

Coomealla High School

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COVID-19 and School Operations - Special Report March 23, 2020

Good afternoon everybody,

I have just finished a live stream with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of The NSW Department of Education to outline the terms of school operations during the COVID-19 crisis in response to the Premier's announcement this morning that she is encouraging all school aged children to stay at home for duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following points were made:

- Schools will be providing learning packages that will be able to be completed at home. These packages will also be utilised at school for supervised learning. There will not be normal classes in operation.
- The learning packages will be set and marked by the students' teachers.
- There will be a flexible timetable structure to allow staff to prepare the learning packages and communicate with students at home. Therefore, students will have a variety of staff supervising them and not necessarily their normal teacher.
- Students will be offered home learning packages in both online and paper formats. The paper formats can either be picked up from the school or posted out to students.
- Classes will be combined and the students who come to school will independently work through the learning packages.
- Staff will be available during school hours for email, phone and online support. Please understand that staff may not be immediately available when students phone the school and it may be necessary for them to return calls later or make contact on-line.
- Students in Year 12 who do practical subjects may have to book times at school so that they can utilise the equipment they require to complete their practical work. There will be further information coming this week in regards to Year 12 students. The board of the NESA is meeting this week to discuss the adjustments and modifications that will be offered to this year's Year 12. I will communicate the outcome later this week.
- Parents and carers are asked to keep sick children at home. Children who arrive at school and who are sick will be sent home.
- It has been reported to me that today Sarah Mitchell (Minister of Education) tweeted that schools would provide the technology for students to work remotely. I can only assume, and I haven't seen the quote, that she was talking about the technological platform for students to work from. No extra hardware nor budget has been given to schools to provide students with laptops or other computer technology. We are currently working on providing a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) service where the school will subsidise students purchasing a computer (preferably chromebook) by \$150 per student. (Chromebooks retail for approximately \$300 each.) Each student will be entitled to a one-off subsidy for their enrolment at CHS. We intend on continuing this subsidy each year for students that have not previously accessed it. The COVID-19 crisis has made a decision around this rather urgent. I had an extraordinary teleconference with my executive team today and will have details of how to access the package to you by early next week at the latest.

Learn to Live, Live to Learn.

I want to thank my hard working staff and the committed way that they have gone about their work during this extraordinary time. I would also like to thank you for your understanding. This is new territory for us all and we are doing our best to maintain continuity of service delivery, albeit in a very different way. I will keep you posted regarding developments mentioned in this communique and the evolving situation as it pertains to our wonderful school.

Regards,

Steve Harper
Principal