



St Columba's School Bayswater

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Grow in Faith Seek Wisdom Live in Peace

Sunday 15 March 2020 *Weekend Release*

STATEMENT TO STAFF / PARENTS / CAREGIVERS

Dear Parents/Carers

I am aware that there may be some concern amongst our school community at the moment regarding the COVID-19 virus and the health of students.

Please let me reassure you that the safety and wellbeing of every one of our students is our highest priority.

We are working closely with CEWA support staff and following the advice of the Department of Health in dealing with risks posed by COVID-19. Our school is taking all reasonable measures to prevent the spread of the virus at school.

It is important to acknowledge that it can be normal to feel worried or anxious about this situation, parents and children alike. If your children are worried about this virus, you can help them by providing reassurance and perspective – it is unlikely that they will get sick, but if they do, they will go to the doctor. Most children have mild symptoms and feel well again soon. Also remember that speaking with them about increased handwashing, covering their mouth when coughing, sneezing into their elbow and general good hygiene practices will help them feel empowered in this time.

Please keep in mind that as leaders of our school communities, we have an important part to play in promoting good hygiene and public health messages with our students and families that will help contain the spread of this virus and protect those in the community who are at the greatest risk.

As a Catholic community, we can extend our prayers for all of those impacted in Australia and abroad, and show care and support for all members of our community. Much like the flu that affects many people each year, it is not out of the question that people we know may be ill with symptoms caused by COVID-19, and if so, it is important that we offer them our support, while we follow advice from health authorities.

If you would like to talk to your children about the virus, here are some useful resources:

- **How to talk to your kids about coronavirus**

<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/how-talk-your-kids-about-coronavirus-ease-their-fears-ncna1129851>

- **This is a comic for children explaining the coronavirus**

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

- **A 4-minute animated clip for children on coronavirus**

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

For the latest information on the virus, preventative measures, or what to do if you or your child become sick, please visit: https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus

For information on who should or shouldn't attend school, please refer to:

<https://www.cewa.edu.au/novel-coronavirus-update/>

We will continue to place other resources under the NEWS tab on our school website. Teachers will also begin to go through some of the Coronavirus resources for schools with their students.

As there is uncertainty around school closures etc, we will continue to keep you informed as we have information come through to leadership. Please note, we have cancelled school assemblies until further notice and Stations of the Cross [Friday evening 27 March]. This is in line with bans of gatherings of 500 plus people. As Principal, I have a responsibility to the community to make decisions now about minimising risk.

Pre-Kindy and Kindergarten 2021 Parent Forums are cancelled. A video presentation will be forwarded to all parents later this week. I will be emailing parents regarding specific details and the process from here. Our current families will be contacted to confirm your child's place at St Columba's asap.

Please note there are many messages coming via social media and news broadcasting. My responsibilities come directly through communication with government and Catholic Education WA. These are the guidelines I will continue to follow and communicate.

A SMS will be sent to parents whenever we update the website for Coronavirus updates. This is all about doing what is in the best interest of our students, our staff and our families. Any directives from the federal or state governments, Education Department or Catholic Education WA, will be forwarded when and if these are received.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding during this time.

Kindest regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Art Lombardi', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Art Lombardi
Principal