



## **A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL: LATEST UPDATE ON COVID-19 #15**

Dear Parents & Carers,

As we approach the mid-point of Term Three, the likelihood of restrictions upon schools due to COVID-19 being lifted has faded. Due to the community spread and the impact most recently upon schools in Sydney, the Minister for Education and Chief Health Officer met last week to review the current guidelines.

Today I attended via Zoom a meeting of the Association of Heads of Independent Schools (AHISA) NSW. Hearing the account of Principals who have had active cases of COVID-19 in their school to manage, as well as the challenge of population density on campuses and across suburbs, made me thankful once more for the fresh air, space and open surrounds we may take for granted.

A look at the map of COVID-19 spread by Local Government Area may convey the impression that the risk of transmission in our community is low. However, the movement of people around the state and the lack of adherence to social gathering restrictions in local venues cautions us not to become complacent. COVID-19 has become a community issue requiring a communal response.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

- o There are no reported cases of COVID-19 infection in any of our students, staff or direct contacts
- o There are no cases of COVID-19 in Armidale or the Northern Tablelands

### **UPDATES**

The NSW Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant advised today that increased restrictions on schools will take effect from Wednesday, 19 August 2020. These following are to cease from Wednesday for the remainder of Term Three:

- o Activities that result in the mixing of students from schools in different regions, such a sporting-related activities, drama and debating

- o School-related group singing or chanting activities and use of wind instruments in groups
- o School-related social activities (eg: parent functions, school formals, graduation dinners)
- o School-related overnight events (eg:camps, excursions)

### **ADVICE**

- o Students and staff with even mild symptoms of COVID-19 are to stay at home and be tested
- o Students and staff with symptoms of COVID-19 are not to return to the College until a negative COVID test result has been received.
- o Students and staff who have been tested are required to provide evidence of the negative COVID test result before returning to the College
- o Physical distancing of staff and good hygiene practices for all is required
- o Community sport including school teams may proceed at a local level
- o Only one parent per participant may attend sporting fixtures
- o Daily temperature and health checks will continue
- o Recess and Lunch will continue outdoors weather permitting
- o Students are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitiser, tissues and water bottles
- o Students are not to share food or utensils, with the lunch ordering system for students and staff to remain in place

### **IMPLICATIONS**

Our Year 12 students are being challenged to grow through disappointment and demonstrate maturity as many of the signature Year 12 events have had to be changed, cancelled or postponed. A separate communication will be sent to the Year 12 families tomorrow, Tuesday 18 August, 2022 with further details of the Year 12 events in light of the current restrictions.

- o IGSSA Athletics has been cancelled as a live event, with a virtual alternative event being considered
- o IGSSA Hockey and Netball Sydney weekend has been cancelled
- o Experience Days have been postponed
- o Choir, vocal and wind ensembles will not continue in their current form
- o College events for the remainder of Term Three will be restricted to those involving students and limited staff participation only
- o Virtual events as planned, including Stage Six Information Evening, Starry Night of Speech and Drama, In House concerts will proceed
- o The PLC Armidale App via Broadcasts as well as Social Media will be used to

actively communicate the many positive things happening at the College on a daily basis

These are trying times for all and it is not uncommon for girls to feel more emotionally charged or vulnerable. Our Pastoral Care staff, College Chaplains, Nurse and Psychologist are available to provide additional support to girls both big and little who are trying to make sense of change and challenge. Please don't hesitate to make contact with Mrs Fiona Wake, Head of Junior School, Mrs Anna Caldwell, Head of Senior School or myself should you have any concerns regarding your daughter or the operations of the College with these increased restrictions in place.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "N. M. Taylor.", enclosed in a light blue rectangular border.