

IONA COLLEGE

A Catholic Boys' College conducted by The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.



Dear Parents and Caregivers

I am writing to you regarding the evolving situation with the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Queensland Health and the Australian Department of Health are working tirelessly to manage and contain the impact of this virus for Australians and Queenslanders alike. They are regularly updating travel advice (<https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>) as new information emerges.

Iona College continues to work closely with the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and the relevant state authorities, including Queensland Health, to monitor the situation and identify and manage any impacts on schools. You can be assured that we have been preparing and stand ready to act should the need arise.

I would like to make you aware that I have been advised today that an instructor who is engaged by a swim club that operates outside school hours at Iona College has recently shown some cold/flu type symptoms. I am advised the person has submitted themselves to their GP for testing and the results should be known in about 24-48 hours. The instructor is currently self-isolating. There are no known connections with anyone infected with the novel coronavirus nor has this person recently visited overseas destinations. In undertaking the tests, medical professionals are following guidelines with the symptoms presented and took the necessary precautions.

I wanted to make this information available to you so that you had accurate information about this matter. We have been liaising with our peak authority QCEC and state authorities (including the Department of Education and Queensland Health) on this matter and there remains a low risk in relation to our school. We will stay in contact with appropriate authorities in order to keep our school community informed. I wanted to make this information available to you so that you can be alert to your own child's health. Again, there is little likelihood of transmission within our school in this instance and I am advised that there is no need for students or staff to be isolated at this time.

Across the state communities remain alert to the potential spread of the virus and how it may impact us all. I would like to reassure you that the health and well-being of your children remains our number one priority.

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I wanted to also provide you with some more information about the approach that our school might need to take if a COVID-19 case is identified in our school. Similar information is being shared across many Queensland schools in the public, independent and Catholic sectors this afternoon.

If a case is identified in our school, we will work closely with relevant authorities, including Queensland Health, in managing our response and our actions will be taken with community health at the centre of our decision making.

If there is a confirmed case at Iona College, it is possible our school may need to close for a period to allow Queensland Health to assess the situation and to perform contact tracing as required to identify people, staff and students who may have come in contact with the COVID-19 case. You may have already seen this happening in other states where confirmed cases have been identified. If this occurs, we will also consider specialised cleaning of our facilities as required to ensure our school is safe for students and staff to return when clearance is given. Any possible closure is likely to include any on-site services such as other facility hirers.

Continuity of learning is extremely important to us and, as in other disaster and emergency events, we have options available to facilitate online learning to support your child's learning. The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) also has procedures in place to support senior secondary students.

As we continue to navigate the challenges associated with this virus, if your child develops flu-like symptoms, please:

- keep your child at home;
- avoid close contact with others such as touching, kissing or hugging, or any mass gatherings, especially those involving other children;
- see a doctor or contact 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) immediately;
- seek medical advice if your child has other underlying medical conditions; and
- call ahead to the medical centre or doctor's surgery, advising of your child's symptoms.

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It is also important to continue to encourage your children to:

- wash their hands regularly with soap and water, particularly before and after eating, and after going to the toilet;
- use alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap is unavailable;
- cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of their elbow; and
- dispose of tissues in the bin immediately.

Further advice and information about the coronavirus is available on the Queensland Health website:

<http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/217/838/novel-coronavirus>

As a community, during this preparation phase, it may be timely for families to consider their own family and care arrangements should school closure be necessary.

Again, while you can be reassured that authorities are taking necessary measures to contain COVID-19, it is important for me to keep information flowing to parents and caregivers to ensure we are all informed and prepared as a community, should this public health issue come into our school.

I thank you for your support in managing this event and supporting student awareness of the additional need for strong health and hygiene practices.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Goodwin', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Trevor Goodwin
Principal