely



Kim Cohen  
**Principal**