

EDITION 6 9TH APRIL 2020

the LIGHTHOUSE



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome to our last edition of The Lighthouse before Easter. Easter is our most important feast as Christians for we are invited to rejoice in the promise of everlasting life through our witness in the resurrection of Christ. This year, Easter is going to look different. It will not be a time for large family gatherings or for trips to our favourite holiday destinations. For those who normally gather in their parish communities at this time it will also be challenging. I encourage you to look creatively for ways to find renewal over this long weekend, within the constraints of our social distancing protections, so that we can continue to move forward connected as a people of hope and love.

Plans for Term 2

The announcement on Tuesday, 7th April by Premier Andrews and Education Minister Merlino that school would resume for Victorian students after the Easter holiday in a blended online mode was not unexpected. The statement was very clear: *where students can learn from home they must learn from home*. We were expecting this potential outcome and are well prepared to commence our Continuing Learning Plans on Wednesday, 15th April when school recommences.

However, the statement that these arrangements would remain in place for the duration of Term 2 and then be reviewed, emphasised that we need to prepare for the long haul.

To this extent, it is important that we consider that we commence Term 2 in "Phase 1" of our Continual Learning Plan in the recognition that we are navigating uncharted waters and will need to continue to review our online learning approaches as the term progresses and we receive feedback from the learners and their parents.

Our priority remains to continue to endeavour to provide an engaging and manageable learning program for each student that encourages them to progress purposefully with their learning. We will complement this with strong pastoral care support

to ensure that the wellbeing needs of each student is understood and that the close bonds already established in our community are not diminished.

Continuing Learning Goals

As a faith community with a hopeful spirit, our continuing learning goals are:

- Our students continue to learn and learn well
- Our students continue to learn with people who care about them

Illuminare et Ardere

Supporting You (our Parents/Guardians)

If you believe our celebrities and social media influencers, home schooling is hell. Please let me reassure you that you are not going to need to "homeschool" - you have a whole community of outstanding professional educators at your disposal who will guide the learning program for your child so that it is customised to respond to their needs, who will monitor their progress, assess their work for understanding, provide you both with feedback and make the appropriate adjustments.

The teachers will be available to answer questions and provide guidance as it is required during normal class times. We will provide specific details about how to access teachers, what you can expect in support from our allied professionals and how "check ins" will occur.

The first of these check ins will take place on Tuesday, 14th April and every student will be contacted to ensure that they are ready to learn.

Parents/guardians are asked to take responsibility for the general safety of their child and, as best they can, prepare a space at home that is conducive to learning. We will provide some guidelines as to what such a space would ideally include and how to establish good home learning routines. The most important role of the parent at this time is the provision of a healthy home life, physical exercise and relaxation, and the reassurance that you can offer your child that we will get through this period. We will also share some resources on how to discuss the coronavirus with children and help alleviate anxiety.

Support for Parents/Guardians in Essential Services

Limited onsite provision will be available to supervise students where parents cannot work from home and appropriate supervision cannot be provided in the home as a result. Any student attending the College will complete an identical online learning program to their peers learning from home. Supervision will mainly be undertaken by support staff and is restricted



to normal school hours - 8.45am to 3.45pm and appropriate social distancing measures will be applied. Any parent wishing to access this facility on Wednesday, 15th April is required to email registrar@aquinas.vic.edu.au before 4pm on Monday, 13th April so that we can ascertain the demand and prepare accordingly.

Access to Teaching Staff

Our Continuing Learning Plans are based around the best advice that we have available from those already experimenting with online learning. There is much being discovered and many early adopters - students, parents and teachers - are reporting feelings of being overwhelmed. It is clear from these experiences that being in "virtual classrooms" all day is more than a strain on your bandwidth, it is demoralising for both students and teachers. As a result, our plans contain a blend of "synchronous" (real time) and "asynchronous" (any time) learning activities for students. Teaching staff are required to work from home in accordance with government guidelines, however, most will be available at the time of their scheduled lesson to respond to student questions and can be contacted during normal school hours. It must also be noted that many of our staff, just like yourself, are playing dual roles as carers at present so I seek your understanding if a response is delayed.

