



## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL COVID-19 #11**

Dear Parents & Carers,

As Remote Learning was implemented across the College this week, there was much learning taking place, for both staff and students. We have also received, interpreted and attempted to reconcile the advice we have received from both Federal and State education and health authorities.

As previously stated, as an Independent School we act in accord to advice received from the Federal Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan, the National Cabinet as well as NSW Health. The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) has also provided advice to schools, with their advice to Boarding Schools being made available last Friday.

We are also seeking feedback from our parent community, especially our Boarder families regarding your considerations about having your daughter/s return to the College and Boarding in Term Two. Your prompt response to the feedback being sought would be appreciated.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

- There are no reported cases of COVID-19 infection in any of our students, staff or direct contacts.
- There has been no change to the number of current cases of COVID-19 reported in my last update. There are still only 4 current cases in the Northern Tablelands, 2 in Armidale and 1 each in Inverell and Moree.

## **UPDATES**

- The drive through testing facility in Armidale has been extended for an additional week. It was thought that increasing the number of people being tested in

Armidale and Tamworth may have led to an increase in the number of cases of people with Covid-19 being diagnosed. After the first week in Armidale there has been no additional cases confirmed.

- The College remains open and students are welcome and able to undertake their Remote Learning program on site under the supervision of staff both teaching and non-teaching.
- A letter was sent to families last week whose daughters may benefit from additional support in completing their Remote Learning program. We anticipate many of these girls will be at school also this week.
- The [RemoteLearning@plcarmidale.nsw.edu.au](mailto:RemoteLearning@plcarmidale.nsw.edu.au) has been put to good use throughout the week. This enabled technical issues to be identified and resolved in a timely way.
- Our network firewall blocked some of the Anzac Day photographs being delivered in time for inclusion in our Term One Commencement Service. They will be shown at assembly this week instead.

## INFORMATION

NBN Co has issued an initial [list of phone and internet providers](#) participating in NBN's \$50 million offer to support low-income family households with school-aged children to access the internet for remote learning. The offer is available only for low-income family households not connected to the NBN before 1 March 2020.

Schools are deemed an essential service. **NSW Health** released the findings of the report into COVID-19 in NSW schools last week. From early March to mid-April, 18 individuals (9 students and 9 staff) from 15 schools were confirmed as COVID-19 cases; all with the opportunity to transmit the COVID-19 virus to others in their schools.

735 students and 128 staff were close contacts of these initial 18 cases. **NO** teacher or staff member contracted COVID-19 from any of the initial school cases. One child from a primary school and one child from a high school may have contracted COVID-19 from the initial cases at their schools, but each were exposed to the virus from another source also.

The conclusion of the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) report was that the spread of COVID-19 in NSW Schools has been very limited. It also identified COVID-19 as a less common infection in children than influenza and often with presenting with mild symptoms. Click [here](#) for a full transcript of this report.

The Federal Minister for Education, Hon Dan Tehan, wrote to the Independent Schools Council of Australia last week to encourage Independent Schools to consider a transition of students from remote learning to on site classroom based delivery for most students from Week Six, Monday, 1 June.

This advice is based on findings from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) that *"is very limited evidence of transmission between children in the school environment"*, along with that of the National Cabinet that *"education is best delivered by professional teachers to students in the classroom on a school campus"*.

## **CONSIDERATION**

We are considering having students return to campus in different phases. It will be very difficult to sustain a dual model of both Remote Learning and regular classroom delivery. When planning to bring back a whole year groups, we are reliant upon the majority, if not all girls in the year group returning.

The latest AHPPC and National Cabinet advice agrees that the 1.5m social distancing requirements and the four square metre rule are not required for schools. They are also in agreement that attendance at a school campus represents a very low health risk for students.

However, our large campus, generous classrooms and small class size allows us to create space between students and staff even though technically not required.

## **PROPOSED**

## **PHASED**

## **RETURN**

### **Phase One: Week 3 (11/05/20)**

- Stage Six (Years 11-12, day students and boarders)
- Junior School (Pre-Kinder to Year Six)

### **Phase Two: Week 5 (25/05/20)**

- Stage Four (Years 7,8)
- Stage Five (Years 9,10)
- Remaining Boarders return

### **Phase Three: Week 6 (01/06/20)**

- All students have returned to regular on campus classroom based learning
- Co-curricular programs and College events resume

Please note: Siblings are welcomed to return to the College at the same time for both the day school and boarding. Likewise, girls whose parents work in an essential service along with those girls who are not able to access or complete their remote learning work effectively at home are welcome to be at school.

Due to the disrupted term, the Boarders' Weekend scheduled for the end of Week 6 (Friday 5th – Monday 8th June) will be cancelled.

The following link will take you to the google form we are using to capture your feedback and thoughts regarding your daughter's return to the College.

[Return to School Survey](#)

Please be assured that final decisions about returning to Campus for both our day students and boarders will be subject to the most current government and health advice available.

Kind regards



N. M. Jayson.