

Friday 1st May 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

We are now almost three weeks into this new phase of school life known as **Remote Learning**. I am sure I speak for everyone when I say this has been a difficult and challenging time no matter what our particular contexts are. While we acknowledge that Remote Learning is definitely not the ideal way for a school community to operate, I have been so impressed by the commitment of parents, children and College staff in helping to make this the best possible experience amidst these restrictions.

I wanted to thank you, our parents, for taking the time to provide incredibly useful and encouraging feedback to us on the recent parent survey. We received over 150 responses in just 48 hours. Your contributions have been reviewed and we will continue to adjust and improve our approach in line with your feedback.

You may be aware of a recent announcement by the Federal Minister of Education that has received a lot of media attention and may have caused some confusion amongst the public. Independent and Catholic schools were given the option of bringing forward upcoming payments of recurrent school funding if they committed to reopening school for at least 50% of students by 1 June 2020. This is an optional decision for Independent and Catholic schools to make, which includes Northside Christian College, as we are primarily funded by the Federal Government.

From a College perspective, any decision to re-open the College fully to students will be entirely based on what is best for the health, safety and wellbeing of our students, staff and parents. We will continue to take into account the advice of the Australian Chief Medical Officer as well as the Victorian Chief Health Officer. Like you, we have sometimes been concerned by the apparent contradictions in the advice we have received from Federal and State Governments but we will continue to closely monitor the situation and assess the advice which we receive from authorities.

The College Executive team are currently looking at a range of options on when and how Northside will facilitate a return to school for your children and we will keep you informed regularly. At the time of writing, the Victorian Government has not announced any plans to fully re-open its state schools before the end of Term 2. However, this may change on or around 11th May when the Victorian Premier, Daniel Andrews, is expected to outline the next steps for the state of Victoria. We expect to have more information for parents about NCC's plans at that time.

Just to be clear, no matter what happens, NCC will receive the same amount of funding from the government. The only difference will be that funding would be received earlier if the College re-opened to all students on 1st June. So essentially, it makes little or no difference to the College's budget.

Our first priority remains the provision of a safe learning environment for our students and staff, and the health and wellbeing of our community.

Grace & Peace

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'D Higgins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Damian Higgins
Principal