

20 April 2020

Dear Emmaus friends and families,

Although no doubt different to your 'usual' Easter and school holiday routines, it is still my prayer that the current circumstances have however still permitted some form of appropriate Easter celebrations within your families as we remember the ultimate sacrifice Christ made for us all on the cross. In this time of uncertainty I have found this season a reminder that in the bigger picture God remains in control, and in Him our trust and hope is well founded.

I write to you today as a follow up to my last formal correspondence on 2nd April 2020 regarding term 2 schooling arrangements. The week subsequent to this you additionally received detailed further term 2 schooling information from each Head of School regarding exact term 2 schooling arrangements. As expected, a lot has changed since that time with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, and this information was provided at that time to give families clarity and certainty about term 2 as we entered school holidays.

Last Thursday's National Cabinet meeting (16th April) provided an update regarding schooling nationally with the release of 7 National Schooling principles, however once again further clarifying that decisions regarding schooling is a State based matter for their State schools (State Government Schools). Independent and Catholic schools nationally are to consider these 7 National Schooling principles (and the various State School positions) in their own decision making process as they, within certain boundaries, have the ability to make their own independent decisions / positions.

Australia (and South Australia in particular) is in a position to celebrate the significant reduction of new COVID-19 cases being diagnosed daily at this time which has seen Government discussion start to shift cautiously to 'the road out' of the restrictions (to use Scott Morrison's words). It is important however to note that our PM clearly stated that Australia still remains in the 'suppression' stage and would only consider any relaxation of current restrictions following three targets being achieved:

- Significantly extending the testing regime (beyond those who only meet certain criteria)
- Implementing greater tracking mechanisms (to better track and respond to outbreaks)
- Establish localised response capabilities (in response to localised outbreaks)

The PM stated that the goal was for these three elements to be implemented over the next month, suggesting any change in current restrictions in less than a month would be very unlikely. It however does, for the first time, provide some indication on a potential time frame for some possible relaxation of current restrictions.

The arrangement for Emmaus' commencement of term two outlined in my 2nd April correspondence remains consistent with the newly announced 7 National schooling principles, hence this is still the plan from day 1 term two at Emmaus. South Australia is in somewhat of a fortunate position to observe other states returning to term two a week or two ahead of us, so our position can be further informed by their experience. Although I appreciate there is some variation between the states, the vast majority have returned to term two in a manner also consistent to Emmaus' position outlined in my 2nd April correspondence.

I however acknowledge that this is a rapidly changing situation and we are still one week away from term two commencing. It is my intention to communicate once again with you later this week following this Thursday's National Cabinet meeting (23rd April) to confirm arrangements for the commencement of term two. Unless something significantly 'new' is announced this Thursday (which results in states such as VIC, NSW & QLD also shifting from their current positions in response to it) then Emmaus will commence term two consistent with my 2nd April correspondence.



Emmaus
Christian College

One element of hope however I have observed generally over the last week is with respect to a likely time frame before the current restrictions are reviewed. Due to Australia's positive progress with the suppression stage, discussion regarding reviewing restriction arrangements have shifted to "after the next 4 weeks or so" (compared to 3 to 6 months which was previously mentioned). Although I urge caution, and do not want to create any false expectation, I am increasingly optimistic about the time where Emmaus can return to face-to-face teaching as the prime mode of education. Please continue to plan however for remote teaching to be an all term two arrangement, but hopefully we will see a return to face to face teaching for all students earlier. Any such return to face to face teaching may also be a 'staged' process with some year levels commencing first.

May you continue to experience God's peace and goodness at this challenging time.

Blessings,

Andrew Linke
Principal