



24 March 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers

First up I would like to acknowledge the phenomenal job that the teachers at Saint Stephen's are doing under very trying conditions. We have a number of staff working from home as they or members of their families are vulnerable health wise. This does put pressure on the staff on campus as, even though the teachers off campus are teaching all their lessons, teachers on campus do need to supervise their classes. This is done with grace, professionalism and a sense of collegiality with no complaints.

As parents, I urge you please to support our teachers. Please don't send them myriad emails a day, give them a break on weekends and don't expect immediate responses to queries. We are working in conditions that change on an almost daily basis and the staff here have been admirable in the way they are calmly taking this on board and getting on with the important job of delivering, what we see as an essential service. I know that they are hugely appreciate of the messages of support they have been receiving from parents.

Baring in mind the current workloads of all teachers, I have urged them to move to online delivery of all their lessons, with Prep to Year three catered for in a different way.

To give them a bit of breathing space and to ensure that they down tools during the upcoming holidays, the Executive Team have determined that next term, whether we are on-campus or online, will start with two pupil free days. This will allow us to get our heads around new directives that will no doubt come out over the next three weeks, plan for these and put in place how they will be implemented in our students' best interests. Teaching and learning as we know it is already looking different and we will continue to adapt as the circumstances demand. Whatever the circumstances, however, we will continue to deliver world class education in terms of intellectual, emotional, creative, spiritual and, to the best of our ability, physical programs. Your children are in very safe hands at Saint Stephen's College.

Changes to borrowing of Library books and Home Readers

In order to limit the spread of germs and keep our students safe, books and readers should not be returned until further notice.

For the time being, we are tripling the number of books and readers students may borrow, to make sure they have plenty of reading material.

We will cease loaning books and readers, for the time being, at 5pm on Thursday 26 March.

Please note that our ebook platforms (Sora and Overdrive) remain great options in the current climate and student may borrow an additional 4 titles at a time in this way. Please contact the iCentre staff if you would like help with Sora or Overdrive.



Developing character, inspiring hope

Junior College

After-school activities

All of the after-school activities, provided by outside companies, will be cancelled from Wednesday. This includes Tennis, My Fitness, STEM Club, Cath's Creatives, Gardiner Chess, Total Football Academy, and Auskick. If you require care for your child due to these cancellations, there is After School Care available and the iCentre is open for students in Year four and above. To contact After School Care please email oshc@ssc.qld.edu.au

iCentre

Extra home readers will be given to your child in Prep to Year three this week. These are in addition to the ones your child may still have at home. Please do not return any books at the moment. There is also extra borrowing from the iCentre available until Thursday so that everyone can keep reading during this time. Online reading materials are also available through Reading Eggs, Sunshine Online, Literacy Planet and Sora.

Absentee process

We ask for your assistance to streamline our administrative procedures. When you are communicating your child's absence, please do so as early as possible and state the reason and length of time for the absence. Due to the high volume of emails that the administration offices are receiving, we would appreciate the online absence facility being used where possible. Your cooperation and patience is appreciated during this particularly busy time for office staff members.

Physical activity for young ones

A message to help you get active:

My name is Prue Davies and I have been teaching Physical Education for the last 25 years – 18 of those here at Saint Stephen's in the Junior College.

My husband, my son and I are trying to do our part in helping children and families with some fun-filled active ideas to do at home in order to keep moving together during these uncertain times.

In as little as ten minutes a day your little ones can do so much to help their minds and bodies stay active and have fun. We will share ideas and ways to extend for older children and mix up activities with equipment found in most homes. To get involved please follow one of the following links. www.facebook.com/ACEPEwithMrsD, www.instagram.com/ace_pe_with_mrs_d/

Senior College

Assessment

The Year 11 exam block is on this week. A reminder that students who are in mandatory quarantine, must NOT come to school for these exams. Alternative arrangements will be made for these students. Strict social distancing regulations are being adhered to for these exams.

All Year 7 to 12 students who are working from home are still able to complete assignments and these should be submitted via the drop box on D2L. For subjects with exams, students who do not sit tests will receive an NA on their Term One report card, however, this will not impact upon their GPA. In some subjects it may be possible for students to sit the test when Term Two commences, but this will depend upon individual subjects and year levels. Exams will not be sent home for students to complete.

Absentee Process

With regards to the absentee process, I would like to remind you of the following important points:

- If your son/daughter is self-isolating, please state that as the reason when you contact the school, indicating whether it is mandatory or voluntary
- Please ensure when you are contacting the school about an absence, a timeframe is specified if it is more than one day
- If students are self-isolating but continuing to come in for exams, it is imperative they sign in prior to the exam and sign out afterwards (with a parent), which is the usual process for signing in and out
- A reminder that an absence must be reported by a parent/guardian, not a student
- If a student is self-isolating and can't complete an exam, an N/A will be recorded on their report
- If a student is self-isolating and is continuing to work from home, his/her absentee record won't be affected
- Students who are self-isolating should be at home and parents should be monitoring this, and the expectation they are continuing with their studies online

It is very important that parents are following the set procedure for reporting the reason for your child's absence. The procedure for reporting voluntary or mandatory isolation is to email the relevant absentee address (Junior or Senior) titled 'Voluntary/ Mandatory Isolation' and include the dates. If phoning in to the College absentee line, please state the correct reason in the voicemail message. Please do not state that your child is 'sick' if you are isolating them. This will ensure that we have true and accurate information; we are monitoring these absentees closely. Following this process will allow us to have accurate data when it comes to recording absentees on College reports.

