



Carey
Baptist
College

Attempt the Extraordinary

Thursday 26 March 2020

To our Carey Community

I am very mindful of the volume of information that has been sent out to our families over the past few weeks, however, I felt it important to update you on how Carey is responding to the more recent Federal and State Government management of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

As you will be aware, the Prime Minister announced on Sunday (22/03/2020), that for the moment, schools should remain open. However, parents were given the opportunity to either send their children to school or keep them at home. This position has been reiterated in both the Federal and State Government announcements in the past 24 hours.

Our highest priority at Carey is always the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff and students. For this reason, it is critical that we continue to take our advice and direction from the Department of Health and Department of Education.

Carey Baptist College, both Harrisdale and Forrestdale Campuses, will, therefore, be kept open until a directive is received for us to close. This is with the understanding that parents can choose to send their child to school, or to keep them home. Please be assured that if you decide to keep your child at home, we will support your child's learning through the online platforms that have been developed by staff.

Many of our parents, of course, have already chosen to keep their children at home, and we completely support their decision to do so. As the number of students on campus is reduced, it assists in creating the levels of social distancing required, creates more physical space and allows us to free up some of our teachers to prepare more of the 'off-campus learning resources' needed for parents to continue their child's education in a home context. As you are already aware from communications from our College Principals, our staff have been working hard to ensure that learning programs can be delivered effectively online to our students.

There is wide debate in the community as to whether schools should remain open. A significant reason for keeping them open is so that those parents who are unable to care for their children during school hours due to work commitments, including those involved in our community's essential services, can continue to engage in this critically important work. We need to do everything we can to support these workers and ensure the most vulnerable members of our communities can be protected from this virus.

We intend to provide this service, while also putting in place measures that minimise health risks for our staff and the students in our care.

Financial Assistance

In recent days, we have been identifying mechanisms we can use to increase the level of financial assistance that can be made available to families whose financial situation has changed because of the current crisis. Our desire is that all of our Carey families can keep their children in our schools, and we do not want concerns around finances to be a reason to leave. To this end, if your financial situation has changed and you need assistance regarding your fees, please contact our College's Accounts Department at accounts@carey.wa.edu.au and discuss how we can assist.

As we continue to navigate the rapidly emerging challenges of this crisis, I would like to express my thanks for the many positive messages of support and appreciation that we have received from so many of our parents. Our Principals and staff are doing an amazing job as they stand in the frontline caring for our students, keeping routines in place, working to minimise anxiety and engage them in learning. It is our desire to see our students flourish - whether they are learning in our classrooms - or at home using off-campus resources.

It is also our desire to stand with you, our families, through these uncertain times. This crisis does not define us; it does not change the fact that we are a community of people who care for one another; we need each other now, more than ever, and we will find creative and safe ways to stay connected.

I believe we have every reason to remain hopeful, optimistic, and to not be afraid. We *will* emerge from this crisis - and, it is my prayer, that we will emerge wiser for the lessons we have learnt, both individually and collectively.

Our theme at Carey this year is *Courage* - little did we know what was ahead! How do we find courage in the face of uncertainty and fear ... through faith and trust in a God who loves and cares for each one of us.

Jesus said "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

(The Gospel of John, chapter 14 verse 27; New Living Translation)

If there is anything we can do to support you, please do not hesitate to contact the College or Church. Details are provided below.

Our prayers remain with you.

Jennifer Argue
EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

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