**Catholic Schools Office** *Diocese of Armidale*

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19 August 2020

Good morning all,

I am writing to provide parents and carers with an update on the current COVID-19 arrangements.

On Monday, updated advice was issued by NSW Health to CSNSW regarding additional measures to help mitigate risks posed by COVID-19 to school communities. A copy of the advice from Dr Kerry Chant, Chief Health Officer NSW Ministry of Health, can be found [here](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/cho-advice-education.aspx).

We are fortunate to live in a diocese that has had minimal confirmed COVID-19 cases and, as we always have, will continue to follow advice from NSW Health as the wellbeing of our students, staff and school community is our primary concern.

**COVID-19 Updated guidelines**

The following guidelines are required to be implemented by Wednesday 19 August 2020 and will be reviewed by NSW Health at the end of the term.

**Staff and students that are unwell**

NSW Health requires that:

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| * Staff and students, with even mild symptoms of COVID-19, are required to be sent home from school.
* Staff and students absent or sent home due to flu-like symptoms need to be tested for COVID-19.
* Staff and students are not able to return to school until they return a negative COVID-19 result and are symptoms free.
* Schools must sight the negative COVID-19 test result prior to allowing staff and students to return to school.
* Details of COVID-19 symptoms as per [NSW Health](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/frequently-asked-questions.aspx#1-4).
* Some discretion is to be used when a known condition could be contributing to symptoms and in the absence of other risk factors (recent travel to a known hotspot).
* Details of the testing procedure and testing clinics can be found [here](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others/clinics).
* Staff or students that have a member of their household awaiting a COVID-19 test result are permitted to attend school.

We appreciate the difficulties that staff and families in remote settings may have in accessing tests and results. I ask that any concerns in relation to this be directed to your Principal. |

**Distancing and hygiene measures**

* Adults must maintain physical distancing (1.5m) at all times, including during school drop off and pick up.
* Hand hygiene is to continue to be practiced upon entry to school, entry to classroom and exit from the classroom.
* Adults are not required to maintain physical distancing from students.
* Students are not required to maintain physical distancing from each other.
* Schools should restrict activities to year groups where possible to limit close contacts to those within year groups. This does not extend to interactions at recess and lunch.

**School activities**

The following activities are not permitted:

* Activities that result in the mixing of students from schools in different regions, such as sporting-related activities, drama and debating.
* School-related group singing or chanting activities and use of wind instruments in groups.
* School excursions.
* School-related overnight events (e.g. retreats, camps, excursions).

**Travel**

* Interschool activities may continue however they must remain within the local community or zone. Details on sports zones can be found [here](https://app.pre.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/Home/RepresentativeSchoolSport?cache_id=8f90b).

**School visits**

* Providers that are essential to the delivery of the curriculum can continue to provide services and programs until further notice.
* CSO staff delivering essential services and support can attend the school where it is not possible to deliver remotely.
* Providers such as Centacare and speech pathologists are still permitted onsite.

**Parent volunteers**

* Parents and carers and other non-essential visitors are not allowed on the school site.
* Parents and carers volunteering in a canteen or uniform shop are permitted.
* Parents can attend face to face meetings that are essential (e.g. to discuss disciplinary or other welfare matters).
* P&F and SAC meetings can only be held online.
* P&F social events or functions are not permitted.

**Orientation**

* Year 7 orientation is to be delayed until term 4.

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| * Kindergarten orientation and transition to school activities are not permitted. Advice has been developed to support schools to consider alternate ways to engage families and children in preparation for starting school in 2021.

**Graduations and formals*** Graduation ceremonies are not permitted in term 3.
* A graduation assembly can be held in term 3 consisting of Year 12 cohort only and staff (no external visitors and no presentations).
* School formals, dances, graduation or other social events are not permitted and schools should not promote or sanction social activities organised by others.

There are a number of items that are being clarified by CSNSW and additional information will be released as it becomes available to us. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale is continuing to follow guidelines from NSW Health and urges families to also stay across this rapidly changing situation.  |

Yours sincerely



Chris Smyth

Director of Schools