



School Operation Update - Friday, 27/3/20

Dear parents and carers

I write today at the end of the first week when school operations in NSW have encompassed schools remaining open for all students, but parents having the choice to keep their child at home. Thank you for your kind words of support, encouragement and patience at this time. For your information, 5% of students were at school today. The large-scale move to 'remote' teaching and learning is a very new experience for students and teachers alike, and we will collectively grow in our capacity to do this very well. To this end, your words of feedback have been much appreciated and we will continue to address issues that you raise, in support of your child, to the best of our ability and within our means.

School remains open

At the time of writing, the health advice on schools and the Department of Education's position on school attendance remains unchanged. The school's doors accordingly will remain open for those students whose parents are in the essential services or who are vulnerable. As updated expert information comes to the Department, who are in constant liaison with NSW Health, we will keep you informed of any impact on school operations. Please keep in mind that the canteen remains closed and so students attending school will need to bring food for the day with them.

Supporting continuity of learning for students

Teachers have been working hard to develop learning resources for students to undertake from home. Whether your child is at school or at home, the aim is for all students to access the consistent learning content provided by teachers. This continues to be typically delivered to students by the Google Classroom that your child's teachers have established for subject areas and classes.

We have appreciated feedback and being informed of any issues that students may be experiencing with the online delivery. For example, following feedback from parents, I have asked Head Teachers and teachers to be conscious of not overloading students with too much work, too soon. This is a new environment for students, who are adapting not only to a new mode of curriculum delivery, but also to different ways of working and learning. Empathy and understanding are key touchstones in these circumstances. It is also true for teachers that they are adapting to new modes of curriculum delivery and ways of teaching. We continue to work through some delivery issues, including learning to use technology and platforms to their fullest capacity, supporting each other as best we can. We appreciate your ongoing patience at this time.

To support continuity of learning following this first week, when some assessment tasks that students had begun working on began to fall due, and so tasks were modified and the



submission date extended, teachers and Head Teachers have now, for the coming weeks and months, placed formal assessment 7-10 on hold.

When possible, formal assessment tasks have been re-programmed within the teaching and learning activities being implemented online. They now can be tasks that students are required to submit for formative assessment. In this form, they give students a chance to get feedback from their teacher on their learning progress, but the task does not count towards a final grade or result for reporting purposes. The summative assessment process also assists teachers in forming the professional judgement they may need to exercise in determining a student's course results later in the year.

Senior Curriculum Update

NESA's Board met this week and confirmed that the Higher School Certificate (HSC) is going ahead in 2020. An important task ahead for us is to devise a revised assessment program for our HSC courses, which begin in term 2. More advice on this will follow early in term 2. This week, the end of course examinations for preliminary HSC courses were cancelled. Where possible, examination tasks for preliminary HSC subjects were modified and converted to serve the purposes of formative assessment, which is a type of assessment that I have briefly explained above.

Support for students at home

I encourage you to access the [Learning from Home](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-from-home/advice-to-parents-and-carers) resource which provides practical advice to parents and carers on how to best create and support a productive learning environment in the home. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-from-home/advice-to-parents-and-carers>

My heartfelt thanks to students, teachers and parents and carers for together, as one, seeing us through this challenging week. In these troubling times, I have found uplifting the sense of community and deep reserves of resilience and optimism that have been evident. We all have every reason to be proud of our young people, and to carry with us into the weekend a sense of hope and optimism for how they will move through the coming weeks, and all that lies ahead of us, with a strong and stable platform of support behind them, both at home and at school. My best wishes to everyone.

Dr Mark Howie
Principal