



Monday, 6 April 2020

Dear College Families,

### **Coronavirus Update – Looking ahead to Term 2**

There is no question that we are living in an unprecedented time that is requiring us to adapt very, very quickly. There are challenges to every aspect of our personhood. As social beings we are feeling the loss of human contact, as emotional beings we are dealing with uncertainty and as spiritual beings some of us will be grappling with questions about life and death. Nevertheless, there is still much for which to be thankful; technology tools that facilitate learning, adaptive and flexible staff, conscientious students and supportive College families.

Recently, I met with staff to look ahead towards Term 2. I reminded them of the goals in all of our planning are to:

- continue learning;
- continue caring for each member of our community; and,
- continue connecting with students, parents and each other.

I asked staff to consider how we might ensure that we realise these three objectives for a more sustained period. I also asked staff to look forward to the moment when this is all over and to contemplate how we will want to be remembered. Will we have delivered on our mission of Building Purposeful Lives? Will we have remained faithful to the kind of learning described in BPL? Will we be known as the place where loving God and loving others is our highest priority? I am confident based on the kinds of planning I see happening on a day-to-day basis that the answer to these questions will be yes. But I share this with you now because I want you to know that we are committed, even in the midst of this upheaval, to deliver on the vision that we have for students. It is my hope that as we work in partnership throughout Term 2 that we will continue to see young people grow in faith, virtue, wisdom and service as they take hold of their God-given purpose.

What follows is a range of information to assist you in looking towards Term 2.

### **K – 12 Fee adjustments**

In acknowledgement of the impact that this crisis is having on families the College has made the following decisions with respect to K – 12 fees. Commencing Term 2:

- All families will be reimbursed \$105, the parent participation fee for Term 2, in recognition of the reality that all parents are participating at a significant level in the life of the College as they monitor online learning.
- All families will also receive a partial reimbursement of the Curriculum Resource Fee in anticipation that the College will not have the need to access this fee for excursions throughout Term 2. The reimbursement will be as follows;
  - for each Primary student - \$207; and,
  - for each Secondary student - \$303.

The Curriculum Resource Fee covers camps, excursions and a range of other curriculum related costs. We are grateful that we were able to conduct camps which perform a key role in developing community, just prior to social distancing measures being introduced.

Further to this, we appreciate that some of our College families will be immediately and deeply impacted financially and we want to assist such families in practical ways. Therefore, I would ask you to contact the College's Finance Manager in the first instance to discuss your needs at this time.



## **ELC fees**

On Thursday, 2 April, the Australian Government announced that from Monday, 6 April a new funding package will be available for Early Childhood Centres, replacing the Child Care Subsidy which is currently in place. In effect from today all funding for Early Childhood Centres will come from the Australian Government without the need for families to pay a gap fee. This is wonderful news for families who have been struggling financially and for this reason, have either reduced their child's days or withdrawn from the centre. It is also good news for our ELC as it secures enrolments and provides a level of funding to remain operational.

In response to this announcement we are welcoming back all families who have decided to withdraw their children temporarily from the ELC. We are also welcoming back families who chose to reduce their days back to their previous schedule of enrolled days. Please note, the Australian Government advice remains the same for schools and Early Childhood Centres; schools will remain open for essential workers and for families who cannot provide learning from home.

## **Online learning – we need your feedback**

Whilst feedback has been primarily positive regarding the provision of online learning, we recognise that we are not yet experts in this area. Before we launch into online learning for Term 2 we are eager to hear from parents regarding the quantity, quality and, complexity of tasks currently being provided. To this end, we are conducting a range of focus groups with parents throughout this week. Please let your child's relevant Head of Years know if you wish to be involved. Otherwise, please provide classroom teachers with feedback regarding your child/ren's and family's experience of online learning. Please note that we are not expecting parents to be teachers but rather to encourage their child to continue to pursue their learning.

## **Help us connect**

Today, students across the College are participating in an online Easter Service. This is a great opportunity not only to remember what Jesus Christ has done on our behalf but for students to feel like they are part of the College even whilst they are not in attendance. Participating in services, assemblies and other College online events will be so important at this time to prevent the wellbeing impacts that come with being isolated from friends and other support networks. To counter this, the College is committed to finding opportunities to connect, for example, Imago Day and Donut Day. Over the course of term 2 we will be endeavouring to find other creative ways to connect. Please support these initiatives and send photos of your participation to [community@nwcc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:community@nwcc.nsw.edu.au).

## **School holiday changes**

A reminder about upcoming holiday changes. The College Executive has made the decision to rework the 2020 holiday schedule in order to shorten Term 2 in anticipation that we will be required to continue to facilitate online learning and to allow teachers to prepare for online learning for a sustained period of time. Please note these revised dates in your calendar:

- Term 1 finishes – Thursday, 9 April 2020; and,
- Term 2 begins – Monday, 4 May 2020.

The Term 1 holiday will therefore be three weeks (10 April – 3 May) rather than two. During the 3rd week of the Term 1 holiday staff will return to the College for three days of preparation for Term 2.

In order to ensure that we maintain the equivalent amount of teaching and learning days in the 2020 calendar the following adjustment has been made to the July school holidays:

- Term 2 finishes – Friday 3 July; and,
- Term 3 begins – Tuesday, 21 July (please note this amendment takes into account a Staff Professional Development day that will be required at the commencement of Term 3).

The Term 2 holiday will therefore be two weeks (4 July - 20 July) rather than three. Please note, that there may be further changes to these dates should the NSW Premier make decisions in this regard.

## **Skeleton staff**

Please note, as of last week the College has been and will continue to operate with a skeleton staffing plan. This means that we have a small number of staff onsite each day to supervise students whilst the majority of staff will be working from home. This decision was taken in light of the Prime Ministers announcement on Sunday, 29 March that urged those who can work at home to do so.

Please note that as part of this staffing plan, the College Office and campus will be closed in the first week of the upcoming holidays; that is from Friday, 10 April until Monday, 20 April 2020.

### **College bus service**

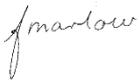
Whilst the shift to online learning has significantly reduced the number of students attending on a daily basis the College is committed to continuing to run its bus service. We are currently working with families who have indicated their need to access this service to determine bus routes in order that this service runs efficiently for the remainder of the term. If you need to access this service in Term 2 please let us know by emailing [norwestbus@nwcc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:norwestbus@nwcc.nsw.edu.au). Please note that for Term 2 College families requiring this service will not be charged bus service fees.

### **Conclusion**

I pray that the Easter holiday will be a wonderful time of refreshment for each member of this community as we reflect on all that God has given us most especially His Son, Jesus Christ. It has been a huge term and so very different to what we had anticipated. Thank you for your patience and support as we navigated this together.

Finally, I am confident that the College community will weather this storm because I am clinging to the promise that "*in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*" (Romans 8:28).

Yours sincerely,



Felicity Marlow  
Principal