



Dear Parents and Caregivers

Firstly, I sincerely hope you all had time to relax and share in the spirit of Easter, albeit without time traditionally spent with extended family and friends as we continue our social isolation practices.

As outlined in my last correspondence to you, the COVID-19 crisis has been a time of unprecedented change, requiring innovation, patience, kindness and above all tolerance, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support to achieve our desired learning outcomes.

As we head into Term Two, a directive from the State Premier and Queensland Minister for Education means students will continue with home-based learning through until 22 May at this stage, with the school to remain open during that period for students of those unable to supervise their children at home. A survey will be coming to you shortly as a means to gauge how many students will be attending the campus during the continued home-based learning period. We will resend this on a weekly basis as individual families' situations may change.

Whether your child is attending school on-campus or remotely we do request that you use the normal channels to contact us if they are absent from their classes for any reason. Although a directive from the Government indicates that State Schools are not required to conduct roll calls during this time, Saint Stephen's will endeavour to keep attendance records as accurately as possible. This means our students are expected to log in each morning and join the online learning sessions just as they would in a face-to-face classroom environment.

The rationale behind this is two-fold. Firstly, it denotes our students are openly connecting with the online content and continuing their quality education in the best manner available to us during this pandemic, and secondly and most importantly, it allows our students and teachers to actively engage with each other and provides a platform in which teachers and staff are able to assess the well-being of our students, which during these unprecedented times of social isolation, is vitally important.

Mental Health and Well-being

Saint Stephen's College is a close-knit community and as we all move forward through this pandemic together, we need to regularly assess the mental health and well-being of our students. An attribute which is at the very core of our school ethos. There has never been a more important time to look out for one another, than right now.



Developing character, inspiring hope

We will continue to deliver well-being lessons across Prep to Year 12 throughout the home-based learning period allowing students to engage in topics relevant to their own personal development.

Students will touch base with teachers and tutors at varying times throughout the day and will be provided with tips to assist them progress through the COVID-19 crisis and strengthen and develop their mental health and well-being strategies with our compassionate and experienced Pastoral Care Team on hand to answer any questions you may have. For Senior College enquiries, please contact Mrs. Kathryn Dendy at kdendy@ssc.qld.edu.au and Mr. Richard Smith for Junior College enquiries at rsmith@ssc.qld.edu.au.

Please remember that we also have resources for parents to access in Parent Lounge.

Phase Two Off-Campus Learning (OCL)

As parents, it's imperative we navigate these uncharted waters together and, as such, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic I have kept the line of communication open through emails such as this. One of the most crucial elements of good communication is the ability to listen, and we have done just that.

Saint Stephen's staff, the Board and I, are only too aware of the added pressure Coronavirus is placing on both parents and students, and as a way to alleviate some of the additional burden, we have taken onboard both the positive and constructive feedback received from the one-week rollout implemented at the end of Term 1. Your suggestions, along with staff concepts and students' feedback, have been melded together to develop Phase Two which will endeavour to deliver a high standard of off-campus education to both our Junior and Senior College students with minimal disruption.

Junior College Update

As outlined earlier, the government directive is that home-based learning will continue for at least the first five weeks of Term Two at this stage.

For our Junior College students, this means they will be required to undertake a live session with their class teacher at the beginning and middle of each school day. The first interaction will include a roll call and outline the learning schedule for the day ahead, with the second interaction utilised to monitor the student's progress and lead in to further subjects and specialist afternoon lessons.

Prep to Year 3 students will follow a PowerPoint which provides links to live sessions and videos at a self-paced level. Paper based activities are available to be collected from the College the week prior to being undertaken in which time parents are also invited to hand back completed work for marking.

The Off-campus Learning (OCL) teacher is available throughout the day to respond to any email enquiries you may have. Loan devices are available for parents unable to access a device during this home-based learning period by contacting Junior Administration at jnradmin@ssc.qld.edu.au.

Years 4 to 6 will follow a daily plan uploaded to One Note and delivered in both live and pre-recorded sessions throughout the day. The student's familiarity with these systems will allow them to continue to upload their work for marking.

You will receive more detailed information with regards to the Junior College OCL program early next week.

Senior College Update

As an effective means to streamline remote teaching and learning for both students and staff, Years 7 to 12 will adhere to a new timetable structure for Term Two.

The students working day will be divided into five 65-minute blocks, in addition to break times. Students will also have time scheduled to attend subject-specific tutorials and complete work in preparation for interactive online sessions.

This new timetable reflects our continued commitment to the well-being of students and provides a platform in which they can continue with their academic routine. Each school day will begin with a Tutor Group where students can touch base with their tutor with additional time provided for student well-being activities including Chapel, Habits of Mind and Pastoral Care.

Finally, where possible, students will work on assignments throughout Term Two for their assessments as opposed to sitting exams in a bid to make the assessments for the Term reflect the current situation we are all enduring.

School Fees update

Since the commencement of the COVID-19 crisis, there have been some requests in relation to whether Saint Stephen's will follow a few APS schools with a reduction in fees.

The short answer is yes.

There is no doubt the COVID-19 crisis is uncharted territory with the world not enduring anything like this since the end of the First World War and as such, like other educational institutions around the world, we are doing the very best we can to achieve the desired learning outcomes for your children within the boundaries and constraints of the resources available.

To that end, Saint Stephen's has been very fortunate to be in a better position than most to weather this storm due to our technological advantage, however, we cannot do it alone, we still need the ongoing support of you, the parents, to get us through.

Our teachers have gone far above and beyond in their endeavours to continue your child's quality education working countless additional hours in order to deliver the very best educational standard through home-based learning.

To continue to do this, we remain reliant on the sustained revenue generated through school fees.

The Board and I acknowledge these are unprecedented times and as such offer the following:

- \$350 subsidy to all full paying domestic students; and
- Removal of additional fees including excursions and incursions, sports, some music fees and annual camp fees (for Senior College).

The subsidy equates to the equivalent of a saving of between 23% and 35% for Term Two, depending on exclusions.

The Board and I appreciate the tremendous level of support being shown by parents and thank those who have indicated that they are in a position to be able to continue to pay full tuition fees, and wish to do so. We have set up a tax-deductible scholarship fund into which you may wish to donate in lieu of paying full fees. Details of how you can make this tax-deductible donation to our scholarship fund, which will help the College to support those experiencing financial difficulty, will be included in your Term Two invoice.

I would also remind those who need financial assistance above the current subsidy to contact the school so we can discuss available options. We are here to work with you with all discussions conducted in a sensitive and supportive environment and in total confidence.

It makes me immensely proud to see our already strong school community bond even tighter as we work through this pandemic together. The hard work, dedication, resilience and toleration being shown by staff, students and parents is heartwarming and I am confident we will emerge from this crisis stronger and far more united and resilient than ever before.

I will continue to keep you updated on any changes that occur during this home-based learning period and again thank you for your unwavering support. Please remember that school resumes for students on Thursday 23 April with access to our Vacation Care Program available for pupil free days scheduled to run from Monday 20 though until Wednesday 22 April.

Let us pray to the Lord, who is our refuge and strong hold.

For the health and well-being of our nation, that all who are fearful and anxious may be at peace and free from worry.

For the isolated and housebound, that we may be alert to their needs, and care for them in their vulnerability.

For our homes and families, our schools and young people, and all in any kind of need or distress.

For a blessing on our local community, that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship, where all are known and cared for.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God.

Amen

Yours sincerely



Kim Cohen
Principal

