



WALK IN NEW LIFE

MATER MARIA CATHOLIC COLLEGE
COMMUNITY • FORMATION • SUCCESS

Return to School Update - 22 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am pleased to report that we had another successful week of students making their way back to school. We are looking forward to next week when we will see them more regularly before we have the full return of students from 1 June. Below is the plan for next week:

Week 5 (Wk 1)	Monday 25 May	Tuesday 26 May	Wednesday 27 May	Thursday 28 May	Friday 29 May
Year 7	School	School	HBL	School	HBL
Year 8	School	HBL	School	HBL	School
Year 9	HBL	School	HBL	School	School
Year 10	HBL	School	School	HBL	School
Year 11	School	HBL	School	School	School
Year 12	School	School	School	School	School

In a press conference on Tuesday 19 May, the NSW Premier and State Education Minister outlined the expectation that all schools will be returning to normal classroom schooling by the end of May. The importance of returning to the regular routine of schooling was mentioned, as well as, a statement that the recording of student attendance would return to the normal legislated expectations.

The silver lining in what has been a tumultuous time for many is that we have all had an opportunity to experience and experiment with new ways of teaching, learning and even parenting. Teachers have learnt new skills and had an opportunity to use new resources to engage and provide students with more individualised feedback on their work. Students have had more control over what they are learning and the depth they have engaged with the content. Parents have become more familiar with their children as learners and have learnt how to access information about their children from *Compass*. That being said, we acknowledge that home-based learning wasn't a positive experience for everyone and we are all looking forward to getting back to school.

As we return to school, there are some details we would like to share and a few points that we would like your support with:

Attendance:

- Attendance is compulsory for all students, in all classes unless they are sick.
- If your child is sick, they need to stay home. We ask that you contact the school and provide an explanation note via **compass**. This will now be considered as an absent day on the attendance record and parents have the normal 7 days to explain the absence before it is deemed unexplained and unjustified - a flexible timetable is no longer an option without official approval from the Principal.

Attendance continued:

- If your child has a health condition that makes them vulnerable and a doctor has advised you to keep them isolated, please contact me to devise a plan for the continuation of a flexible timetable. To remain on a flexible timetable, students must have a documented medical condition on school records or supporting documentation from a doctor for a newly diagnosed illness. This can only be approved by the Principal.
- Similarly, if there are other vulnerable family members living in the same household as a student and doctors have advised for the family to remain in isolation, please contact me to discuss a plan for a flexible timetable.

Student Wellbeing:

- Although most students were keen to get back to school, we do have some students who are struggling with this transition.
- If your child is struggling to reconnect to school, please contact the appropriate Year Coordinator as soon as possible. From previous experience, the longer a student feeling this way is away from school, the more difficult it is to reconnect - we are here to assist students and parents in this situation.
- Our College counsellors are available to assist students.

Engagement with Learning:

- As we return to normal classroom teaching, we will not be facilitating home-based learning.
- Teachers will only be providing a brief outline of the lesson content on Google classroom for each lesson.
- We will continue to use *Compass* to congratulate students on their good work, as well as inform parents of concerns about learning and areas that require improvement with behaviour.
- Although there have been concerns raised in the media about students falling behind, in reality, most students completed the set work and many have exceeded expectations and the time frame of HBL has not been significant enough to have a lasting impact on high school-aged children.
- The nature of the work that has been set during HBL has provided us with a very good understanding of our students as learners and the areas we need to focus on.
- You would have received concerns from teachers via *Compass* over the past few weeks and these will continue. If you have concerns about your child's progress in a particular subject, please contact their teachers via email.

Uniform & Grooming:

- The normal uniform and grooming expectations as listed in the College diary apply for all students and there will be consequences for those who choose to disregard this.
- We appreciate that there are some issues with uniform as we transition from Lowes to Pickles - please provide your child with a note if this causes them to be out of uniform.
- Students have been given permission to wear sports uniform on PE practical days only to avoid the need to use the change rooms. Students who take advantage of this by wearing sports uniform on non-practical PE lesson days will be considered out of uniform.

Canteen facilities:

- We had gone through a process of replacing our canteen contractors in the Term 1 break. Unfortunately, the COVID19 restrictions have impacted the start date for new canteen service providers. They will open the *Mater Maria Cafe* as soon as possible.
- In the meantime, students are not to leave the school grounds to collect meals nor have food delivered to the school. Students will need to bring their recess and lunch from home until further notice.

Transport:

- The school bus runs have continued through the COVID19 restrictions and will continue to do so.
- As mentioned by the Transport Minister earlier this week, there is not a requirement for social distancing of students on school buses, therefore, the buses will return back to normal capacity.
- Students who catch buses that are on general public services may be impacted by the restriction in passenger numbers - please take this into consideration to avoid your children being late to school or stranded in the afternoons.
- With the increase in the number of parents driving their students to school, we encourage you to organise an alternate, safe pick up point with your children to avoid the inevitable traffic jams that will occur in Forest Rd. Please be considerate of the school's neighbours.

Parent-Teacher Interviews - Years 8, 9 & 10:

- The parent-teacher interviews scheduled at the end of this term will be postponed until early Term 3.
- Should parents still be restricted from attending the school grounds, we will communicate an alternate model to provide you with the opportunity to hear feedback from your children's teachers.

Fee Relief: <https://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au/learning/Fee-Relief-during-Covid-19>

- As mentioned previously, we appreciate that the financial situation of many families in our community have been impacted significantly. Please do not hesitate to contact the fee relief team at the Catholic Schools Office to enquire about assistance.
- Ideally we would like to support all those in need and we would hate to see students leave our College due to financial reasons - this is a time when staying connected to your community is important and we are here to help.
- Please contact me if there are other ways we can help your family - we have many people in our community that are keen to provide whatever assistance is required.
- Feel free to contact me - your privacy will always be respected.

We thank you for your continued support and we are looking forward to school getting back to normal by Week 6.

Have a great weekend!

Kind regards

Marc Reicher