VCE and VCAL Students

Minister Merlino reassured the community that senior certificates would be completed this year and current Year 12 would not be returning to complete a Year 13. He made the following comments in regards to the senior certificates in his announcement:

"VCE students will still receive an ATAR score, but there will be a number of changes to the academic timetable for VCE and VCAL students:

The GAT test will move from June to October or November

End of year exams will be postponed until at least December

School based assessment tasks will be reduced where possible to relieve some pressure on students as they move to remote and flexible learning arrangements

Universities will be asked to delay the start of the 2021 university year to account for impacts of coronavirus on senior secondary students.

VCE study scores will continue to be a combination of school-based assessment and external exams. VCAL students will have more time to complete their courses and this will be consistent with the revised dates for the VCE.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is also examining a compressed end-of-year exam schedule – including slightly shortening each exam – in recognition of the disruption caused by the pandemic.

A small number of students undertaking VET may have the award of their VCE or VCAL delayed until the beginning of 2021 so they can complete mandatory practical or workplace learning requirements – ensuring that they are not disadvantaged by the lack of hands-on practice while we fight this pandemic."

The Minister also said that there would be limited permission for small groups of VCE and VCAL students to attend school to meet learning requirements that cannot be conducted via distance. The College is considering this option as part of our Phase 2 plan.

We also met with our College Captains again today to further discuss how we can support our senior students. Our Captains are doing an excellent job of communicating with their peers and sharing news as it comes to hand. They tell us that this is helping to assure the students as some clarity is gradually emerging about the rest of this year.

Term 2 Events

Given social distancing restrictions it is reasonable to expect that most of our calendared co-curricular events for Term 2 will need to be postponed or cancelled. Some smaller meetings may still be able to proceed in blended online modes. We will keep you informed of updates to the calendar via The Lighthouse.

Tuition Fees

A reminder to contact the Finance Office (fees@aquinas.vic.edu.au) or 9259 3001 should you need tuition fee relief. We appreciate that this may be an uncomfortable conversation for you and we will deal with each family on a case by case basis and with sensitivity and confidentiality. Our knowledge of your financial situation will also assist the College Board with its own budgeting as we endeavour to manage our own cash flow in these uncertain times. I recommend that you stay abreast of the financial support being offered by government here: https://www.australia.gov.au/#_financial_support

Some final thoughts for this week ...

I overheard a popstar being interviewed on TV earlier this week about their experiences in quarantine and the cancellation of their tour (sadly, I wasn't paying enough attention to accredit). He lamented the lost opportunities; however, he also reflected that his (young) children are likely to have very different memories of the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 than most adults. He imagined that his children will, most likely, form fond memories of this time of the family home together, for they become the centre of attention as parents seek creative solutions to their boredom. Of course, this is not intended to diminish the suffering of those who have, or will have, experienced unbearable loss as a result of COVID-19, or those who are heroically working on the front line of emergency services. But it does provide an example of our human capacity to see a silver lining in the most trying of times. We hope that our students will also see the term ahead for the great opportunities that it will provide as long as we remain open, creative and resolute in doing our best.

May we see this time of reduced liberty not only as the appropriate caring gesture to our fellow humans, but as an opportunity for quiet and calm, and a chance to meet more deeply those in our household. At this time, our prayers remain with those in our global community experiencing loss, hardship and the anxiety of uncertainty at this time.

Many blessings to all College families over this Easter break. We look forward to "seeing" all students when Term 2 commences next week.

Darren Atkinson
Principal

LEARNING @ AQUINAS



Mr Michael Box
Deputy Principal

Last week I responded to some frequently asked questions about Continuing Learning. In his article in this week's Lighthouse Mr Atkinson has explained what will happen in the first weeks of next term. We have produced a [Continuous Learning for Parents](#) that set out our processes. The most common question I have received is *will this plan change over time?* We are currently at Phase 1 in our Plan and we will move to Phase 2 and beyond if needed as we continue to adapt.

