

11 March 2020

RE: **Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Dear members of our All Souls St Gabriels School Community,

As part of our commitment to the health and safety of our community, the Senior Leadership Team are monitoring the coronavirus situation closely and following advice, guidance and directives from government agencies – especially the Queensland Department of Health. Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), Education Queensland (EQ) and the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) are also supplying advice and guidance to schools.

**Please be assured we will act accordingly upon advice and directives from the Queensland Health Department and the Federal Government Departments associated with this situation.**

**At this stage, we all should remain alert, but not alarmed.**

The advice, guidance and directives received will be changing as the situation evolves. The Senior Leadership Team is aiming to keep all members of our community informed of any major changes to our routine practices. This letter serves as a way of starting this flow of information regarding our general precautions and also the way we are supporting our community in specific areas of our school.

General precautions we are currently taking include:

1. Hand sanitiser is provided at the Pre-Prep gate entrance, Junior School gate entrance, Junior School Office, School Main Office, entrances to Halse Hall, Clinic, Student Services Office and the Library for students, parents and visitors to use.
2. All students and staff are being continually encouraged to practice good hand and respiratory hygiene to help protect against infections. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - reminders to cover their mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a tissue, or coughing into the elbow;
  - disposing of the tissue into a bin and then washing / sanitising hands afterwards; and
  - washing hands regularly, after using the toilet, and before eating.
3. To avoid spreading infections to others we ask day school parents / care givers to keep their children home if they are unwell. As is our normal practice, boarding students with fevers and / or symptoms of infectious conditions are kept in the Clinic, away from the general school population. Clinic staff will monitor their progress of recovery and keep parents and residential staff informed.

*(Continued overleaf)*

#### Junior School precautions:

1. All Junior School classrooms have been provided with hand sanitiser, disinfectant wipes for hard surfaces and boxes of tissues.
2. All students coming to the Junior School Office with cold and / or flu symptoms will have their temperatures taken with a 'forehead thermometer', and if they register a fever, parents / care givers will be asked to collect their child. Students will not be allowed to return to school until their temperature returns to normal or clearance has been provided by your GP. Junior School Boarders will be assessed and monitored by Clinic staff – parents and residential staff will be notified.

#### Senior School precautions:

1. All Senior School classrooms have been provided with a box of tissues.
2. All students coming to the Student Services Office with cold and / or flu symptoms will be directed to the Clinic for assessment. If Day Students register a fever, parents / care givers will be asked to collect their child. Students will not be allowed to return to school until their temperature returns to normal or clearance has been provided by your GP. Senior School Boarders will be assessed and monitored by Clinic staff – parents and residential staff will be notified.

#### Boarding School precautions:

Whilst we can introduce precautionary measures, there will always be a potential for sharing infections in dormitories by the very nature of the fact that a large number of people are sharing common spaces. The need for good hygiene practices is being reinforced in this area of the School.

1. All Boarding Houses have been provided with additional boxes of tissues and hand sanitiser.
2. Common areas continue to be thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis.

#### Chapel Services:

I have discussed precautionary measures regarding Chapel Services with Br Nathan (School Chaplain). We are being guided by advice and directions from the Anglican Diocese of North Queensland. The Bishop was in a meeting today with fellow Bishops and we will be informed of any precautionary measures in addition to the following measures we are already introducing.

1. Members of the congregation will use a nod of acknowledgement, rather than handshaking, during the "Passing of the Peace".
2. There will be no physical contact during communion distribution. This includes "blessings" received by students not partaking in Holy Communion.
3. Members of the congregation will have the option to partake of the bread alone.
4. Members of the congregation will not be able to 'dip' the bread in the common cup.
5. Members of the congregation will still be able to partake of the wine from the common cup – this will be fortified wine in a silver or gold plated cup that will be wiped and rotated between uses.

Parents / Care Givers and residential staff are asked to discuss these options with students so they are able to make informed decisions prior to moving forward for Holy Communion / Blessing.

Br Nathan will be reminding all members of the congregation of these options during our Chapel Services.

*(Continued overleaf)*

There seems to be a heightened level of concern for this situation generated by traditional media outlets and social media. The Senior Leadership Team are monitoring the situation closely and following advice and directives from government agencies.

Further advice and information about the coronavirus is available on the Queensland Health website: <http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/217/838/novel-coronavirus>

Parents / Care Givers may also find the attached document (Information for Schools and Early Childhood Centres, Students and Their Parents) from the Australian Government Department of Health helpful.

Advice from ISQ, received in the last 48 hours, indicated that the Director General of the Department of Education (Queensland Government) stated there are no current plans to change the Easter school holiday dates. This advice email also went on to say that the Department of Health will be in contact with any school where there is either a confirmed case of coronavirus relating to a student or to a parent / caregiver of a student. The Department of Health will advise whether or not a school should close. We have received no such advice.

Again, I stress that at this stage, we all should remain alert, but not alarmed.

If you have any questions regarding the information included in this letter, please contact the School to be directed to the right person.

Regards,



**Ian Dietrich**  
Acting Headmaster