



Dear Families of PVCC Secondary Students,

I hope that you are finding ways of 'coping and hoping' as we move through the current period of uncertainty. My name is Daniel Symons and I have the pleasure of serving you and your children as Head of Learning and Teaching in the secondary school.

After two decades of arhythmic engagements with Plenty Valley Christian College, my prevailing experience is that our compassion for each other and soft hearts towards the Lord have carried our community through difficult times.

This email and documentation follow on from Mr Metcalfe's message to students and parents about the continuation of our remote learning arrangements for this period of lockdown. I hope it will bring increasing clarity around our arrangements for learning and teaching in this time.

Lockdown has left many of us needing a 'human touch' to the barrage of online/impersonal interactions that we must endure. So, to reduce the coldness of text I created a short recording below, explaining the Plenty Valley approach to supporting secondary students through lockdown. The video and text should compliment and reinforce each other.



(Enjoy the awkward thumbnail photo too)

The following information will help you understand:

- How we meet **student needs** in remote learning
- How to establish a **daily routine** to facilitate independent learning
- Some **other key decisions** made for this lockdown period (examinations, SACs, Year 7s)



STUDENT NEEDS FOR REMOTE LEARNING

Aligned with our student-centred vision (“daring our students to be engaged, equipped, and empowered to transform their communities, local and global”), I have explained each of the aspects of remote learning in terms of **student needs**. All our efforts aim to hold student wellbeing as the most critical priority; in particular, we want to avoid having students chained to their laptops for the whole day.

Students need clear *expectations*

- SEQTA is our **central platform** for all remote learning
- **Instructions** for **every lesson** will be available in the student section under ‘Courses’
- All **learning resources** will either be included in each lesson plan, or links will be provided to external resources
- Microsoft Teams is the platform we use for **videoconferencing**. If a student is required to attend a videoconferencing session for a lesson, this will be noted in the lesson plan.
- **Accountability** for independent work will be provided by teachers as appropriate to their subject. Teachers will notify parents through SEQTA if a student is not submitting work.

Students need *balance and choice*

- We aim to strike a **balance between independent (offline) and collaborative (online) work**
- Students should expect **half of their classes to be online** (collaboration using Teams) and **half of their classes to be offline** (independent set tasks)
- All **lesson plans** will be available to students by **8.30am each morning** so students can plan their day
- Online classes will be noted on lesson plans as ‘TEAMS’ (indicating students should go to their class Team using Microsoft Teams) and ‘TASKS’ (indicating they should check SEQTA for a set task)
- **Attendance** will be marked at 8.40am in Home Group Teams, as well as all online lessons (marked as ‘TEAMS’ in the lesson plan)
- Students should plan each day to include attending online classes, completing independent tasks, doing physical activity, and enjoying social connectedness.



Students need timely support

- Subject teachers are expecting to receive **feedback from students** during remote learning:
 - o If students are unclear about a **learning task**, they should seek out their subject teacher by sending an email or a chat message on Teams
 - o If students have completed the work and are **bored**, have **concerns** about not being sufficiently prepared for an assessment, or do not have sufficient learning resources, they should contact their subject teacher
- If there is a **wellbeing concern**, students or parents should contact the Home Group teacher, who will provide direct support or refer them to the most appropriate member of our Wellbeing Team
- If a student is **unable establish communication with their teacher** for longer than 24 hours (or if there is a more urgent need), please contact the Head of Learning and Teaching (daniel.symons@pvcc.vic.edu.au)
- Students who are already engaged with our Learning Support Team may communicate with their regular contact person or contact the Head of Learning Support directly (julia.walker@pvcc.vic.edu.au)

Students need challenge and feedback

- Remote learning provides an opportunity to enjoy more self-directed learning experiences, where students pursue their own individual interests and passions
- Teachers are considering ways to modify or create new learning experiences that show students how to become more self-determined
- Learning is better together! For this reason, we are asking students to **turn their cameras on while in online 'TEAMS' sessions**. This is 'optional but encouraged', as we realise we need to balance the benefits of greater online connectedness with limitations, such as unstable internet connections.



DAILY ROUTINE

These arrangements allow students to establish a healthy daily rhythm.

8.30am	Check timetable on SEQTA In the 'Courses' section of SEQTA: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Note which collaborative 'TEAMS' classes are running for the day- Note the independent 'TASKS' set for the day
8.35am	Make a balanced plan for the day, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attending all 'TEAMS' classes at the scheduled time- Allocating time to all independent 'TASKS'- Allocating time to physical activity- Allocating time to be social (family dinner, Zoom chat, multiplayer/board games)
8.40am	Attend Home Group Discuss any questions or needs Enjoy fellowship
Day	Observe your daily plan Check in with teachers for learning needs Reach out to your HG teacher if you need wellbeing support Submit your independent 'TASKS'
Evening	Try not to spend too much time staring at a screen!

OTHER KEY INFORMATION

SACs

After much discussion, we have decided that **we will not reschedule any VCE SACs** during this lockdown period, unless they have been granted a special exemption approved by school leadership.

This was a difficult decision made in recognition of the following:

- The short-term relief experienced by postponing a SAC is outweighed by the medium-term pain of having to do these SACs later (in a tighter time-frame); I'm sure we're all familiar with the idea that 'Tomorrow Me' may not be particularly happy with 'Today Me' when I put something off ([this is especially difficult for adolescent brains – see point #2](#)).
- The volume of requests: if it was just one or two classes, it would be more manageable, but we're dealing with a snowball effect of many classes making this request. Each individual



person sees their own experience, but someone has to have a look at the big picture to make wise, informed and coordinated decisions.

As such, **all SACs currently scheduled in the Year 12 SAC Calendar and on SEQTA will be held online.**

VCE teachers have discussed methods to hold these assessments online, with particular attention to the authentication of student work. These strategies will be designed and communicated by the subject teacher.

Year 10/11 examinations and the GAT

At this stage, the government has scheduled lockdown to end on the evening of Thursday 3rd June.

This means that our **examination schedule can (and will) proceed as planned** from Friday 4th June to Friday 11th June. This will include the GAT.

If lockdown is extended, we aim to communicate our new plans for examinations by Wednesday 2nd June, as well as information provided by VCAA about the running of the GAT.

We are highly reluctant to cancel our examinations if it can be avoided. We are particularly mindful that our Senior Students were not able to undertake the majority of these assessments last year. In line with our rationale for 'PVCC Secondary Examination Guidelines' (available on SEQTA Documents), we want to ensure students have sufficient experience with examination conditions, so they feel prepared for their final Year 12 external examinations.

Plans for Year 7

For many Year 7 families, this will be their first experience of remote learning in a secondary model of education. We hope that the above outline provides clear expectations, particularly regarding how to navigate the required systems and who to contact if things fall apart. If you have any further questions, please see our Remote Learning Plan (on SEQTA Documents) as the first port of call, and then contact the appropriate person from the section above titled 'Students need timely support'.

Our greatest disappointment is that the Year 7 camp has again been cancelled. There isn't much we can do to mitigate this, other than to make sure we're not leaving families of Year 7 students high-and-dry with nothing to do for a week. Our Year 7 teachers are paying particular attention to the needs of these students; we aim to create experiences that scaffold independent learning in a gentle, encouraging and supportive manner. We see you and are with you.



We live in faith that “all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 9:28). That’s you and me.

We know our heavenly Father will remain faithful to us, as we seek to be faithful to one another in support, patience and lovingkindness. If there’s anything we might have missed, or something that you would like to draw our attention to, please let us know.

Warm regards,

Daniel Symons

Head of Learning and Teaching (Secondary)

28 May 2021

PVCC