

17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

**Novel Coronavirus – COVID-19 Update**

I write to you today following participating in a Webinar yesterday with the South Australian Premier, Education Minister, and State Medical Authorities focused on the implications of the COVID-19 virus on South Australian schools. The South Australian Government's remains focused on 4 key priorities:

- Slowing the spread of the virus
- Providing resources
- Raising awareness
- Providing an economic stimulus package

Within the broader Australian and South Australian context, Emmaus is seeking to also act in a balanced and responsible manner regarding our response to the COVID-19 virus situation as is relevant to our specific circumstances.

In addition to the information I have previously provided, I would like to share with you the philosophical position (core principles) upon which Emmaus is making decisions. At a time where it is tempting to make decisions based on the decisions of others, Emmaus remains committed to balanced decision making considering the underlying facts and core principles.

The key guiding principles upon which our decision making is based include the below Government positions:

- Restriction of gatherings (nominally <500 still in Australia, but many other countries have recently reduced this to <100 or even <10!)
- Restricting all non-essential gatherings
- Practicing social distancing protocols
- Practicing good hygiene practices (& cleaning)
- Protecting the elderly and vulnerable

The outworking of such principles results in Emmaus generally seeking to:

- Restrict interaction between Emmaus staff and students from those in other schools
- Restrict access to non-Emmaus staff and students to the Emmaus site
- Restrict Emmaus students entering other environments (especially public places)
- Avoid lengthy 'static' gatherings (even if with smaller numbers)
- Restrict use of school facilities by other external users

At a more specific level Emmaus is, during primarily Term 1 (and early Term 2 at this stage):

- Cancelling all larger gatherings including weekly assemblies and sports days
- Cancelling all interschool events (sports, music, and cultural)
- Cancelling certain camps and excursions where the above risk factors cannot be acceptably managed



A number of other events such as Parent Teacher interviews are planned to proceed at this time, but in a modified capacity factoring in social distancing principles. Other events such as the Year 12 Formal will be rescheduled to later in the year, assuming it is appropriate for it to proceed at that time.

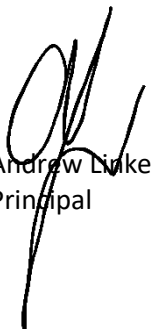
Staff will be in contact with families about the multitude of events over the remainder of this term (and early next term) to confirm their individual status.

As I write, the next batch of South Australian Schools are being announced as being closed for the next 24-48 hours. Sadly, it seems this will continue to be a daily occurrence for the foreseeable future. As previously shared, please be vigilant monitoring the email addresses you have provided the College as it will be by this means the College notifies the parent community of any Emmaus closure. Can I also please ask you check this daily before you go to bed in case there is a late notification? I can assure families that our teaching staff have worked extensively over the last few weeks to ensure learning programs will continue remotely / electronically as usual in the event of a closure. Our younger student will require a little extra support from parents taking their Chromebooks home (and connecting them to the internet). I appreciate that nothing replaces the warm smile and encouraging word of a loved teacher, but we are committed to doing our best educationally for your children if we are required to move in that direction (and I'm sure we can still give encouragement and love electronically!).

I would also like to reassure you that Emmaus is committed to providing families accurate and timely information updates when there is news to share. If there is an absence of information being shared, it simply means there is an absence of news to share! It is important in these challenging times we pull together as a community and support and pray for each other. It is equally important we do not propagate rumours or misinformation.

If you have any questions I encourage you to follow up directly with your child's class teacher or respective Head of School.

Blessings



Andrew Linke  
Principal