Canteen

The Canteen will remain open as long as school is open, however, the menu will become more limited due to the availability of stock. The canteen is following the social-distancing rules appropriate in this environment; however, I urge parents to use the online system of ordering to speed up the amount of time that students spend in the canteen as we can only allow eight students in at a time.

Study tips for learning from home

Our College study skills online platform has added a recent section to the Study Skills Handbook: Tips for remote home learning.

The link <http://www.studyskillshandbook.com.au/inside/remotehomelearning.php>

username: saintstephens

password: 17achieve

This resource provides practical advice for supporting your child's potential or current remote learning. Generally, this program is targeted for the older students of our College, however; some of this advice is applicable for all ages learning remotely.

As our situation progresses, we will keep in contact in relation to particular age level's access to different topics provided in this program. Please do not hesitate to contact rcomport@ssc.qld.edu.au if you need further assistance.

Studiosity

We are happy to inform you that in order to provide maximum support to the students, all Studiosity services, Years 7 to 12 (Writing Feeding, Connect Live and Quizzes) are already currently available 24/7, 365 days a year. Please contact rcomport@ssc.qld.edu.au if you have any queries.

Physical activity for students (and parents)

Students are encouraged to remain physically active at home. All students should be aiming for 30 minutes of exercise a day for physical and mental well-being. Students should use "Rate of Perceived Exertion" when deciding how hard to work out. Consider 10/ 10 as hard as you can work; you should be working at 6/10 or above for your efforts.

You are able to utilise outdoor green spaces as long as you maintain the social distancing requirements. Try to implement the training method of Fartlek (Speed Play) so you can achieve a more intense workout in a shorter period of time. You may go for a 20-minute jog but instead of remaining at a constant pace, go harder for 30 seconds (8/10) and then jog (6/10) for 1 minute, or even use each of the light poles in the street as your guide to changing your speed. You can alter the length and intensity of your efforts depending on your personal level of fitness. This will allow you to improve your cardiovascular system over a shorter period of time.

There are a number of ways to remain physically active at home as well. On-line fitness apps such as Instant Fitness, Sworkit and Sworkit Kids, are safe and suitable workouts for the family. In addition, there are a number of Tabata workouts which can be found on YouTube which will give you a high intensity workout. Look for body weight ones if you do not have access to some home weights. Please look on the PE D2L page for links to suitable home work out sessions.

Fun Run

This week students on campus in Years 4 to 12 (except year 11) will be participating in a Fun Run. This is to encourage students to continue to be physically active during these turbulent times. Each year level will have a designated time for their fun run and will be able to get involved with a dress up theme. More information will come out from the Sports Department later in the week.

Extra-curricular activities

In-line with the Federal Government's measures announced recently, all extra-curricular activities will be cancelled. This is not a decision taken lightly and will cause disruption to our external contractors who have made a significant contribution to enhancing opportunities for students and adding to the culture of the College. These closures will include external activities such as Art , Chess, Martial Arts, sporting activities as well as the extensive Dare 2 Dance program. To give parents time to make alternative arrangements, these activities will be cancelled from Wednesday afternoon. The College gym was closed from Monday, as required in the Federal Government announcement on Sunday.

The iCentre and After School Care continue to be available to supervise students after school. Supervision of students will be supplemented by staff moving around the campus in the afternoon while students are waiting to be collected.

Financial Aspects

School Fees

As indicated last week I encourage any parents experiencing difficulties in paying their fees to contact the College so that we can determine how best we can support you at this time.

Advertising your business in Acta Ludi

During these difficult times we understand that many of our families who own businesses, are facing many challenges. We would like to invite you to promote your business by advertising in our online College newsletter, Acta Ludi, so that we can support each other in our community.

All advertisements need to be in the format of a PDF, either A4 or A5 portrait preferred. Please send them or any questions you have to Jane Howe, Director of Community Relations, via email jhowe@ssc.qld.edu.au before 1pm Tuesday each week.

Excursions and camps

The Executive Team has made the decision to cancel all non-essential camps (Year 7 to 11) and excursions for the remainder of the year as we understand these may put pressure on the family budget. When we are in a position to do so we will brainstorm ways of replacing these with enjoyable on-campus activities.

Parents on Campus

Due to the current need for social distancing, we ask all parents to spend as little time as possible on campus. This means that when you pick up your children, please don't congregate as has happened in the past. It is unfortunate that we have to introduce these measures, but these are unusual times.

Resources for Parents

We have set up a "Parent Resources" link in Parent Lounge. Over the next few days we will be populating this link with resources for you to access during these trying times. These will include messages from Fr Andrew, resources from our College psychologist, James Evans-McLeod, links to websites and documents to help you support your children if/when they are learning from home and many more. The idea is to support you as you support your families.

I wish you all well as we figure this out together. Please remember to be kind, not only to all around you who are dealing with their own stresses, but to yourselves too. I leave you with a message from Fr Andrew:

At a time when we are struggling with how quickly everything seems to be moving, and with our own sense of feeling out of control, it may be useful for us to take a moment, as the Psalmist suggests to us. In Psalm 46, we read: "Be still, and know that I am God." For our own wellbeing, it is important for us to find a moment to stop and be still – to disconnect from the "voices" that we hear in the media, as well as from the constant sound of our own voice in our heads. Take a moment to pause, perhaps sit outside and admire the wonder of creation that God has given us, and feel the calmness and strength that can be ours when we allow God's Spirit to fill us.

May God's Peace be with you now and always. Amen.

...and to close, a great video on the effective washing of hands - it turns out my thumbs haven't been as clean as they should be! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbX0xwKORjk>

Kind regards



Kim Cohen
Principal