



St Mark's

ANGLICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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A School of the Anglican Schools Commission Inc.

Friday 20 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I write to bring you up to date with developments regarding COVID-19 and how St Mark's is responding to advice as it is provided by Government and health officials. St Mark's, and all Anglican Schools Commission schools, will always act with the health and safety of our students and staff central to our thinking.

I attended this week another meeting of all ASC Principals and key ASC staff. Such meetings will occur weekly as we collectively navigate the issues that present themselves in this current worldwide situation. Further to previous decisions made about group gatherings to ensure appropriate social distancing, it was agreed that all excursions off-campus will be cancelled for the foreseeable future. Major activities such as ASC Schools Week, the ASC Music Concert and St Mark's music ensembles are therefore cancelled.

The School is taking seriously its commitment to enacting social distancing and excellent personal hygiene. In order to do this, the following practices have been adopted:

- Desks have been moved apart (similar to how a room is set up for a test).
- Students are asked to wash their hands after coming in from recess/lunch (recommending this be done prior to entering class).
- Coughing and sneezing is done into tissues, which are then put in the bin, or into elbows.
- When working in groups, students sit apart.
- Rooms are ventilated with fresh air, where appropriate.
- Food items or drink bottles are not shared.
- Stationery items/devices are not shared.
- Students are working outside when possible.
- At recess and lunch time, students are asked to increase distances between themselves.
- When lining up to enter class, students are requested to have more distance between themselves.
- Students are asked not to touch each other.
- Surfaces are regularly cleaned.

The Anglican Schools Commission, and therefore St Mark's, is currently taking advice from governments and health officials regarding the possibility of a School closure, and at present this is not recommended. We are, however, preparing for the possibility that St Mark's might close as the COVID-19 situation develops in Perth. Our Distance Learning Plan is refined daily, and our teaching staff have been working very hard to continue their classroom teaching while also preparing to enact the Plan, if/when required. Many have been practising the use of digital tools with their classes so a relatively seamless transition could occur if needed.

While staff have been preparing individually, it is necessary to provide them with a significant amount of time to collaborate in teams with colleagues, to ensure the most efficient provision of ongoing learning.

The Secondary School had planned for a Parent Information Evening (for Years 6, 11 & 12, and all secondary students new to St Mark's in 2020) on 30 March, requiring secondary students to be dismissed at 1.10pm. This early closure was first communicated through the Newsletter on 5 February. While the Parent Information Evening has been cancelled in line with social distancing measures, staff will use the early closure to further develop plans for distance learning. This necessitates an early closure in the ELC and Junior School. The ELC will close at 12.50pm, Junior School at 1.00pm.

For those ELC and Junior School families that will find it difficult to accommodate the early close on 30 March, arrangements will be made to supervise your children at school until the usual end of the day. Please contact the relevant Head of School directly to let them know if your child will use this service (ELC – 9403 1398; JS – 9403 1369).

Our staff greatly appreciate your understanding of the need for the provision of this time to allow them to be fully prepared to implement our Distance Learning Plan.

Parents of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 may already be aware that NAPLAN has today been cancelled for 2020. Education Ministers met today and reported that “the decision to not proceed with NAPLAN in 2020 has been taken to assist school leaders, teachers and support staff to focus on the wellbeing of students and continuity of education, including potential online and remote learning”.

As we communicate with you about COVID-19 and the implications of measures being taken to slow or stop the spread of the virus through our community, I am conscious that there needs to be one ‘single source of truth’ for St Mark's. Emails are easy to lose track of within a full inbox. Any letters that I send home to you will be placed on the School's website under “News and Events / News Alerts”, and the link is [HERE](#). This site will always be updated with the latest communication.

I appreciate all you have done to help your children to feel as calm as possible as more and more events are cancelled, and school begins to feel quite different. As I said in my last letter, we should focus on what we can control. We can all take responsibility for excellent standards of hygiene and our social distancing, and students are in control of their attitude to learning, in whatever form that manifests.

I remind you that, anyone who is awaiting COVID-19 test results, or who has a member of their immediate family awaiting test results, should not attend school until the test results are returned as negative. We ask that you please contact the School if your child or someone in your family is being tested. Additionally, anyone who is displaying COVID-19 symptoms should remain away from School and seek medical attention.

Thank you again for your support in this matter, in the best interests of our students, staff and vulnerable members of our community. I will keep in touch to let you know of any important changes in our approach at St Mark's.

Stay well, and best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Steven Davies
Principal