



COVID-19 UPDATE – 25 April 2020

TERM 2 ARRANGEMENTS

Dear Parents and Carers

I am sure that most of you are aware of recent State Government announcements regarding Term 2 arrangements for public school students in Western Australia.

This communication seeks to inform you of College arrangements and, hopefully, answer some of the questions you may have. Once again, I apologise in advance for the length of this communication.

The following questions are answered (as best as possible) in this communication:

- Who is advising schools?
- What decisions have been made?
- What information has been considered in making these decisions?
- If my child attends school, what will they be doing?
- If my child works from home, what will they be doing?
- If I keep my child at home, do I need to tell anyone?
- What are you doing to keep my child safe at the College?
- Will 'social distancing' be occurring?
- Will the canteen still operate?
- How will this affect the WACE for Year 11 and 12 students?
- How long will these arrangements stay in place?
- What if I have more questions?

Who is advising schools?

Decisions taken by both the State Government and the Department of Education are based on advice provided by two key bodies:

1. National Cabinet – which comprises the Prime Minister and all the state and territory premiers/chief ministers); and
2. Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) – which comprises all the state and territory Chief Health Officers and the national Chief Medical Officer.

What decisions have been made?

The State Government and the Department of Education made the following decisions and statements:

- Western Australian public schools will be open for all parents and carers who choose to send their children to school, when Term 2 commences for students on Wednesday, April 29 2020.
- In recognition that the current environment may be an uncertain and difficult period for families; parents have been given a choice about whether their children return to school for face-to-face teaching or learn from home. It is a personal decision influenced by each family's circumstances.
- Students who attend school will be taught a face-to-face program and timetable;
- For those children learning from home, this will be through online or hard copy packages provided to you from school. Details of how to undertake and return the work will accompany the packages;
- For those students who are learning from home, contact by school will be made each week by phone and/or online;
- Year 11 and 12 students are strongly encouraged to attend school to continue their critical study program;
- Parents are asked not to enter the school grounds.

What information has been considered in making these decisions?

On 16 April 2020, the AHPPC provided advice on reducing the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools. The full advice can be found here: [AHPPC School information](#)

On 22 April 2020, the Western Australian Chief Health Officer, Dr Andy Robertson, penned a letter to parents and carers. Some key statements made by Dr Robertson include:

- With the very low levels of COVID-19 in Western Australia, along with the wider public health strategies now in place, I strongly believe there is no need for school closures in this state currently.
- If your child has a chronic medical condition or a compromised immune system, you may wish to consult your GP or paediatrician when deciding if your child should return to school.
- I have been working closely with the Department for Education, Catholic Education and the Independent Schools Board to make schools as safe as possible for everyone. This includes increasing cleaning schedules, making sure there is soap and tissues for students and staff, having protocols in place to practice social distancing, not having large gatherings of the school community and teaching children, however young, to avoid passing on germs.
- If your child/children are well, I encourage you to send them back to school this term. If they have symptoms of a cold or have a fever, please keep them at home until they are better.

A full copy of this letter can be found here: [CHO Letter to Parents](#)

On 24 April 2020, the AHPPC provided an update to the information; the content of which was also approved by National Cabinet. A key component of the update was the following statement:

AHPPC does not believe however, that the 'venue density rule' of no more than one person per four square metres is appropriate or practical in classrooms or corridors, nor maintaining 1.5 metre between students during classroom activities.

The full information update can be found here: [AHPPC updated school information](#)

If my child attends school, what will they be doing?

- Students who attend the College for face-to-face classes will attend their normally timetabled classes.
- During the first two weeks of classes, students attending school will – mostly – be completing online work planned for by teachers at the end of last term. There may be some limited opportunities to engage in practical activities (such as Physical Education).
- Some aspects of typical practical activities will be limited for the foreseeable future (see further information in the section, “*What are you doing to keep my child safe at the College?*”).

If my child works from home, what will they be doing?

- Teachers who teach a face-to-face program and timetable for students at school will not be teaching online or through distance education.
- Students who are working online from home will be able to access work prepared by teachers at the end of Term 1 through SEQTA.
- Students who previously identified the need for a work package (due to not having a device or the internet at home) can collect their work packages as previously arranged – by visiting the College between 1:00pm and 3:00pm on Tuesday 28 April 2020.
- For all students learning from home, College staff will make contact each week by phone and/or on-line and feedback given on work package completion. Please note that this contact will not be from your usual class teacher. Students will be provided with guidance as to how work can be sent to teachers and how to access additional support if required.
- To supplement work provided by the College, the [Learning at Home](#) website will continue to be available to students and parents/carers as an additional resource.

If I keep my child at home, do I need to tell anyone?