The principles we have based our decisions upon have come from a range of research, but a very good example is the assistance provided by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership who produced a document called "[What Works in Online/Distance Teaching and Learning?](#)" This offers advice about what is successful in the provision of off site learning. The section on screens was informative:

Screen time – quality vs. quantity

"In recent years, debates about screen time have shifted from a focus on quantity to quality. Previously, the dominant assumption guiding advice to parents and professionals who work with children revolved around the potential harm technology poses to children. Recent research has demonstrated that this focus on risk and harm is outdated (*Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016; Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2017*). Instead, it is more appropriate to consider the quality of both the content and interactions children are consuming/participating in online. This shift in focus allows for more nuanced guidance to be given to both parents and education professionals, guidance that has been lacking due to the narrow focus on risk mitigation. Both teachers and parents should ask the following questions when considering what their children/learners are doing online (*synthesised from Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016*):

- **What's the context?** Where, when and how is digital content being accessed?
- **What's the content?** Is the content age or skill level appropriate?
- **What connections are being facilitated?** How is this online experience facilitating (or impeding) positive social connections?
- **What's the impact?** Is the child physically healthy with a healthy sleeping routine? Is the child enjoying their digital experiences and continuing to engage in hobbies and social interactions with friends and family?

These questions offer parents and teachers a framework for differentiating between problematic and normal use of technology during this period of significant change in schooling. Importantly, these considerations are built into the principles of online learning outlined above. That is, by building an online community that privileges authentic, interactive experiences (between: students, students and the teacher, students and the content), teachers can have confidence that the time their students spend online at home will positively contribute to their learning and wellbeing."

Our objective throughout this experience will be to produce authentic, interactive experiences that positively contribute to students' learning and wellbeing. We will be flexible and ready to adapt to situations as needed. Our teachers have the skills, training and the willingness to adapt. We will listen to our staff, parents and students and we will work to improve the learning experience so it is a benefit to our families rather than being overwhelming at a difficult time.

A POINT OF REFLECTION



Dr Napoleon Rodezno
Deputy Principal

As we approach the Easter period and reflect on Jesus' Ministry, Death and Resurrection, it is enriching to recognise the opportunities we encounter from within the challenges we face as humans during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The authorities continue to search for what may be best practice in order to address the threat of the virus, and the restrictions we all face mean that the world is, to an extent, in shut down mode. The school holidays will soon come to an end, and the start of the term will bring learning in a different way to what most of us know. Thus, the significance of Easter should be very important to us. It is a time to share with family the gifts that we all have. It is a time to be thankful that despite the challenges we face as a community, and the inevitable impact that the pandemic has had on many, most people in our country continue to address the dangers with responsible measures and a much needed positive approach. We are blessed to have access to education for our students, food, shelter, time to share with each other, and even have access to social media platforms which keep us connected. These are essential resources which may not be as widely experienced when we compare our society to those of our brothers and sisters who live overseas, remote areas or are systematically underprivileged within our country.

As the term begins, there will be communication from your child's pastoral care staff. Please engage in discussions about the wellbeing and learning of your children as this is a vital element of the process of learning under the context we face during Term 2. Assisting your child in setting up an appropriate learning environment is important. In the lead up to starting the term, I suggest that you discuss with your child the need to be ready for the term. The following may be the points for discussion:

1. Is your child's electronic device suitable for on-line learning? Is there a suitable wifi connection available?
2. Is there a suitable learning space? (Please remember that bedrooms are not appropriate when students are to engage with teachers or others on-line)
3. Has your child considered what will be appropriate attire when completing work?
4. Is your child familiar with the demands/requirements of their courses/individual subject areas?
5. Does your child need support with the organisation required to address on-line learning?
6. Are they keeping in touch with others?
7. Are they exercising regularly?
8. Do they need to talk to someone other than you regarding any concerns they may have?
9. Do they have questions for their teachers? If so, how will these be communicated?
10. Are they aware of who to ask for help if needed?

I wish you and your child a great term and ask you to engage in communication with your child's teachers throughout the period of Continuing Learning. Your involvement is crucial to your child's positive development.

SCRIPTURALLY SPEAKING



Tania Grace
Assistant Principal -
Mission

Next week as we start the new term, our Years 7 to 9 students will complete an RE task that will reflect on the Easter Holy Week. One of the parts of this activity asks the question “*Why is Good Friday called ‘Good?’*” It is an interesting question to reflect on given the overall morbidity of the day.

When I think about Good Friday I reflect on how my daughter helped me to become more involved in Good Friday Service. I had been quite involved during my teenager years and found it so sad - I would rather avoid facing the sadness than go and witness it. My daughter, her 9 year old curiosity, wanted to see the Mass for herself. I was happy to take her and we set off that Friday. Afterwards she commented on how sad it was and I reminded her that from this sadness - so much good evolved. As I said this to her I was reminded of the importance of facing these sad times together in order to see the goodness that grows from it.

