



27 August 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers

It is time to have a brief update with regards to the COVID-19 situation and the impacts this will have on the College as we approach the end of the year with all its associated celebrations and functions.

I know that there is some concern with regards to the new cases of COVID-19 in South East Queensland. We are monitoring the situation closely and currently there are no restrictions that affect us as a school as we go about our day to day business.

Hotspots

If you are concerned about having inadvertently been to an area that is now a hotspot you can find a list of locations here: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/contact-tracing>

If you have been to one of the listed venues you must:

- Stay home if you are sick
- If you have any [COVID-19 symptoms](#), no matter how mild, [get tested](#)
- Stay 1.5 metres away from other people—think two big steps
- Wash your hands with soap and water, or hand sanitiser
- Leave a location if it is crowded
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If you have any concerns about your health, contact your doctor or contact: [13 HEALTH \(13 43 25 84\)](#).

Further relevant information:

Contact tracing for COVID-19

If a person gets a positive test result for COVID-19, 'contact tracing' is done. This is to prevent the virus spreading further through the community. As part of this process, Queensland Health speak to the sick person to find out who might have had close contact with them when they would have been infectious.

If there are people who had close contact with the sick person, our local public health unit will get in touch with them directly. If they start showing symptoms, they are assessed faster and appropriate action is taken.



Developing character, inspiring hope

If the health unit cannot find the people who had been in close contact with a person who tested positive, an alert will be issued on the Queensland Health website and through media and social media. This lists the dates, times and places where the sick person visited. The public who may have had contact with that sick person at one of those times or places are reported to Queensland Health.

Close contact

Close contacts are people who have had face-to-face contact with a confirmed or probable case for more than 15 minutes in total over the course of a week. For example, having three chats of five minutes each, over seven days, is considered 15 minutes total contact. Close contacts are also people who have shared an enclosed space with a confirmed or probable case for more than two hours. This contact period is counted from 48 hours before the start of the person's symptoms.

Queensland Health do not look for people who passed the sick person on the street or in a shop, as the risk to them is extremely low.

The local public health unit will tell you if you have been deemed a close contact of someone who has COVID-19. They may direct you to quarantine in provided accommodation for 14 days. If you get sick with any COVID-19 symptoms during that period, even only mildly, you should get tested immediately.

If you haven't already been contacted by health authorities and think you should be deemed a close contact of a confirmed case, call [13 HEALTH \(13 43 25 84\)](tel:13432584).

School Functions

We are now planning for upcoming College functions under the assumption that current restrictions and social distancing laws remain in place for the remainder of the school year. This does mean that our events will be different to previous years as there are strict rules about the number of people we can have in venues as soon as visitors are involved.

Whilst this is very disappointing for students, parents and staff, we do need to continue to follow State Government and Health Department directives. Queensland has done such a good job of suppressing the spread and we must play our part in keeping our community safe and healthy.

We continue to explore different scenarios in order to ensure that we can provide our students, particularly the Year 12s, with the most joyful celebrations possible in the current circumstances. At the same time, I am immensely grateful that unlike other schools, states and countries, we are still at school and can celebrate as a community together. I certainly feel for graduates in America (and, more than likely, Victoria) where their final year ended abruptly with no opportunity for farewells. I also remain grateful that we had our Formal prior to the COVID restrictions coming into play. I am sure you all feel the same way.

Saint Stephen's Day

In order for as many students as possible to be involved on this day, there will be a very limited number of guests allowed to attend. In fact, the parents of the students chosen for Sedés Honoris will be accommodated in the bio-box during the proceedings. I know this sounds very harsh, but unfortunately, as soon as parents are part of the audience the number of students who can be in attendance drops radically as the function can no longer be classified as an assembly and different rules come into play.

Students will be informed closer to the time of the exact arrangements for the day.

Year 12 Functions

Graduation

This year a formal on-campus Graduation Ceremony will replace the off-campus Valedictory Service and Speech Night for Year 12s.

This was decided for a number of reasons, one of the initial ones being that Year 12s could celebrate with as many members of their family as they wished and not be limited to only two guests. Unfortunately, due to the social distancing laws this will not be the case this year.

We will provide a beautiful special evening for the Year 12s who can invite two guests each. On this evening as a cohort they will acknowledge those who have excelled through the presentation of prestigious awards, reminisce about their years at Saint Stephen's College while listening to addresses, including the much-anticipated Valedictorian speech, perform together as they sing their Year 12 song and have great photo opportunities as they process across the stage one last time.

The evening, which will be held on Thursday 19 November, should conclude at about 8pm, allowing families and friendship groups to go out to restaurants to celebrate further as no refreshments may be provided by the College.

Final Chapel

The culminating event of the year for Year 12s is Final Chapel on the morning of Friday 20 November. Only Year 12s and their two guests and staff will be able to attend the event. It will be the same special ceremony that it always has been, just with a smaller audience. The students (unfortunately no adults) will again make a tunnel for the Year 12s to pass through as they say their farewell to Saint Stephen's College. As I mentioned previously we are continuing to explore ways of including more people in this very special Chapel service.

Speech Nights

Senior Speech Night (Years 7 to 11)

This event will be held on Thursday 26 November and will only be for award winners and two guests each. The actual ceremony will be similar to past ceremonies, but with a smaller audience.

Junior Speech Night (Years 4 to 6)

On the evening of Wednesday 25 November, the Junior College will hold the Speech Night for award winners and two guests each. The tradition of Year Level Choirs all performing will be changed this year to smaller performance groups.

Year 6 Celebration

The Year 6 students will be farewelled in the usual tradition, but alas, without the breakfast component. The students and their parents will be able to celebrate their years in Junior College with this event being held on Friday 27 November.

Colour Explosion

The P&F is planning the Colour Explosion to go ahead on the very last day of school for the year. This will be a wonderful way to finish what has been an extremely trying year.

Appropriate arrangements will be put in place to ensure that all students have the very best time. Year 12s will be welcome to return to school to enjoy the day with the rest of the students.

Thank you again to all in the College community for your support and willingness to follow the directives that have been put in place by the State Government and Department of Health.

We are doing a great job keeping ourselves and each other safe. But, as someone said the other day, 'I long for precedented times'!

In times of difficulty, Lord, we appreciate the support and encouragement of others.

In better times we feel stronger and more secure.

Remind us then to co-operate with other people and look out for the needs of others, being ready to offer a smile, a word, and other support and encouragement.

Amen.

kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Cohen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kim Cohen
Principal