



## NOSSAL HIGH SCHOOL – RETURNING TO SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Dear Parents and Students,

I thank you all for the work and support you have been providing for our school community as we navigate the “new normal.” It has been gratifying (but not surprising) to see how well our community has adapted and managed within the remote learning environment, and while it has been challenging in many respects there have also been significant positives and much new learning has occurred for all of us, and for the community in general.

Initially one of my greatest concerns about moving to fully remote learning within the COVID-19 community lockdown was the longer term impact this may have on the mental health and wellbeing of our students and families (and staff of course) and I have been greatly reassured by what I have seen and heard over the past few weeks about the way our community have been watching out for each other, stepping up and offering or seeking support, and proactively addressing issues and potential concerns. I know that many of our parents and students have been managing under enormously increased pressure and am as always impressed by the exceptional work of our staff to facilitate not just the teaching program, but the entire school operation remotely.

The School Leadership team and staff have been doing considerable planning for the return of staff and students beginning on Tuesday May 26.

Following comprehensive advice from the Chief Health Officer and DET we have structured a staged return for students with significant changes to the timetable, operational procedures, and hygiene, classroom and social interaction protocols. These have been designed to ensure the continued good health and safety of our school community as the first priority, and to model and adapt and capitalise on our practices to meet the unique needs of our staff and students and our physical environment.

I know many of us are greatly looking forward to a return to school, but we will also miss the benefits and advantages of remote learning. We are hopeful that the virus transmission curve is indeed flattening and are happy that we are seeing a reduction in some of the restrictive elements that have been responsible for this improvement.

However – this is not a return to “normal” schooling. Many aspects of life will be different in the post pandemic world, and we will need to continue to take action to further minimise the risk of transmission.

As with many other things at this time, we will alter and adapt as we go to ensure maximum safety and benefit, and we will continue to review the effectiveness of the changes we are making progressively. We will make decisions about Term 3 as a result of our reviews, continued expert advice and regulation, and the progression of the virus.

We will hold a whole school (online) assembly at 9.00 am on Friday to go through this in detail with all students.

Detailed information follows with some important and quite different procedures that we intend to adopt so please read through it all carefully and discuss it with your children to ensure that they are clear about the changes and our expectations. If you have any concerns or need clarification, please contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Page  
Principal

## RESUMPTION DATES AND STAGES

**Monday May 25** is a **Pupil Free Day (no classes for students)** for staff to do final preparation

**Tuesday May 26 – Years 11 and 12 students (only)** and teachers resume classes onsite

**Monday June 1 – Year 10 students** resume classes onsite

**Tuesday June 9 – Year 9 students** resume classes onsite

### IMPORTANT NOTE: YEAR 10 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A VCE SUBJECT

At Nossal High School almost all Year 10 students undertake a VCE subject, which means that including them in the initial return to the school would involve having three quarters of our students onsite from the outset. As you will see below, we have made various changes to the way we will be using our onsite spaces and to the structuring of our timetable, and we think it is important to induct all students in these changes as effectively as possible since they will be in place for what is likely to be a long time. For this reason, it was decided that we would provide a small transition period between the induction of our Year 11 and 12 students and our younger students so as to optimise the establishment of appropriate onsite habits in all year levels.

We have therefore staged the student resumption across three dates, which may be different to other schools, and have made the decision to bring all Year 10 back on June 1. Year 10 students who are undertaking VCE studies will not attend their VCE classes in person between May 26 and May 29, but will still attend remotely. Their teachers will continue to teach them online. For most Year 10 students this will impact on only two VCE classes, and their teachers will be very conscious of the need to continue to offer them appropriate support to ensure that they will not be disadvantaged. They will then be resuming a full program a week earlier than most other schools, and will have a week “to themselves” to become accustomed to the new “normal” at the school with the support of their senior peers.

If you are an essential services worker or teacher, and your child cannot be supervised at home, or believe that there is a valid reason for your Year 9 or 10 child to return to school prior to the designated return dates listed above, please contact the Principal directly to arrange for approval of this. Students in this situation will be supervised at school but will still be learning online with their usual teachers until the designated return dates.

## ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS and ILLNESS

All students and staff are expected to return fully to onsite classes on the dates listed. Students and staff who have a medical condition or compromised immune system that puts them at risk are able to continue to teach or learn remotely, but they will need to provide a medical certificate to enable this to occur. Teachers will provide an online program for students who have documented medical advice that they should continue to learn remotely.

It is important to understand that, unlike last term, attendance at school is **not** now optional, and students should attend if they are able to do so. If students are ill, they should remain at home until recovered and inform the school as per our usual processes. In the current environment anyone with a cold or who is feeling unwell should not attend school and risk passing on any infection nor put themselves further at risk. Obviously any COVID-like symptoms should be checked immediately, and students should be isolated at home until medically cleared. **Should students present at school with minor medical symptoms we will**

**ask them to return home; any with any flu - like symptoms will be quarantined at school and parents contacted to collect them immediately.**

If you have concerns about other family members who may be placed at risk if your child returns to school, you will also need a medical certificate confirming that your child needs to continue with remote learning because of this, otherwise they would be expected to attend.

