

March 20, 2020

The past few weeks have certainly been amongst the most challenging which I have experienced in our community. The uncertainty of the coming weeks is unsettling to our students, our staff and our wider community. On behalf of the staff at Swan Hill College I would like to thank our families for their support over the course of this term. I have no doubt that next term will be unsettling as well and we will depend on your support and goodwill going forward.

Earlier this week I spoke with staff about the amount of stress which has been building within our community since January. This has had a noticeable affect on our staff and students and will continue to build over the next few weeks. I spoke about how important it is for staff to remain as calm as possible in order to promote a stable environment for our students. In fact, it is crucial that we remain calm as a community and it is more important than ever that we look after each other and pay particular attention to those who might be vulnerable.

Since my letter earlier this week, we have noticed that attendance has dropped, which was expected. At present the information we have from the Department of Education indicates that schools will continue to be open in the short term. However, this has the potential to change as the Coronavirus spreads throughout Victoria. At present the best advice for students is to use good hygiene practices such as thoroughly washing hands with soap and water, coughing into their elbow, etc. Posters have been placed around the school encouraging these hygienic practices and we have recently expanded our cleaning services to include the cleaning of door handles, toilets and tables during the day as well as after school.

As mentioned previously camps, excursions and assemblies have been postponed for the remainder of this term and the school will most likely extend this practice into term 2. In addition to this we are taking steps to reduce areas where larger groups of students might congregate and will continue to make changes as the need arises. Many of our teachers are delivering lessons about Coronavirus and how it spreads in order to negate some of the myths and rumours and promote a more informed response from our students.

Today we received confirmation from VCAA that NAPLAN testing would not occur in 2020.

Staff will continue to place work online for students. DayMAP will be our main source of this work but staff may use a range of platforms to provide continuity of education for our students. To access this work, students will need their education department login which they have been made aware of. Should students need support with this they can contact the IT Department at school.

To all of our staff, students and parents please take care not only of yourselves but of those around you. We will continue to produce updates as we are made aware of them. Thank you again for your support.

Andrew Sartori
Principal
Swan Hill College