



23 March 2020

## **RE: COVID 19 UPDATE 3**

Dear FCAC Parents and Caregivers

In light of the Government's announcements over the weekend and with two COVID 19 cases in Hervey Bay now confirmed, the College is elevating our response in regards to social distancing at school.

### **Social Distancing**

We will be seeking to restrict interaction between year levels where practical. In the case of an infection, this will limit the spread of any disease. It is important to note that, due to the very nature of a school, there will still be contact between students of various age levels; however, there will now be less instances of this.

In addition to the restrictions already in place around gatherings, assemblies and chapel services, the following changes will be enacted throughout the week:

- Times of the day where students gather (eg. lunch times, Kiss and Go) may be staggered and/or students will be seated in areas designated to their year level.
- Access to some shared facilities (eg. Library, Tuck Shop) may be scheduled to limit interaction between different year levels.
- Volunteer access to classrooms is suspended until further notice. Any activities requiring volunteers will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- Extra-curricular activities that involve multiple year levels will be reviewed and some have already been cancelled. Organisers of activities will communicate to participants through their normal channels and the College app.
- Junior School specialist classes will involve students staying in their designated classrooms rather than moving to learning areas shared with other year levels.

Some of these measures go against the grain of how we operate here at FCAC. We are a community that relies on the generosity of our volunteers and encourages interactions between students of different age levels. In taking these actions, we act in the interests of our own FCAC family and in the interests of the wider community.

### **Student Absences and Self-Isolating Families.**

Understandably, we are experiencing higher than normal levels of student absences. I would like to thank the members of our community who are keeping their sick children at home. This is very important



as there are immunocompromised students at our College and/or students who live with an immunocompromised adult or sibling who are in a higher risk category if they contract COVID 19. If someone in your family falls into this category, please contact Nurse Kay ([kburke@fcac.qld.edu.au](mailto:kburke@fcac.qld.edu.au)) so that we are aware of your individual situation. If you are the parent of a sick child, please keep them at home.

We also have a number of families who are self-isolating for various reasons. We understand the reasons why some families might do this and we support their decision. We also want to continue to support their children's ongoing education.

If your child is absent from school:

- Please advise the school through the normal channels ([absent@fcac.qld.edu.au](mailto:absent@fcac.qld.edu.au)).
- If your child is suffering a **short term** illness (1-2 days), please focus on getting them well. If there is some pressing need to do school work, Middle and Senior School students can access class content on Canvas. If you need to email your teacher, please understand that they will respond within 24 hours. In the majority of cases, students who are absent in the short term will be able to catch up on their return to school.
- If you are **self-isolating** your child or family, please let your Head of School know (Mrs Brown [dabrown@fcac.qld.edu.au](mailto:dabrown@fcac.qld.edu.au) or Mrs Hallam [jhallam@fcac.qld.edu.au](mailto:jhallam@fcac.qld.edu.au) ). We have a number of families doing this at the moment and we want to coordinate our response to provide the most effective support. The Heads of School will then communicate with the necessary staff and inform you as to how we are supporting students in self-isolation.
- If you have not informed us of your self-isolation, please let us know as soon as you can so we can ensure you are receiving all the necessary information. You may have already informed a class teacher but please follow up with your Head of School to ensure we have your family on our register.
- Self-isolating students will be recorded as an 'authorised absence' on our official records.
- We understand that some families may need to self-isolate for extended periods of time. The manner in which we will support these students will continue to evolve over time as we transition to a more interactive model of instruction.

### **Possible School Closures**

The Federal Government has, to date, insisted that schools remain open at least until the Easter break and we are planning for this scenario. We are also planning for a range of possible scenarios including short, mid and long term closures. The College has integrated online learning platforms into our curriculum for many years now and we are prepared to take the step to an online learning / learning from home model should the need arise.



In the event of the College being closed, you will receive communications from the College on how to proceed and how to access support for your children. Please ensure you have the **College app** downloaded on your personal device as this will be the first method of communication.

### Support for Students

Families are seeking the best ways to speak with their children about the current situation. Some simple tips include:

- **Maintaining a sense of calm.** Your children will have less anxiety if you are calm.
- **Focus on facts** in an age appropriate manner. [School TV](#) has a great video on how to talk to your child about COVID 19 (there is also a link on our Facebook Page).
- **Keep the lines of communication open** by providing opportunities for your child to continue the conversation.
- **Control during uncertainty.** Focus your child on the things they can control, like the importance of washing hands.
- **Refuge in Routine.** Uncertainty can trigger anxiety in children whereas sticking to routines can alleviate stress and anxiety.
- **Minimise media exposure.** With news about COVID 19, it can be hard for children to switch off.
- **Parent self-care.** As parents, we set the emotional tone for our children, so look after yourself.
- For more information read Dr Jasmine Green's full article on the [SAAC website](#).
- Please do not hesitate to contact any of the staff here at FCAC if we can help you support your child.

We have been keeping things calm and positive for our students. We are also working behind the scenes to ensure we are prepared for any sudden government directives. Our students should be confident that their learning will remain our priority regardless of any changes to operations and our FCAC families should know that we are here to support you throughout the coming months.

Kind regards,

Joe Wright  
Principal