

Tuesday 31 March 2020

Dear Parents and carers,

Last week saw a major development in our country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic with families who were able encouraged to keep their children home from school. Our schools, like all across our country, have responded very quickly in planning and developing options to allow all students to continue their learning in the home environment. We recognise that for all of our families this is also a time of transition and that you too need time and support in this time of uncertainty and we thank all parents and families for their support and encouragement as we transition to this new mode of learning.

The response from our schools involved:

- each school investigating which students had access to internet and technology at home,
- determining which technology platform would best meet the needs of the staff and students,
- collaboratively planning a home learning routine/timetable to support students and parents with establishing successful home learning,
- collating effective initial home learning activities and resources for all students based on their needs, capabilities and previous learning and ensuring options were available for students with and without access to technology.

This work has been completed whilst meeting the learning needs of students still attending classes at school.

In less than a week schools are now ready to:

- share their home learning routine/timetable with all families
- provide resources to support/replace online learning options
- communicate home learning expectations with all families via Compass
- ensure all parents/carers have access to regular updates from the Catholic Schools Office

Our school teaching teams have worked extraordinarily hard to develop their home learning resources in one week to support a completely different learning experience for their students. The Catholic Schools Office launched an Online Learning Continuity Resource last Friday to support schools in this ongoing work. All schools are now trialling their newly developed approach to support the learning of students at home as well as those who need to be at school. We anticipate that schools will use these final two weeks of Term 1 to fine tune and further develop their home learning expectations based on the feedback from students, teachers and parents.

In establishing effective home learning practices for secondary students it is recognised that:

- The spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing of our children/young people, families and staff must be considered above all else.
- Parents are generally not trained teachers and are not expected to deliver a curriculum.
- It will take time for students to adapt from a classroom environment with their own teacher planning and guiding their learning, to an environment with less structure requiring more independence from students.
- Families have differing access to technology and devices in the home setting.
- It is suggested that the home learning day for all secondary students should include:
 - Daily prayer and engagement with a Religious Education activity
 - Physical movement and appropriate breaks
 - Checking in on Compass to obtain subject updates from teachers.
 - Working on set tasks, while maintaining a balance of schoolwork, physical activity and family time.
 - Completing and submitting tasks for feedback.
 - Staying in contact with teachers via Compass.
- NESA has indicated that the 2020 HSC is going ahead. Therefore, as per NESA's advice Year 11 and 12 students should:
 - keep learning,
 - complete assessments, and
 - continue to make progress on major works where applicable.

We ask that parents encourage and support their child/ren to follow their daily timetable and engage with lesson instructions (including the completion and submission of tasks), as outlined on Compass.

All members of our school communities are to be congratulated on their patience, flexibility and adaptability as we move into entirely new modes of learning and expectations of students as learners.

Ongoing two-way communication between school and home will be vital as we work together to ensure we continue to meet the learning needs of our students whether being supervised at home or school. Parents are encouraged to email their child's teacher in the first instance if they have questions about their child's learning.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Fern

Head of Teaching and Learning Services