**Any concern regarding COVID infection or contact with infected people should be immediately communicated to the school so we that can inform the appropriate authorities and take the designated actions within the school community.**

As always, Nossal staff will continue to offer ongoing support and assistance to students who are home due to illness, and we will provide materials and keep them up to date as much as possible. However, teachers will not be able to provide a full in-school program for their classes as well as a full remote program for students who would prefer to work at home, or who are absent for a few days due to illness. That arrangement will **only** be available to students with documented medical issues for continuing their education off-site as outlined above.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES**

The Chief Medical Officer has advised that students are not required to maintain physical distancing at school and that maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres between students will not always be practical. Physical distancing is most important between adults as the main risk of transmission of COVID-19 is between adults, however we will be employing a number of essential practices to reinforce and encourage effective hygienic practices, social distancing, and changes to school procedures to further limit the risk of transmission. This is in line with our usual practice of expecting our students to adopt adult behaviours wherever possible. As they begin to move more regularly through public spaces, it will be important for them to develop habits and behaviours which are mindful both of their own health, and of the health (and concerns about health) of those around them.

**The most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), is to ensure that any unwell staff, children, and young people remain at home.**

As the main risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school environment is between adults, it is important that visitors to school grounds are limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations. The following restrictions will therefore apply

- All unwell staff and students must stay home.
- Parents/carers of students with complex medical needs (including those with compromised immune systems), should seek advice from the student's medical practitioner to support decision-making about whether on-site education is suitable.
- Any student or staff member experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus will be isolated under appropriate supervision and parents or carers called to collect them as soon as possible so that urgent medical attention can be sought.
- Staff and students with compromised immune systems will continue to work remotely.
  - Students and parents should note that there are several Nossal staff in this category. They will deliver their classes online, with the students attending their classrooms as normally timetabled and under the supervision of onsite staff for classes in Years 9&10. Years 11&12 will be expected to attend their remotely taught classes with minimal direct in school supervision.

- Activities involving onsite visits by other groups and schools, as well as non-essential large gatherings and assemblies, will be postponed or occur online.
- Camps and excursions and other out of school events will be cancelled or postponed.
- External hirers and community groups will no longer be using school facilities out of hours.
- Parents are asked to limit their entry into the school where possible.
- Parent meetings, interviews, payments, or enquiries should be conducted via phone or online if possible.

## **HYGIENE**

**Consistent and effective hand hygiene (washing with soap and water) is the best protection against the spread of coronavirus.** To support this behaviour, which is our expected “best practice” in terms of student and staff behaviour, the following enhanced hygiene measures have also been implemented across the school:

- All staff and students should undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing, or using the toilet.
- Soap and water are available in all toilets and kitchen areas, and hand sanitiser stations will be placed at strategic points around the school, particularly at entry and exit points and in areas of high use.
- It is recommended that students do not drink directly from drinking fountains at this time. Instead they should bring their own water bottle for use (and refilling) at school.
- The Department of Education and Training Students Using Mobile Phones policy remains in place. Staff and students should clean their phones regularly, and students should continue to lock their phones in their lockers at the start of each day’s lessons.
- Sharing of food and kitchen utensils should not occur.
- Breakfast club will not operate this term.
- Appropriate food handling practices will be rigorously applied in the Food Tech and Canteen areas.
- High touch areas and equipment will be regularly cleaned throughout the day - an additional cleaner will be onsite each day to undertake this task.
- Sanitiser sprays and cleaning materials will be available for essential shared classroom equipment.
- Lab Coats and Safety glasses can no longer be shared, and students must ensure they have their own.

## **PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MOVEMENT AROUND THE SCHOOL**

- Staff offices and workspaces have been re-arranged to enable physical distancing requiring some staff to change their office or desk locations.
- Classrooms have been re-arranged to minimise physical proximity of students where possible, and students will be required to practice increased physical distancing when working in the IRC, on couches and the Internet café and in private study spaces and the breakout rooms.
  - This will be encouraged through the use of signage and tape which will limit available seating in certain spaces.

- Group work may be limited or reduced, and teachers will maintain physical distance from students where possible.
- Movement around the school will be closely directed to minimise congestion and reduce student traffic within the school and between classes.
  - All staff and students should enter through the front office doors and exit via the canteen doors; stairways will be one way, as will foot traffic around teacher offices and kitchenettes.
- Students will be encouraged to physically distance in the yard at break times and when travelling to and from school.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND STAGGERED FINISH TIMES: STUDY PERIOD CHANGES**

Students are advised to make themselves aware of the guidelines from Public Transport Victoria which are designed to keep them, their fellow passengers, and drivers and other PTV employees safe. These are outlined here:

<https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/more/coronavirus-covid-2/>

While it is not possible for us to stagger our starting times, we will trial some significant changes to the structure and organisation of our timetable to allow students the opportunity to travel on public transport at non-peak times.

