



## Message from the Principal: COVID-19 #3

19 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We remain committed to keeping you informed and updated regarding the College's response to COVID-19. However, should you have any questions or concerns in between the COVID-19 updates being sent out, please use the following email address –

[covid-19information@plcarmidale.nsw.edu.au](mailto:covid-19information@plcarmidale.nsw.edu.au)

### Current Status

There are no reported cases of COVID-19 infection in any of our students, staff or direct contacts.

### Updates

- The Prime Minister announced yesterday that schools are to remain open.
- This was advice given to the three sectors, Government, Catholic Systemic and Independent Schools.
- A small number of Independent Schools have chosen to close their boarding and continue the day school operation, some have closed all together, whilst others have moved to a hybrid model.
- From next Monday PLC Sydney has decided to operate online classrooms for Kindergarten to Year 12, their Pre-School and Transition classes will continue to operate as usual.
- **PLC Armidale remains open for day students and boarders.** This decision was made in consultation with Mrs Leah Russell, Chairwoman of College Council and our Executive.

## Why?

PLC Armidale is heeding the advice of the Australian Government and NSW Health. Australia's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Brendan Murphy provided the attached advice in relation to schools. The advice for schools from NSW Health can be found [here](#).

Dr Geoff Newcombe, Chief Executive, AIS NSW also wrote to member schools last evening with the following update.

### ***The advice for schools is to remain open***

*I have spoken with the Prime Minister today and have assured him that AISNSW supports his position and that of the Chief Medical Officer, that schools remain open for the present. The advice from health authorities is clear, that closing schools may have a detrimental effect on the effort to contain COVID-19... The Prime Minister welcomed the fact that our schools are providing some at-home learning for these students not attending. However, the Prime Minister "insisted" that all non-government schools keep campuses open to accommodate those students who wish to engage in at-school learning.*

Our school remains fully operational. Classes are being held as per our usual schedule so normal attendance requirements apply. Should your daughter be absent please contact the College as set out [here](#).

We have also received confirmation that keeping our Boarding Houses open to support the girls and their families is endorsed by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, the health body which advises Australia's Chief Medical officer.

## Actions

Please visit the [Current Families](#) page on the College Website. We have uploaded links to useful information from NSW Health and other sources.

- We have increased practices of social distancing and personal hygiene
- Girls have been reminded about keeping a 'personal bubble' personal space between peers
- Junior School chapel was broadcast in each classroom
- Additional handwashing stations have been set up outside the Dining Hall
- Tables in the Dining Hall have been separated
- Teachers are increasing the distance between students in the classrooms

## Events and Activities

- **Junior School Parent Teacher Interviews** scheduled for Week 9 along with **Boarder** and **Year 12** Interviews in Week 11 will now be done **via phone or video conference** following the time schedule which will be confirmed with parents prior to the day.
- **Junior School Camps** scheduled for Week 10 have been **postponed** till Term 4.
- The Whole School **Cross Country** has been **cancelled**.
- The **Autumn Festival** and **Anzac Day March** have been **cancelled**.
- The **Armidale Eisteddfod** has been **cancelled**.
- All events from May onwards are **pending**. We will advise closer to the date.

Parents are asked to consider limiting their daughter's exposure to the general public or non-essential events and activities where the health of 'direct contacts' may not be known.

## Planning

We continue to plan and prepare in case the Australian Government's advice to schools to remain open changes. To assist with this planning and preparation we are undertaking the following ...

- **A Day with a Difference** on Monday, 23rd March where all students across the College will be involved in a range of online, virtual or independent learning activities onsite under the full supervision of the teaching staff.
- **Preparation** of a learning management approach and training students along with staff how best to maintaining connection and continuity of learning through modes other than the classroom.
- **Preparation of a series of protocols and guides** for students and families regarding the platforms being used and expectations for attendance and participation in a virtual classroom.
- **A survey of all current families** regarding home internet access, connectivity and device connection. Your prompt reply to this survey will enable the school to ensure that students can access learning in a variety of modes, other than digital if required.

We remain committed to the quality of the learning experience along with knowledge and care of each student. We have identified that some families and girls are anxious about change and uncertainty. The College Psychologist, Ms Penny Kempton has prepared a set of resources for staff to use during Pastoral care in real time or online. We have also uploaded these resources to the [Current Families](#) section of the website for parents to access at home.

We are aware that mis-information in unmoderated forums such as many social media sites can be confronting and distressing for a child/adolescent to process. We have sought to provide credible, factual information about COVID-19 and trust that this is proving useful to helpful discussions you may be having with your daughter.

Thank you for the many positive comments and expressions of support as we endeavour to continue the usual operation of the College and engagement with our community.

Kind regards,



Mrs Nicola Taylor  
Principal