



16 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to you so that you are kept up-to-date on important information in relation to COVID-19. The purpose of this email is not to alarm, but to inform and assure you of our readiness should the current situation change.

### **What is the Current Update on School Closures?**

The Australian Prime Minister's Conference on Sunday afternoon (15 March 2020) released that there will be no school closures across Queensland this week.

State, Territory and Federal leaders are meeting weekly to manage Australia's response to COVID-19 ('the National Cabinet'). Any advice coming out of this process will be made available to you as soon as possible. You can follow their communiques here: <https://www.coag.gov.au/>.

The National Cabinet met yesterday and the Prime Minister confirmed:

- Schools will remain open and respond to local issues as required on the advice of health authorities;
- All international travel arrivals will be required to self-quarantine on arrival back in Australia for a period of 14 days;
- Social distancing will continue to be a key response to this virus and to contain its spread – no hand shaking, 1.5 metre safe distancing, etc.;
- Mass gatherings of 500+ people are not to proceed; and
- For other non-essential gatherings, schools are to consider the need to proceed and the issues of health and hygiene/social distancing as further mitigations to the spread of the virus.

It is clear from comments made yesterday by the Prime Minister that broad school closures will (and are) being weighed up as a part of the containment strategies.

### **Where Does St Mary's Stand?**

We at St Mary's School will remain open until we are advised otherwise by the TCSO or Queensland Health Authorities.

Current advice provided to schools has included cancelling large gatherings and events that could potentially put elderly members of the school community at risk.

Making the following decisions has certainly taken us into uncharted territory, however, we believe that erring on the side of caution with regards to every day school activities and excursions to keep our community safe, is of the utmost importance.

As a result of this advice, the school has made the following decisions:

1. The P-2 Swimming Carnival scheduled for this Friday has been cancelled.
2. Parent/Teacher interviews scheduled for next week have been **postponed** until early next term. Parents may request an update via email if they wish to do so before the interviews next term.
3. The Year 7/8 Tallebudgera Camp has been postponed until 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> September.
4. The Cross Country Carnival scheduled for the last day of term has been cancelled. We will hold a Mini Cross Country Trial for children in 10 – 16 years age group, this Friday, 20 March 2020, where only children who wish to gain selection for the McIntyre Zone Team can nominate. (A separate letter has been sent home regarding this.)
5. Colour Warrior has been postponed until Term 4.
6. School assemblies on Friday mornings have been cancelled until further notice.
7. Playgroup has been cancelled until further notice.
8. The Easter Liturgy will take place in classrooms.
9. The School Choir will no longer sing at the Youth Mass this Sunday.

The national focus is to contain and prevent the spread of this virus. This is a whole community response and we each have a responsibility to ensure we are doing our bit to keep us all safe.

We expect that **ill children will be kept home**, particularly those demonstrating the symptoms of FEVER, FATIGUE, COUGH, SORE THROAT and/or SHORTNESS OF BREATH.

If your child presents to class showing multiple symptoms you will be contacted to collect your child. The same will apply if a student has been in direct contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Planning is currently taking place to deal with any situation that may unfold, including school closure and the continuity of student learning. To support this planning, we require notification if your child is in the high-risk category should they contract the virus.

This includes any students with serious chronic medical conditions including those with compromised immune systems. Please notify by emailing [goondiwindi@twb.catholic.edu.au](mailto:goondiwindi@twb.catholic.edu.au) .

Thank you for supporting us in looking after our community.

Kind regards.

Brett Pollard  
Principal