- The school will be open from 7.30 am until 5.30 pm, so some students may be able to arrive slightly earlier than the peak and leave later than the peak travel times for students.
- We will alter the timetable to move Years 10/11/12 study periods to the afternoon where possible and allow students the option to leave early and travel home to study.
  - If a student wishes to remain at school for the study period they will report to the teacher supervising the study at the start of the session so their name can be recorded and we have an accurate list of who is in the school. They are then required to remain until the end of the period.
  - Students in Years 10 & 11 do not need to sign out via the kiosk for the study periods (to minimise congestion and multiple touching of the kiosk screen) and will be assumed to have gone home to study unless they register their presence at school with their study teacher.
    - Students in this category may choose to leave at lunchtime if they have a study after lunch or at the end of lunchtime if they have music or club activities during lunch.
  - Year 12 students will be able to sign in and out via the Compass kiosk whenever they have a study period (other than the in-class studies) as per our previous practice.
    - This includes a return to the normal practice of arriving later on days when their study periods occur at the start of the day.
  - Students with in-class study periods at the end of the day will still be expected to attend these. A roll will be taken by the teacher.
- Assemblies, SACs, or other school events may be arranged during these study times and students will be expected to attend them as directed.

- All students (other than Year 12s with a study period at the start of the day) are required to attend Tutorial each day.
  - Years 12s onsite are required to attend tutorial even if they have a study period during period 1, in line with our normal expectations.
- Students approved to study remotely will attend tutorials remotely.

NOTE: This option does not apply to any Year 9 student. As noted above, it is also restricted in the case of Year 12 in-class studies. Year 11 students who are undertaking a Year 12 subject must also attend their in-class study periods.

**This is a significant change to our practice, and requires increased trust and responsibility from our Years 10 and 11 students in particular. If we find this to be ineffective, we will revert to our previous practice and require Years 10 & 11 students to remain at school for supervised study periods.**

If parents would prefer their students in Years 10 & 11 not to have this option, I ask that they inform the Principal of this via email so we can ensure they are present at school during this time.

## SPORT AND RECREATION

In line with community advice, reasonable precautions are still advised to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the context of sport and recreation, during classes and at break times.

- Onsite playground or training equipment can be used, however students should practice hand hygiene before and after use.
- The university training stations, and the Buchanan Park equipment should not be used.
- Swimming and aquatic facilities should not be used.
- Outdoor facilities are preferred for the purpose of physical education and recreational play. Where indoor facilities are used, we may limit the number of students.
- Non-contact sports will be encouraged. Hand hygiene must be practised before and after use of any sporting equipment.
- The weight room will be closed and not available for use other than during specific PE classes where equipment will need to be disinfected after use.

## CANTEEN

- The canteen will resume operation from May 26.
- Changes will be made to the access times and service area to minimise congestion.
- An online ordering service will be implemented.

## MOBILE PHONES

DET have directed us to continue to follow the mobile phone policy.

Student phones must be switched off and secured in lockers from the start until the end of the school day.

Phones should be turned on with the COVID SAFE App immediately before and after school.

The school is a controlled environment and we will have records of everyone in attendance, so contact tracing via the phone app is not required while at school.

## **ASSESSMENTS AND DATE CHANGES**

Ms Warriner is managing the VCE assessment calendar and has provided advice via Teams to ensure that students and staff are aware of current changes and assessment requirements. We do not want the students to return to a flurry of assessment tasks and tests, so we will be spacing the requirements; as you are aware the semester dates have been extended to accommodate this.

VCAA have yet to provide specific dates for the end of year exams, but have stated that they will be in December.

A reminder of some key dates for the remainder of the term:

<b>Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May:</b>	<b>Whole School Assembly, Period 1</b>
<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May:</b>	<b>Student free day – all staff resume</b>
<b>Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May:</b>	<b>Year 11 &amp; 12 Resume</b>
<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June</b>	<b>Year 10 Resume</b>
<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Year 9 Resume</b>
<b>Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	<b>Report Writing Curriculum Day (<i>rescheduled from Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June</i>)</b>
<b>Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	<b>End of Term 1/End of Semester 1</b>
<b>Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July:</b>	<b>Reports &amp; interview appointment access for Course Confirmation released</b>

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

Students, parents, and staff may experience increased anxiety and concern about a return to school, and there will be ongoing community concern about the spread and impact of the pandemic. The school Wellbeing Team will be monitoring this very closely and there are many more additional outside support services and resources also available to us now. If you have any concerns or worries – no matter how trivial they may seem – please do not hesitate to contact the Wellbeing Team, House Leaders or Principal Team directly.