



St Mark's

ANGLICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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A School of the Anglican Schools Commission Inc.

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Dear Parents and Carers

As the end of term is upon us, I write to thank all in our School community for working together to ensure that your children are well educated and cared for in these past very challenging weeks. We don't know what Term 2 will bring in this constantly changing environment of COVID-19. While we wish we were all returning to our school campus at the end of April, remote delivery will be our way of schooling for now.

In past days it has been reported in the news that a few schools in WA are offering an across-the-board reduction in tuition fees for next term. All ASC schools, including St Mark's, have taken the decision to support any school family in need due to losing part or all of your household income. No ASC school is offering an overall fee reduction for Term 2. Schools like ours operate on a model which keeps our tuition fees as low as possible to be as accessible to as many families as possible. Our largest budget line is teacher salaries, and these are costs that will continue as usual in Term 2.

Accordingly, St Mark's will use available budget resources to provide tuition fee relief for families suffering financial stress from loss of job, reduction in hours or business closure due to COVID-19. As the ASC CEO The Reverend Peter Laurence OAM and I said last week in our letter to School families, be assured that our School will support you so that your child or children can remain at St Mark's. It is our policy to support families on a needs basis, so that every student can remain at our School for Term 2 and beyond.

Since all schools have now moved to a remote learning model (much of it being online), we understand that this brings an increase in parent involvement and supervision. The term 'home schooling' has been used in some media reports; however, distance learning is not home schooling. While distance learning looks a bit different to the usual school week on campus, it is designed in the best interests of our students based on age and the required learning outcomes. Students are learning from home and being taught from a distance.

Our teachers create the scheduling, lesson content and resources, in alignment with WA curriculum requirements, and are working at an intense pace to deliver a high-quality home learning experience for our students. We manage the curriculum and provide the programming that fits strategically into the overarching learning journey for your child.

Our teachers are dedicated experts in their field, so please leave the heavy lifting of teaching to us, as you do when your daughter or son is on campus. While you may find that your child requires some support or guidance from you, especially if you have younger children, our endeavour is to make the distance learning experience as smooth and flexible as possible for parents and carers.

I remind families who need tuition fee support for Term 2 to contact our Business Manager, Mrs Carolyn Gray, at cgray@stmarks.wa.edu.au or by telephone at 9403 1301 so we can work with you on a solution that best fits your situation. You are partners with us in the education of your children; that is especially so now. If you do need help and support during this period of remote or online learning, please contact us so we can assist you.

We hope to be able to share with our families soon a clearer understanding of requirements for our Year 11 and 12 students as they work towards achieving their WACE, and VET qualifications or an ATAR. I understand the National Cabinet and Education Ministers from across Australia are meeting this week to discuss Year 12 students, in particular. The Director General of the Department of Education in WA has assured schools that the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) will release this week information about modifications to syllabuses made necessary by the impact of COVID-19, and that should provide the clarity we are all looking for. We will keep you informed about any developments affecting our most senior students.

While none of us would wish COVID-19 on the world, I hope that you are finding some 'silver linings' to the situation. For me, it has been time spent with my children. My children are in their early 20s and very much lead independent lives. It is not too often that we are in our home at the same time, but we were last weekend, and no one had any other place to be for once. We went on a long, well spread and appropriately socially distanced walk together through Kings Park, and what a joy it was. Time to talk together, to find out how we are feeling about this situation and anything else, time to connect, learn from each other, just be together. I love my family all of the time, but especially so as we navigate this time in our lives. I'm sure you do too. I hope you are finding similar opportunities to connect with each other.

As we look ahead to Term 2, and we respond to the valuable feedback provided in our recent survey (thank you to students, parents and staff who responded), our teachers will need some planning time to be well prepared for the term ahead. Students are currently scheduled to return to (remote) classes on Wednesday 29 April. I wish to extend this to **Thursday 30 April** to give staff two days preparation on their return to work. I appreciate your understanding and support of this. Those students who have been attending the campus will not do so again until Thursday 30 April.

Ms Kelly Nebel has been our Acting Head of Senior School during Term 1. Ms Roseanne Madden commences in this role at the beginning of Term 2, and we will introduce her soon after she starts in her new role at St Mark's. Ms Nebel has done a wonderful job as Head of Senior School during Term 1. She has embraced all of the responsibilities of that role with energy and expertise, and has inspired great confidence in our community through her assured leadership and building of positive relationships. Ms Nebel has our gratitude for a job very well done. We welcome her continued involvement in the Senior School as a whole when she assumes the position of Acting Deputy Head of Senior School when Ms Susie Edwards commences her Parental Leave part way through Term 2.

As we approach Easter, it will be unlike any other we have experienced in our lifetime. I invite you to reflect on a central message of the Easter story, that of 'hope'. Through death, despair and hopelessness comes resurrection, new life and hope. Together we will get through the devastating effects of this pandemic, and emerge 'renewed with hope' for all that lies ahead. In whatever your circumstances, may this Easter bring your family together (even if by Zoom or Skype) in love and hope. All of us at St Mark's wish you a happy and holy Easter, and a good break after distance learning in Term 1 concludes tomorrow afternoon.

Yours sincerely



Steven Davies
Principal