

14 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As Term 1 has drawn to a close I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of our College community for playing your role in what was an interesting and challenging term. The effects of COVID-19 in particular had a considerable impact on the last few weeks of Term 1 and of course continue to have a significant impact as we begin Term 2. However, as Ionians, together we have addressed these challenges and the College is in a good position to respond flexibly to what lies ahead of us in second term.

Term 2 Arrangements

You will no doubt be aware that yesterday morning the Queensland Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, made an announcement about the arrangements for Weeks 1–5 of Term 2. Her announcement included advice that, in order to reinforce social distancing across the community and slow the spread of COVID-19, Queensland school students will move to a home-based learning model from 20 April 2020 until at least 22 May 2020. The Premier made it clear that all students who are able to learn from home during this period of time should do so. For children of essential workers and for all vulnerable children where 'At Home Learning' (AHL) is not possible, Iona College will be open. Students who attend the school in this circumstance will be supervised as they undertake the same learning program being undertaken by students learning at home.

At Home Learning

As you know, during the last week of Term 1 we trialled our 'At Home Learning' model to ensure that the College could continue to provide a continuity of curriculum regardless of whether students were onsite or undertaking their learning from home. Despite the fact that we are well prepared, a full adjustment to this model will take some time, perseverance, patience and understanding as we work through the changes together. We appreciate the encouragement and feedback offered by parents and students via our brief online surveys. The College has already begun acting on some of that information in order to provide a more meaningful and engaging experience for students in an 'At Home Learning' model. Further information about more interactive technologies we will be employing will be published later this week and introduced during the middle of Week 1. We will continue to monitor the AHL for relevance, ease of use, practicality and engagement as we progress through whatever period we may be required to apply it for throughout this term.

Like other schools we recognise that, during this time of pandemic, family situations will be diverse and that the rhythm of family life will be different from family to family and very possibly even day to day. Our learning model is therefore intended to, where possible and needed, provide a level of structure for students and families upon which they can rely. At the same time, it is an attempt to recognise the different schedules that exist for some families in times like these. We understand that families will have their own changes to routines and expectations, with children at times taking more responsibility for the functioning of family life in order to assist in dealing with the circumstances created by COVID-19. Ideally and where possible, we encourage students to follow their daily routine as indicated in COMPASS. As previously outlined, students and parents will be able to access the day's work from that source.



Monitoring Student Attendance and Work

Suffice to say, that in moving to an 'At Home' arrangement it is important for the boys to engage with their learning everyday so that they continue their growth and development. Teachers, Heads of Faculties and Heads of Houses will monitor the students' engagement with their program and will follow up any areas of concern with students and parents. This approach is intended to support teachers, students and parents in achieving good outcomes for our Iona boys. During this time there will be an adjustment to roll marking procedures which will be outlined in a correspondence from Mr Harvey and Mr Teece in the next few days. Essentially, the expectation from the College remains that students will be actively engaged in their learning and there will be a requirement for students to indicate by 9.00am each day that they are active and ready to learn. We will be in contact with parents where there is a notable absence of student preparedness for, or participation and engagement in, learning.

Children of Essential Workers

To assist with our planning for the provision of onsite supervision for the children of essential workers, each week the College will be asking parents to indicate that their children will need to attend school the following week. A brief survey will be open on Wednesday mornings and close at 9.00am each Friday. The survey will request details including your son's name, year level and on which days he will require supervision. This information is necessary to help establish appropriate staff to student ratios and ensure that we continue to provide a safe environment for your children.

Communication

Education is always a partnership between parents, schools and students. Communication is an important aspect of any partnership so, as we progress through Term 2, we will continue to communicate with you through the normal school channels including, emails, Facebook and College Newsletters. As always, we encourage your participation through contact with your son's Homeroom Mentor, class teacher or Pastoral Leader (Head of House, Head of Year 7 or Head of Primary Years). Contact can be made via their email address or by phoning 3893 8888.

Finally, our thoughts and prayers are with the sick and the vulnerable at this time and also with the frontline health and emergency services workers bringing care and healing to those affected by the virus. We pray that those infected with COVID-19 experience a full and speedy recovery and that those who are working towards its containment and cure have the perseverance and inspiration to experience success soon.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Goodwin
Principal