

13th May 2020

Dear Emmaus families and friends

I am writing to provide a COVID-19 progress update specifically related to Emmaus Christian College. As shared in the College Newsletter on Wednesday 29th April, classes commenced on the first day of Term 2 in full “face to face” instructional mode with 90% student attendance. Attendance quickly rose to rates up to 97% which is exceptional considering this is higher than is normally the case at this time of the year. I expect the increased hygiene practices and social distancing measures we are all exercising is positively affecting health more generally as well.

Although our students are back in class with their teachers where they are best educated, it is still a long way from *‘business as usual’* at Emmaus. I would like to thank all families for their understanding and patience regarding the COVID-19 safe student drop-off and pick-up arrangements we have implemented. I understand such strict measures negatively impact relationships within our parent community, however, this is an important trade-off to see our children back in classes so soon. It is also my hope that some of our children will have developed a greater level of independence as a result of this arrangement, something that may also pay dividends into the future.

At the time of writing, South Australia is in a blessed position to have only one active COVID-19 case across the entire state representing only one newly diagnosed case over the last 3 weeks. Although this places South Australia in a unique position to consider careful and staged relaxation of restrictions, great caution and restraint must still be exercised – this is not a time for complacency. You would have heard much talk of a potential ‘second-wave’ once restrictions begin to be relaxed, and to some extent, this is being expected by the authorities. For this reason, Emmaus will continue to carefully consider the best medical information available as we responsibly map our way out of the restrictions. Emmaus’ priority is to preserve our ability to educate students in a face to face capacity, hence will take a very conservative approach towards relaxation of restrictions.

On Friday 8th May, the National Cabinet announced the *‘Roadmap to a COVIDSafe Australia’*, Australia’s plan out of restrictions. Using the same three-step approach, the South Australian Government subsequently released how South Australia will fit into this National approach. I have attached these two documents for your information.

Similarly, Emmaus will adopt a three-step approach towards relaxation of restrictions. It is important to emphasise that the core principles of good hygiene will remain a non-negotiable central element throughout. Emmaus will commence our own Step 1 ‘easing’ measures from next week. Due to the rapid change in this matter, I believe it is premature to place specific dates on Step 2 and 3 at this time, and will subsequently notify the community ahead of entering these stages.



In principle:

Step 1 - Implemented from Monday 18th May:

- Permit the reintroduction of **direct education** related activity at the individual student level only.
- This includes activities such as: Music Instrumental lessons; Vocational Education Training; Trade Training Centre; visits from specialists such as Speech Pathologists.
- Other than the above type activities, there will still be no more general physical interaction between Emmaus community members and individuals from other communities during the school day.
- There is to remain no internal gatherings at Emmaus larger than one class in size.
- Parents are to continue to drop-off and pick-up children at the 'gate'.

Step 2 – Introduction date yet to be advised:

- Introduce limited school activities broader than direct education only, however, will still be at the smaller scale.
- This includes activities such as: Volunteers / LAP; face to face enrolment interviews; Parent / Teacher Interviews; internal sports training (not interschool competitions).
- Interaction between schools to be permitted but carefully restricted (size and purpose).
- There is to remain no internal gatherings at Emmaus larger than one class in size.
- Parents are to continue to drop-off and pick-up children at the 'gate'.

Step 3 - Introduction date yet to be advised – involve a staged transition towards:

- Parents permitted on site for student drop-off and pick-up.
- Larger gatherings such as: school assemblies and musical events.
- Limited reintroduction of student excursions and camps (subject to risk assessment).
- Interaction between schools at a group level.

Details for Steps 2 and 3 are intentionally only indicative at this stage and more information will be shared when those steps are implemented.

Thank you for your continued support of the College during this challenging time. If you have specific questions relating to Step 1 easing measures and your specific circumstances, I encourage you to raise these directly with your child's teacher or the member of staff who usually assists you in this area (Instrumental Coordinator / Special Education Coordinator for example).

Blessings

Andrew Linke
Principal