Even to this day I shed a tear during the reading of the passion. The most pivotal point for me is when Jesus asks John to care for his mother.

Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Through everything he was experiencing, he still was concerned about what will happen to his mother, a widower with no form of income or family to support her. In saying that to John, he died knowing she was safe and loved. Such love and concern for another in such trying times is almost unbelievable. Then again, much of what Jesus said, did and represented only became more believable through his resurrection.

In an article from CatholicTV, the final part of the reflection said:

Finally, having perfectly completed all that the Father sent him to do, Jesus dies. In John’s Gospel, we see that death is not just something that happens to Jesus. It, too, is an active decision of love and obedience: “he handed over the spirit.” When he died on the cross, Jesus gave a total gift of himself for us with more love than we could ever imagine.

The most beautiful response we can give to Jesus’ extraordinary gift is to accept it and to try to live our own lives with his same love. Today, I pray that we may join Jesus spiritually at the foot of the cross and never abandon the Savior who gave himself perfectly for us.

So as we all adapt to new lifestyles, may we too learn to love each other as Jesus did, supporting everyone and finding goodness beyond the suffering.



SENIOR YEARS REPORT



Meredith Greenwood
Head Senior Years

I was planning to write about the ATAR in this Lighthouse: what it is, how it is used, how it might be calculated in 2020, then three things happened.

The first was a conversation with a friend and colleague about her daughter who is concerned about how the senior musical is going to be affected. The second was also a passing conversation with another friend and parent of a Year 12. She mentioned those parts of the whole Year 12 experience that her son was coming to realise might not eventuate. The third was the Premier's announcement. It is also interesting that Daniel Andrews himself is the parent of a Year 12 student and he too has commented that his son while obviously concerned about ATARs, VCE and his studies, is also wondering what will happen about those missed eighteenth, dress up days and everlasting memories of those final days of schooling.

I have been making my own Hot Cross Buns for almost as long as I can remember. Many late nights, years ago, were spent with my dear dad in the kitchen on Holy Thursday waiting for the final batch to emerge from the slow combustion stove. That tradition has continued - though the slow combustion stove and unfortunately my father are no longer with us.

Every year the numbers who join in grow as my family and extended family and friends join in. But not this year. In 2020, we have established a Facebook Messenger group and shared the original recipe online, annotations and stains and all, and at a set time we will all login.

It won't be the same. I cannot yet tell our graduating class what their final year will be like. It too will be different. I hope that there is still room to celebrate.

MIDDLE YEARS REPORT



Rachel Crawley
Head Middle Years

Fact sheets outlining the Continued Learning Plan for students and parents are now available on PAM under School Links. These sheets provide directions for parents and students on how to access learning. During this somewhat challenging and confusing time continuing to care for students and maintaining our connection within our community remains a priority as learning moves online. Homeroom and Mentor teachers will continue to provide the basis of your child's pastoral support while they learn at home.

Continuity in the pastoral care of your child will be established with regular contact using different formats to connect and share communications. Students will receive weekly Google Slides, Google Forms and emails from their homeroom and mentor teachers. The slides will be received at the beginning of each week to enable relevant information from Team Leaders, news, study skills and wellbeing activities to be delivered. Google Forms will be shared to students on the first day of each week to gauge how prepared they feel for the week and again on Friday to seek feedback about how the week went.

In these changing times we remain committed to supporting students so that they may continue to grow into independent and resilient young people. Homeroom/Mentor teachers will be using student responses to Google Forms, emails and work completion on SIMON to assess how students are progressing in their learning, how well they are maintaining their wellbeing and if further support is required. Homeroom teachers and subject teachers will continue to work with Parents/Carers and Team Leaders to oversee the pastoral care of students.

Parents are encouraged to contact Homeroom/Mentor teachers and/or subject teachers via email with any queries or concerns regarding their child's wellbeing or learning.

MUSIC NOTES



Jared Campbell
Music Programs
Coordinator

The Aquinas College Instrumental and Ensembles program as part of the Continuing Learning Plan will be continuing to deliver an educationally rich and engaging program during this challenging time.

Instrumental and Voice lessons will proceed via online video conferencing using the Google Meetings platform. This means students will continue to receive their weekly individual or small group lesson with an experienced and professional Aquinas Staff member.

