

COVID19: MY STORY

In our final Remote Learning Reading Detectives Session in May, Year 7 and 8 students were asked to switch roles and become writers rather than readers. They were offered the opportunity to record their experiences of school and life at home once the COVID-19 pandemic had been declared.

The reflections were expressive and honest. It was very difficult to make a selection as every student's story deserved to be published.

"...I still remember my mind spiralling with questions. How was I going to work from home? What would the classroom look like? What if this never ended and I had to have my graduation online? I hated the thought of this transition. Daily, I eagerly awaited the news reports, praying that this was just a horrible joke or prank. Every time I was wrong. Everyday there were more cases, more deaths, dumbstruck and loss of hope. Not only did I question my family and school but moreover I questioned the government, besides giving us false hope what were they doing? Slowly watching Australia's economic state crumble? I wonder how class would look like; I questioned the productiveness of each lesson. Trapped in our seats and to our screens, I dreaded every second of school. My madness has got to such a limit that I have started dreaming about going to those gates, and letting my friends scream my name with happiness until they tackle me to the ground."

- Harmony Kaur Marissa Year 8

"Hi, my name is Vasu. Pandemics are not special, they happen all the time. What is special is how the new world of the information age is reacting to it. These days, we have the internet, phones, and many other devices that change how humans react to events like these. I liked to have viewed the recent pandemic as a passive observer. Viewing it purely as a matter of chronological events and one event after another. What matters in the long run at least isn't the individual stories that people place too much focus on, what matters is how the pandemic has shaped geopolitics and how it's shaped the world around us. That will have extremely lasting impacts. And although I can't tell for certain the impacts this pandemic will have on us vis a vis the information age and technology, I can tell that people will be talking about this for a long time to come. Distancing yourself from the emotional aspect of the pandemic allows you to see it for what it really is, a significant footnote in the history books, and an event that's pushing the wave of change ever so slightly faster. We are victims of circumstance, both on a national and personal level. The world right now is like a jenga tower, and the pandemic is like a 5 year old girl taking off the most bottom piece like an absolute madman. Political administrations have collapsed simply because of the pandemic and how they've handled it. Families have been torn apart, but we've been through worse. In the future, all of the people who have died will simply become numbers or statistics in a book, slowly but surely the individual stories that were generated from the pandemic will be lost. In summary, I like to look at it from the perspective of a student reading a textbook. It excites me and worries me to think about what are going to be the consequences of this pandemic and its impacts on the world for decades to come."

- Vasu Kaushal Year 8

“All I could hear on the radio or on the TV was News Reports about Covid-19 and it really got to me. Then restrictions were strengthened and we couldn’t do things that we would normally do in our everyday lives. Day by day it got worse and worse and the virus was spreading more...

Then online schooling was introduced to the school in Term 2. I was very confused on what to do and where to go. Luckily, I had some of my friends to guide me. Sport was the hardest subject for me because we had to do physical things at home. A few weeks later, I got used to this online schooling and I kind of liked it. Then my mum's friend died of the virus and my mum was really emotional about it. I started to call my friends and we used to talk online and play games together. Then the assignments came in and it was really stressful. I had so many assignments and I was so stressed from doing them. That brings me to today and assignments still stress me out and I would love to learn in school, rather than online.”

- Matthew Fernandez Year 7

“My name is Stella Ploudias and so far I have decided that 2020 has been a challenging year.

At the start of this year, my family and I narrowly escaped being trapped in the bushfires up in Merimbula. It took me a while to overcome the shock just in time for school to start. It was a school start like no other, especially considering I had just started year 7, until the global pandemic of COVID-19 occurred. I had just gotten used to the school and all my teachers, new friends and classes only to be thrown into another pit of despair. I still have sleepless nights thinking about all of the countless deaths 2020 holds and how many more will die. Then I found out that we were not allowed out of the house and school was going to be online.

We attended school through an app called Zoom and though I felt privileged to still have an education I was not keen on the quality of the meetings as it was lagging and very slow. The workload felt like more than usual, even though there were shorter classes. As an additional stress, we were given lots of homework and assessments to complete. The internet always crashed and I lost power quite a few times so I missed out on some important information. I found it hard to concentrate as I constantly had my younger siblings asking for help with their home schooling. I immediately felt my eyesight worsen as we were stuck in front of our screens for hours on end. I have finally come to conclude that I wanted 2020 to end and for the world to move on.”

- Stella Ploudias Year 7

“My name is Christian Hoffer and I attend St Peter’s College Cranbourne Campus and this is my 2020 school story so far. Term one was confusing but it makes sense to be confusing because it’s my first year at high school. At the end of term one I was getting the hang of year seven until COVID-19 came. Term two is definitely new to me because I wake up and I don’t need to drive or go to school. I just do the essentials and spend the rest of the day in my room. I mean interruptions are annoying so at least I don’t get interrupted but in my opinion that’s one of the only good things about online schooling.”

- Christian Hoffer Year 7

“This year was supposed to be full of new experiences and it definitely has been. I started high school which was a big step for me but COVID-19 proved to be much, much bigger.

With the newly spreading virus everything was shutting down including our school. This made a huge impact on my learning and my social activity, I am not very happy about this virus but it’s here now and we are getting better with it every day. I am excited to be back at school where I think I’ll learn better and have all my peers with me again. I’m happy this pandemic is dying down and we are getting back to our normal lives.”

- Destiny Lyddy Year 7C

Perhaps we will be able to publish more responses in another forum.

Ms Angela Gargano