Parents who wish to keep their child at home **must** notify the College that you are doing so. You can do this by:

- Emailing the College at this address: JohnForrest.SC.Absentees@education.wa.edu.au
- Sending a text message to 0407199 574
- Completing the absentee online form on the College website.
- Stating clearly that the reason for absence is social distancing for COVID-19 and the anticipated timeframe.

What are you doing to keep my child safe at the College?

Arrangements will be in place for Term 2 with regard to safety, to reduce direct contact, enhance personal hygiene practices, and strengthen cleaning regimes in the College. Some of the arrangements include:

- Three additional cleaners will work throughout the school day to ensure high-use areas, such as benchtops, desks, doorknobs, taps and hand rails, are regularly cleaned and surfaces disinfected. All toilet blocks will be cleaned after both recess and lunch.
- All toilet blocks contain soap. There are also signs in all toilet blocks directing students to inform the Front Office staff if the soap has run out. Additional basins for handwashing have also been installed throughout the College, including seven new basins within the canteen area.
- The College is also in the process of installing water bottle filling stations alongside existing drinking fountains.

- Hand sanitiser will be available in every classroom.
- Students should bring their own drink bottles to school and use the water fountains to refill water bottles, rather than drink from them directly.

In addition, some College activities will be modified or restricted. This includes:

- No physical contact permitted between students (e.g. Physical Education and Dance classes)
- Removal of activities involving shared equipment that cannot be easily cleaned or disinfected (e.g. welding jackets).
- Students will not be permitted to share equipment whilst at school (e.g. devices, stationary). Please note: If your child does not have their own device, arrangements will be made to provide a device for your child whilst they are at school; although it is important to note that devices are limited and will not be provided to students who forget to bring their own device from home.
- The weights room will be closed.
- Excursions, assemblies, camps and interschool activities will not be conducted.
- Parents who transport their children to school are asked to drop their child/children at the drop off/pick up zone at the front of the College Administration or in the usual off-site areas on Catherine Street or Drake Way. Parents must remain in their vehicles and are not otherwise permitted to enter school grounds.

Practising good hygiene can protect against infection and prevent the spread of viruses. Good personal hygiene includes:

- Frequently washing hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or using hand sanitiser
- Refraining from touching mouth and nose
- If coughing or sneezing, covering your nose and mouth with a paper tissue or flexed elbow
- Dispose of tissue immediately after use and wash hands
- Not sharing water bottles or food
- Avoiding close contact with anyone if you, or they, have a cold or flu-like symptoms (maintain a distance of at least one metre).

As is always encouraged, **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. If we suspect a student has coronavirus, based on their symptoms and history, we will isolate them and follow health guidelines as published by the Health Department of Western Australia.

Will 'social distancing' be occurring?

As outlined earlier in this communication, the AHPPC has determined that the "density rule" of not more than one person per four square metres is neither appropriate nor practical in classrooms or corridors, nor maintaining 1.5 metre between students during classroom activities.

The AHPPC has, however, noted that the greatest risk of transmission in the school environment is between adults. As such, College staff will continue to be required to maintain physical distancing between themselves and each other.

Will the canteen still operate?

The canteen will be open for normal operations; however additional volunteers/staff will not be permitted in the canteen area and student work placements will also be stopped.

How will this affect the WACE for Year 11 and 12 students?

In his statement on 17 April, 2020, the Hon Mark McGowan MLA, Premier, stated:

- Every Year 12 and ATAR student will be able to get a WA Certificate of Education (WACE) and an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) in 2020 so they can go on to further study, training or employment next year.
- Students working toward a Vocational Education and Training qualification will not be disadvantaged due to any work placement cancellations.

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority has published curriculum and assessment advice to support students and teachers, which can be found here: [SCSA Advice](#)

As indicated earlier in this communication, Year 11 and 12 students are encouraged to resume face-to-face learning from the commencement of Term 2. Class teachers will provide additional information to students as it becomes available.

The College will make decisions about school-based examinations for Year 11 and 12 students within the first two weeks of Term 2 and will inform parents and students as soon as possible. Whilst there are clear benefits of examinations to student learning; there are also benefits to the additional time available for teaching if examinations did not proceed.

How long will these arrangements stay in place?

The State Government, along with the Department of education will review all school arrangements in the lead up to Week 4 (18 May) and any adjustments will be made based on the best health advice.

What if I have more questions?

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

You may also wish to access the dedicated COVID-19 information available on the College website This information can be access here: [JFSC COVID-19 Information](#)

Thank you for your ongoing support and cooperation during what we understand is a stressful time for some with many unknowns.

Yours sincerely

MELISSA GILLETT
PRINCIPAL

25 April 2020