



From the Headmaster
Dr D P Nockles

16 March 2020

Dear Parent

As you are aware late on Friday afternoon and then throughout the weekend, significant further restrictions and social distancing strategies have been put in place throughout NSW and Australia in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Further to the school-based restrictions I outlined in my last correspondence, I am writing to inform you that all sporting competitions and events for IPSSO (Primary), MISA (Secondary), NASSA, AICES (Secondary) and CIS have been cancelled at an association level until further notice. The PDHPE staff are working towards sport on Tuesday and Wednesday being conducted as intra House events, however, it is likely that this week lessons will be repeated during sport time on Tuesday and Wednesday respectively. Year 12 students will not be part of any reshaped sport days and will be making use of the IRC facilities during sport time for academic work.

In addition to these arrangements, all of the upcoming agricultural shows around the state, culminating in the Camden Show and Royal Easter Show have been cancelled for our students, putting a halt to the entire Agricultural Show season.

Apart from what I have mentioned above, all other Macarthur co-curricular groups are meeting as normal as long as they do not have any interactions with staff and students from other schools and/or general community members.

I have also initiated social distancing procedures within the School by cancelling all assemblies and Chapel services until further notice. Some assemblies will be conducted, but they will be done in class group sizes via video link. The Easter Service at the end of the Term has been cancelled and the same is likely to be the case for the ANZAC Service at the commencement of the new Term. At this stage the Annual Dinner, which was to be held in May will be postponed until a later date. I am asking parents to restrict access to the campus other than essential trips and acknowledge that this is difficult for a school that has such close parental links. Your understanding in this regard is very much appreciated.

Please find a link to advice

http://www.macarthur.nsw.edu.au/assets/pdf/2020/Admin/Letter_from_Chief_Health_Officer.pdf

that was received on Sunday evening from the NSW Chief Health Officer pertaining to the decision to keep schools open at present. Notwithstanding this current advice and given this is a very dynamic situation, it is still possible that an across the board closure of schools in NSW, if not Australia, might take place in the foreseeable future. At present the most likely timing would be a couple of weeks before the end of this term. Naturally this may well be brought forward if advice is received to that effect.

It is also not impossible that Macarthur may well be closed individually if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is diagnosed in our community. In such circumstances, the length of closure would be on the advice of the Health authorities.

Our staff has been working and planning for the possibility of the School closing, preparing work and testing systems for making work available online. If Macarthur closes for more than a couple of days we will begin the process of online provision of work. If the closure is for a day or two, staff will not send online work and normal classes will resume when the all clear is given. If the closure is for more than a few days, then online work will be made available one or two working days into the closure to allow for better planning and delivery. More information with specifics will be sent when a closure is enforced.

It is worth noting that some families have significant internet access limitations at home, as do some staff, and so online delivery will not be seamless. Please expect the odd bump along the way and be patient as we find ways to resolve them.

In addition, please be aware that staff will have their own families to look after and care for during any closure and so, while rigorous work will be provided and feedback given on work submitted, it will not be tied to a timetable structure. Flexibility is important if this is to work well within our context.

As I say, more details will be provided in time as appropriate. However, I thought families would appreciate some information about the preparations that are being made and some of the foreseeable limitations.

Given the new restrictions placed on international travel, I am asking all families that have a overseas arrival from today onwards living in the household to keep your children home from school for fourteen days or until a medical clearance can be obtained.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Nockles', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

David Nockles