



13 August 2020

Dear parents and members of our Catholic school communities,

At this halfway point in Term 3 it is timely to provide this update on our ongoing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The situation has been brought into sharper focus given the current health crisis in Victoria in particular. The tragic consequences of community transmission of the virus have been well evident to us all and our thoughts and prayers are with those communities now battling to stop the virus from further spreading.

We continue to draw strength from our school families who have shown resilience, support, compassion and understanding as we share existing, future and possibly unknown challenges ahead. It is how we always hope Catholic school communities will respond to a crisis and we thank you for your support. I would especially like to thank our school families and parent groups who have initiated assistance for families currently facing tough circumstances.

We can take comfort, both from this support as well as the demonstrated capacity of our teachers and school staff, that we will be ready for whatever lies ahead. We continue to build on the lessons learned during the Term 2 remote learning experience, as well as our ongoing measures for school hygiene and safety.

There are four key matters to raise in this letter:

1. We need to guard against complacency. This pandemic appears to still have a way to run and we must maintain our strict health and hygiene practices – social distancing, hand washing, and cough and sneeze etiquette. Please reinforce and model these behaviours with your children.
2. If your child is unwell, particularly with flu-like symptoms, keep them at home and [have them tested](#). If you are unsure, call 13 HELATH for further information. Err on the side of caution to keep everyone safe.
3. Our 100% tuition fee discount is still in place for holders of a range of Health Care Cards. This discount will now continue into Term 4. Relief is also available for families without the card and who are in financial difficulty. Our support is available. We mean what we say that no child will be denied a Catholic education because of their family's genuine financial difficulties. Contact your school Principal to make arrangements. It is also important that those who can, continue to pay their school fees – this means we can continue to support our families in need while still providing a quality education for all our students.
4. Please reconsider any non-essential travel outside our region. The situation with 'hotspots' is changing quite regularly, and restrictions are increasing rather than easing – you may find your family in an unintended quarantine. We are aware that compassionate travel will still be required for some families – please advise your Principal of any travel that might involve hotspots. This may also be a time that, by staying close to home, we can support our local businesses.

Our schools are continuing to plan around a range of possible scenarios relating to the pandemic and are continuing to implement strict hygiene practices. Our approach is to continue to act on the advice and direction of our governments and their chief health officers. Our priorities continue to be the health and safety of all in our school communities and the ongoing quality education of your children. With your continued support we will not waver in this commitment.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Dixon
Executive Director

