



## COVID-19 UPDATE 3 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

This morning I looked back at the first COVID-19 communication I sent to parents and carers. At that point, some excursions were cancelled and others were continuing (even the College Ball was still going to happen). It seems like a lifetime ago that I sent that letter... but it was only 17 days ago.

The rapid pace of change occurring in all of our lives is quite staggering – certainly nothing we have ever experienced before. In this communication, I will provide some updated information about current and future plans; as well as some information to support the wellbeing of you and your children.

Topics covered in today's communication:

- Change of School Development Day
- Term 1 Interim reports
- Arrangements for Week 10 (next week)
- Arrangements for next term
- Questions and answers about learning from home
- Year 12 students
- College webpage
- Wellbeing tips for parents, kids and staff

### Change of School Development Day

The College has changed the date of one of the future scheduled School Development Days (SDD). The SDD in Term 4 (October 23) has been moved to the first day of Term 2.

This means that there will be a **School Development Day on Tuesday 28 April 2020.**

Why? The Government has previously announced that decisions about Term 2 schooling will likely be made in the vacation period. No decisions have been made about how schools will operate at this point in time. The change of date will allow us to implement any changes that may be required. It will also remove a non-teaching day in Term 4 when, hopefully students will have returned to a normal school environment.

### Term 1 Interim Reports

Parents/carers should receive a link to your child's interim report today. If you have not received this link, you may wish to log on to SEQTA to view the report.

Please note that students who have been absent as a result of concerns relating to COVID-19 have had attendance recorded as an ‘R’ – signifying a reasonable absence. The interim reports will indicate that your child has been absent for a much larger amount of time than is usually the case. This is because the attendance/absence component of the report is based entirely on whether or not your child is at school i.e. the reason for the absence is not considered. Why? Research indicates that student learning is impacted regardless of the reason they are not at school - so the Department of Education only reports on the basis of being present or being absent. The code used for attendance will change next week and, most likely, next term.

#### Arrangements for next week (Week 10, 6 – 9 April)

As previously advised, coordinated learning programs will cease today. Next week, staff will engage in professional learning; as well as continuing to prepare teaching and learning programs for Term 2. For students who must attend school during these four days; only supervision will be provided and no teaching will occur. Parents were requested to identify if this supervision will be required by email on Tuesday, 31 March.

**Please keep your child home from school if they are unwell.** If they have a fever, runny nose, sore throat and/or cough they must stay home and follow medical advice. If a student comes to school with a cold, we will contact families to collect them and take them home.

#### Arrangements for next term

At this point in time, arrangements for Term 2 have not yet been finalised. The State Government has stated that work has commenced on “developing a longer term education model for Term 2 and beyond”.

Staff are continuing to work on various online delivery models; as well as similar work-book style learning programs for families with limited or no access to either internet or computers.

College data indicates that the vast majority of students will have access to a laptop/device for use at home. Earlier this week, parents received communication asking them to contact the College if your child will NOT have access to a device.

Whilst I cannot categorically advise what education will look like next term, I anticipate that students will engage in learning via online platforms or work packages delivered to family homes. The Government has previously indicated that school closures would force up to 30% of all health workers to take leave to supervise their children. Based on this information, I think it is entirely possible that schools will remain open to allow a small number of students to complete their online learning on campus (i.e. staff would supervise students whilst they engage in online programs from their class teachers).

The College will need to abide by social distancing rules. This means, for example, that only one person can enter or exit a classroom at a time; and classrooms could only accommodate 8 to 10 students.

It is essential to remember that maintaining the health of students, families and staff remains the priority. ***For this reason, students cannot – and must not – attend school simply to see their friends, to get out of the house or to speak to a teacher.***

#### Questions and answers about learning from home next term

More information will be provided to both parents and students next week; however parents whose children are accessing online learning can expect:

- Some direct interaction between teachers and students via video software platforms (such as Zoom or Webex). These platforms allow the teacher and students to be online together – and visible to each other. Students enter the site by clicking on a link provided by teachers.
- Some direct interaction through SEQTA forums, enabling class groups to type in questions or discussion points with the teacher (and each other).
- Submission of work/assessments by uploading work onto SEQTA or emailing teachers directly.

Parents whose children are not online can expect:

- Work packages to be regularly sent directly to home addresses (e.g. on a fortnightly basis) with work tasks to complete.
- Guidance as to how work can be sent to teachers; or how parents can support their children to assess their progress.

