



17 March 2020

Dear Parents

Throughout these uncertain times, Whitsunday Anglican School aims to:

- Protect the health and safety of students, staff, families, and visitors;
- Educate our School community as to the impacts of the spread of COVID-19; and
- Maintain, where possible, educational continuity.

Social Distancing

Subsequent to my communication on Friday 13 March, the School has introduced social distancing as an additional preventative measure.

As referenced by the Australian Government, "social distancing includes ways to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. It means less contact between you and other people.

"Social distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared;
- close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes; or,
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face. So, the more space between you and others, the harder it is for the virus to spread".

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-on-social-distancing.pdf>

All students at the School have received a presentation on social distancing which emphasises:

- refraining from handshaking, hugging and other forms of social contact at School while the virus remains a concern; and,
- maintaining, where possible, a 1.5 metre distance from other students.

Parents and Students Unwell

We politely request that parents, friends and students do not come onto the School campus if they are feeling unwell or have any cold and flu like symptoms.

Mandatory Exclusions (Close Contact with People Being Tested for COVID-19)

Previous communications and publications on our COVID-19 website <https://was.qld.edu.au/2020/03/16/coronavirus-covid-19/> have advised our community in relation to mandatory exclusions.

As the virus continues to spread, there will be some members of our community who may come into close contact with someone being tested for COVID-19. If you or your child come into close contact with someone being tested for COVID-19, please advise the School at COVID19@was.qld.edu.au and ensure that your child self-isolates until the results of that test have been confirmed.



Schools Remaining Open

There has been considerable commentary regarding schools remaining open. Whitsunday Anglican School continues to follow the advice of Queensland's Chief Health Officer, where she has emphasised the importance of schools remaining open:

“the spread of COVID-19 in the community is at quite low levels. It may be many months before the level of community infection is again as low as it is at the moment. A decision to close campus (school) operations now on the current level of community transmission may therefore see schools close for many months.

Schools should implement a range of other strategies to reduce transmission, including the promotion of personal hygiene measures (handwashing, reducing face contact, cough etiquette), physical distancing, reducing mass gatherings (for example school assemblies) and reducing the mixing of students (for example reduced use of common areas, staggered lunch times, and reduced after school activities and inter-school activities).”

Chief Health Officer, Queensland Health, 16 March 2020

We recognise that we are now less than three weeks until the end of Term 1. As we seek to contain and limit the spread of COVID-19, the School has been proactive in introducing a series of measures advised by the Australian Government and Queensland Government health officials and those which are relevant to our context.

Sport and Co-curricular Activities Suspended for Term 1

We commend a number of Mackay's sporting organisations who have demonstrated their leadership in suspending sporting events. Recently, we were advised that representative school sport in district, regional, state, national, interstate and international competitions have been cancelled, effective from 17 March 2020.

Today, I wish to advise that the School will suspend all sport and co-curricular activities for the remainder of Term 1, effective from Thursday 19 March. This includes music ensembles.

Other School Activities

As we seek to implement social distancing and reduce the mixing of students, House Choir and Musical rehearsals are suspended until the end of Term 1.

Whilst we appreciate the generous service of our parental volunteers in our Junior School classes, this is currently on hold for this term.

HATS

HATS will continue to run as normal.

Given the rapidly developing nature of COVID-19, the School shall seek to advise parents as soon as possible of changes to our School programs.

We regret that we have suspended these very important opportunities for our students. As a parent of two children who love their sport, music and co-curricular events, I can certainly empathise with you.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support as we navigate the challenges of COVID-19 together as a community.

With kind regards

Andrew Wheaton
Principal