



COVID-19 Communication 06

17 March 2020

For reliable government updates on Coronavirus (COVID-19) go to
<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

Dear Families

Yesterday, the Victorian Chief Health Officer issued a statement that made it clear that the authorities do not want to close schools prematurely and reduce the positive effect of that closure on the virus spread. This morning the Premier reiterated this. It is clearly their desire for schools to remain open until the holidays begin.

Some of the larger independent schools have chosen to close early. In many cases this is because they need to send their boarders home. Universities have chosen to close because, for many subjects, they run very large classes in an enclosed space and they routinely make lectures available online.

The authorities have a serious concern that students who do not attend school will then gather in public places and this will pose a much greater risk to them and the spread of the virus than attending school. Experience would tell us that students who stay home without supervision somehow forget the implications of going out when they are subjected to peer pressure.

While we respect any parent decision to keep children at home, I feel it is important to point out that if students are absent for the last two weeks of Term 2 leading into the holidays, and then schools are asked to stay closed after the holidays, you could be looking at 6 weeks of home time for your children.

Statistics still indicate that there is extremely low transmission at schools given the numbers that attend. Schools are not unsafe places and Plenty Valley Christian College has taken definite steps to improve our hygiene and social distancing processes. We are being directive about hand hygiene, increasing sanitisation for high use hard surfaces and are practicing social distancing measures. We have cancelled all excursions, incursions and large meetings until further notice.

At the moment PVCC staff are working toward moving to more provision of education in a remote model but at the moment the College is still open and we are providing education to our students in a normal class format.

We hope to have a strong base for some level of remote provision in place for the beginning of Term 2 and will be ensuring that students are trained to access the resources in these last weeks of term. It is our hope that this will stand us in good stead once schools are closed. Right now this is looking like happening at some time in Term 2.

Please be aware there is a lot of incorrect information circulating on social media and the traditional media are tending to sensationalise the stories to attract readers.

Yes, this is a pandemic but we are in the country best equipped to navigate it. Our leaders are working closely together at state and federal levels in a way not seen for many years. They are receiving competent expert advice and acting in the best interests of our country.

In 1933 the incoming US President Franklin D Roosevelt addressed a nation facing potential crippling economic collapse and famously said "... the only thing we have to fear is ... fear itself." I encourage us



all to resist the whirlwind of worry and sensationalism that is built around fear and to look beyond those fear to assist others where we can.

Yours in Christ's Service

John Metcalfe

Principal

PVCC