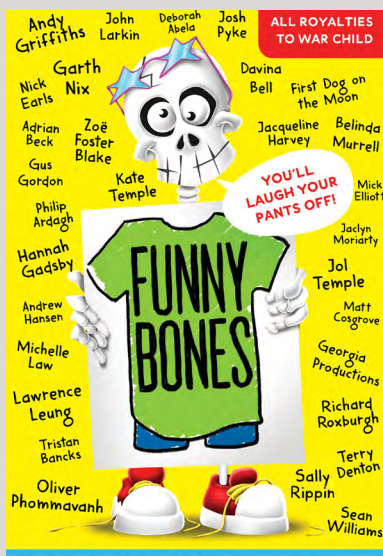
All child safety measures will be in place and further information will be available on the PAM permission letter and will be sent directly to parents of students currently enrolled. Lessons will begin Wednesday 15 April, and continue until a safe return to school for all students.

The Aquinas ensemble program will be notifying students in the coming weeks of development to continue engagement in the program.

The music lessons will be a great way for students to continually feel connected outside of the home and for them to be challenged and regularly see progression as they would if attending on site lessons.

Music is a beautiful art form which, with nourishment, can grow the soul and spirit. Instrumental staff are eager to engage and continue to work closely with students via this new platform.

If you have any further questions regarding the Instrumental and Ensembles program please feel free to contact me directly on campbelljl@aquinas.vic.edu.au



BOOK OF THE WEEK

Funny Bones

Edited by Kate Temple, Jol Temple and Oliver Phommavanh

A bumper book to tickle your funny bone with over 100 hilarious one-liners, jokes, shaggy dog tales as well as silly stories and wise-cracking cartoons from Australia's favourite comedians, children's authors and illustrators, that raises money for War Child Australia.

If you think you've heard every funny story there is then think again ... Funny Bones is a super huge collection of rib-tickling stories, cartoons, comics, jokes and much, much more that's bound to get even the most serious kid laughing.

REMOTE LEARNING IN 1937...

A LETTER FROM THE TIME OF THE POLIO EPIDEMIC

ular:-

Mentone Grammar School,
M E N T O N E

August 9th, 1937.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Owing to the outbreak of Infantile Paralysis, the School has been closed since July 26th, and we have now had the fortnight's holiday which would normally have been taken at the end of August. As the date of re-opening is quite uncertain, I am proposing to carry on School by correspondence, and I feel sure that I can rely on the co-operation of Parents who are naturally anxious that their children should have some definite work to do.

Programmes of study and work to be written, will be sent to every boy above the Kindergarten stage - at any rate till the end of August, which we shall call the end of the second term. The position will then be reviewed again. As soon as we are allowed to re-open, work will be carried on till the middle of December without any further break.

To ensure the success of the Correspondence Scheme, some parental supervision is essential. The following points should be carefully noted:

Boys who live near the School can come and fetch their books. Those who live at a distance, can have them posted on application.

Not less than three hours work per day.
Intermediate Candidates should do more.

Written work, set on the first Programme, must be either brought or posted to the School on Saturday, August 21st.

Masters meet on Monday, August 23rd. - Correct and mark the papers, which will be sent back on the following day. The second programme will reach you on Friday, August 20th.

If the work set is faithfully carried out, pupils should make good progress.

Yours faithfully,

C. C. THOROLD M.A.
Headmaster.

EASTER EGG COMPETITION

TIME TO GET CREATIVE!

There are many traditions associated with Easter and one of the more creative traditions is decorating eggs. This year we are going to have a “social distancing” Easter Egg decorating competition. Draw on your imagination and creativity and share it with us.

There are three different categories for judging:

- Faith/Religious - designs that connect with our Lenten/Easter season.
- Artistic - creative designs
- People/Characters - general people, movie or cartoon characters.

How to enter:

1. Decorate your egg
2. Take a photo of your decorated egg
3. Upload onto the google form [link attached here](#)

Entries close Monday 13th April (Easter Monday) at 4pm.

The top ten designs in each category will be selected for final voting. **Students will vote for the overall winner.**

The winner in each category will receive a \$10 canteen voucher upon our return to school.



Have you visited our Child Safety & Wellbeing Blog?

A great source of information for parents about a range of relevant issues which may be on your mind. Regularly updated with current information.

Check it [out here](#)

Use your PAM login to access



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LIGHTHOUSE