All parents can expect:

- Staff to make direct telephone contact with students during the school day. This may be for a range of reasons; such as discussing an assessment, discussing why a child has not been completing work or generally checking on a student's wellbeing.
- Staff will continue to use SEQTA, emails and telephone calls to inform parents of concerns about academic performance, behaviour or engagement.
- Some classes will be different. For example, Woodwork students will not have access to a lathe or wood working equipment, so the program may focus on development and design; or focus on a project using existing materials found in most homes.

Parents need to inform the College:

- If a student is unwell and cannot engage in work from home, please notify the College as usual.
- If you have a particular concern about your child's wellbeing, you can contact Year Coordinators, Student Services staff or Deputy Principals in the same way you do currently.

### Year 12 students

Whilst COVID-19 is impacting everyone, there is no doubt that Year 12 students are very heavily impacted. From the loss of key activities (such as the College Ball); closer to home activities (getting Driver's Licence, losing part time employment); through to the impact of COVID-19 on achieving a WACE, getting an ATAR, completing a Certificate course for TAFE or completing workplace learning.

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) has undertaken significant work with all states to establish agreement over plans in this area. SCSA will shortly release a letter for students and parents. In addition, a new webpage should become live shortly. The webpage will outline any changes that will occur to specific courses. A separate communication with Year 12 students and parents/carers will be sent out when additional information is available.

I have been briefed by the Executive Director of SCSA, Allan Blagaich; and engaged in a face-to-face discussion with him. SCSA is focussed on ensuring equity and equality for all students. This means that they are committed to ensuring that students are not disadvantaged by where they live or what school they may normally attend.

Whilst I am not in a position to predict exactly what may happen; I can say that:

- SCSA is committed to using external examinations as part of the assessment process for ATAR (as currently occurs);

- It is highly likely that there will be changes to practical/portfolio components of courses. Changes will be published on the SCSA website; as well as being communicated by the College;
- Schools will be permitted to change the number and/or weightings of assessments required of ATAR and General students – and will formally advise students of any changes in this area;
- Externally Set Tasks (ESTs), scheduled to occur early in Term 2 have been postponed, with the new dates to be advised;
- WACE Achievement will not be affected if students cannot complete Workplace Learning Components required in Certificate courses;
- Students who are relying on completing an Endorsed program to achieve their WACE may be able to change to a different Endorsed program that can be completed wholly online. College staff will contact individual students if this is necessary;
- Students who have not yet passed all components of OLNA (Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment) will be able to attempt testing again later in the year. It is possible that this will be able to occur “on-demand” i.e. when it suits individual students.

I realise that Year 12 students want clear and concise information about changes, rather than generalised statements of support. The task is quite tricky, however, because changes required would differ if schools operate online for a few weeks compared to a few months. What I can say is that the John Forrest Secondary College staff are – unequivocally – committed to doing whatever is required to support Year 12 students throughout the year.

### College webpage

The College webpage has a dedicated section for parents to access information about COVID-19. The section includes copies of all communications sent by me; and will have general information to support parents and students to learn from home as well as other resources for families. To access the information, go to [JFSC COVID-19 Updates](#)

### Wellbeing tips for parents, kids and staff

The College website contains information that may be of use to students and parents. Some of the information currently available includes guidance from the Australian Psychological Society (Tips for coping with Coronavirus; and Managing during COVID-19); as well as a compilation of general support services available for young people. This information can be accessed at [JFSC COVID-19 Updates](#)

The Department of Education also has information for families. This can be accessed at: [Taking care of yourself](#)

From my own perspective, I encourage you to find a healthy balance with regard to media coverage. Being constantly exposed to negative information can heighten feelings of anxiety or helplessness. Try to limit the amount of this media you see, hear or read. This is especially relevant for children.

In a recent online briefing for school principals; the Department of Education’s Director General, Lisa Rodgers shared a quote:

*“Never let a crisis go to waste”*

This will mean different things to each of us. Perhaps the crisis allows us to exercise more; read a book that has been on the shelf for months; or teach our kids how to play some of the old board games we used to play ourselves. Grabbing each and every opportunity is what will help us all make it through to the other side of COVID-19.

If you have any questions, please email Angela Trees, Deputy Principal at [Angela.Trees@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:Angela.Trees@education.wa.edu.au) or me at [Melissa.Gillett@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:Melissa.Gillett@education.wa.edu.au). Please note that, given the volume of emails we are receiving, it may take some time to respond.

Yours sincerely

MELISSA GILLETT  
PRINCIPAL

3 April 2020