



9th April 2020

Dear students and families,

This evening we move into the true Easter period with the celebration of the last supper, the time when Jesus gathered with the disciples for the last time prior to the crucifixion and resurrection.

We will sit around our family table tonight and over the weekend, and we will gather as immediate family. We are fortunate to be together, and I am mindful of all those of you who are isolated from parents, children and extended family. As we break bread and commemorate in different ways the death and resurrection of Christ over the coming days, we will remember all those who cannot be together and who we yearn to see face to face again.

In this communication, I provide an update ahead of remote learning next week.

Student Checklist

Attached to this email is a Remote Learning Student Checklist to support your learner/s as they move into remote learning next week. If you have the opportunity to print the checklist, you are encouraged to put it in key places for your learner/s. Alternatively, encourage your student to have it open on their device and minimised, so it can be referred to as needed.

Communication to Senior Students

If you have students in VCE or VCAL we will be sending your family copies of the correspondence shared by VCE Coordinator, Matthew Hallowell and Applied Learning Coordinator, Belinda Dwyer. These will come as separate emails to families, to keep you up to date with the information we are sharing with your student. I thank Matt and Belinda for their work.

Supervision at School

The College has received a very small number of requests for support for supervision at school in line with the Government and Chief Health Officers request that those who can learn from home, must learn from home to reduce the chance of community transmission of COVID-19. The College will communicate directly with those families on Tuesday regarding the specific arrangements for onsite supervision.

Resources

The Remote Learning Manual can be accessed by students and families through <https://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/news/covid19-the-latest> and this outlines the various platforms that will be used throughout the remote learning period. Families will have been planning for study spaces and resources to support remote learning and preparing for learning to begin next Wednesday, 15th April. We are aware that some students were unable to take their personal resources home from lockers at the end of last term, and the College will facilitate opportunities for students to

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access their locker. This can be facilitated by contacting info@damascus.vic.edu.au from Tuesday 14th and a time for collection can be arranged.

Information Repository

We are very mindful of the volume of information that we are sharing and have provided a repository on the College homepage for key communications and resources such as the Remote Learning Manual and Principal Communications.

<https://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/news/covid19-the-latest>

School Operation

While the College is providing onsite supervision, a minimal number of personnel will be present at school to support students. A member of the Leadership team plus other staff required will be present. If anyone is required to come onto the campus at any stage, they will be required to attend **Student Reception** on arrival. If you need to come onsite reception will be open from 8.30am to 4.00pm.

In the interest of everyone's safety, all individuals will have their temperature checked. If the temperature is above 37.5 degrees, entry will be refused. Visitors will be asked to sign in on arrival and out on departure.

IT Support

Our IT Team have provided some guidance for students to assist them in getting the best support possible. Attached to this letter are some guidelines to help clarify the type of assistance required of the Helpdesk.

If there are student device hardware issues, please liaise with Helpdesk. If Helpdesk advises you to bring your device in, a tub will be in Student Reception for devices to be dropped off, with a second tub for items requiring collection.

Financial Assistance

Many parents will have lost significant employment or business income due to Coronavirus. At this time, our position as a Catholic school, in the Mercy and Diocesan tradition, is very clear that families will be supported in times of need. The school's immediate priority is to provide as much stability as possible for your young person/people, and with this in mind, we are committed to providing flexible and confidential financial assistance to support you with managing your school fee commitments for 2020. If this is an issue for you, please get in touch with us to discuss the options. We do care, and if you need help, please reach out by contacting fees@damascus.vic.edu.au

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Easter Message



Pope Francis' message to Catholics around the world urges us amid the global coronavirus pandemic to hope and be in solidarity with those who suffer, and to pray.

"In the risen Jesus, life conquered death... And in the silence of our cities, the Easter Gospel will resound. This paschal faith nourishes our hope... of a better time, in which we can be better, finally freed from evil and from this pandemic." Perhaps now we are in the tomb, may we soon know the resurrection.

As the letter to the Romans from the Easter liturgy proclaims:

When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life. 6:3

Let us make gestures of tenderness towards those who suffer, towards children, towards young people and towards the elderly. May the God of resurrection offer hope through us this Easter.

May God bless you all



Mathew Byrne
Principal

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