



Catholic Education
Diocese of Parramatta

GBW:vt

19 August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

This week, the NSW Government released new advice to schools on responding to the challenges of COVID-19. This new advice followed a review of the existing protocols by the NSW Chief Medical Officer.

The health and safety of our school communities will always be our top priority. I know that some of the new advice announced this week will bring disappointment for some students, families and staff. It will mean that some really important upcoming school celebrations such as Year 12 and Year 6 graduation functions and other large school events will not be able to proceed. I particularly feel for these students, as well as their families and teachers; I know how important these milestone events are for them. At the same time, it is just so important that we do everything possible to keep every member of our community safe.

Below are some of the main changes for schools:

COVID-19 Testing

- Currently, no student should attend school if they are unwell. That still applies but now, each student who is absent from school or who has been sent home because they have flu-like symptoms must have a COVID-19 test
- Students are not able to return to school until they return a negative COVID-19 result and are symptom free
- A negative COVID-19 test result must be provided to the school before a student can come back to school. The test results can be a NSW Health or COVID-19 Testing Centre letter, SMS or email and/or a medical certificate
- These same protocols apply to school staff.

School Activities

- Wherever it's possible, schools will keep activities to Year groups or Stages (e.g. Year 5 and 6 together)
- Schools will stay within their local community area or zone for interschool activities, including sport.
- Group activities such as choirs, chanting and the use of wind instruments in a group setting won't take place

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- Formal graduation ceremonies and other school-related social activities are now not allowed; however, a graduation assembly (e.g. Year 6 or Year 12) can take place but with restrictions. The assembly can only include the students from that Year group and staff. Regrettably, parents / carers and other family members are not able to attend the assembly. I know that schools are exploring creative ways to ensure parents and carers are part of this in other ways such as live streaming and the use of social media.
- Parent & Friends social events or functions can't take place
- School or community-run playgroups are on hold
- Kindergarten orientation and transition to school activities remain on hold
- School-related overnight events like retreats, camps and excursions are suspended.

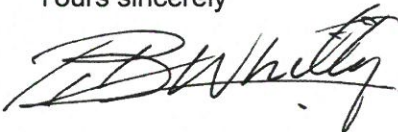
The health and safety advice that has been in place throughout the pandemic remains in place. This includes regular hand washing and social distancing for adults.

I am aware that there have been so many changes for school communities during the last six months and how difficult this has been for families and school staff. I am so proud of the way that each community has responded and supported each other during this extraordinary time.

Your school will be in touch with you about these changes and how they will apply in your school. They will keep you updated when there is important new information.

Thank you again for your support and your care of each other as we continue to work together during this complex time.

Yours sincerely



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