



Friday April 10, 2020.

Dear Boarding Community,

Happy Easter!! At this challenging time there may be those amongst us facing adversity that makes even a modicum of happiness seem difficult to achieve however, I hope you may take comfort in the pleasure that comes with being with your immediate loved ones and the knowledge that we are all in this together – and together we shall move successfully through this period.

In recent days I have spoken with many of you and repeatedly found myself saying that I am resolved by that notion of seeing this period as one in which we thrive and not just survive. I invite you all, and would ask you share this with your son, for I strongly believe this shift in mindset can see us accomplish all manner of possibilities over the coming weeks.

Earlier this week you would have received correspondence from the College pertaining to how the landscape of Term Two would look like for our students. After that was sent, we still felt there was still much needed consideration for our Boarders and our broader Boarding Community. Exhaustive conversation and gathering of information have occurred in the last days, in the consideration of whether our Boarding Precinct could reopen at the commencement of Term Two.

**Ultimately, the difficult decision has been made *not* to reopen Boarding for the commencement of Term Two.** At this point, we are not closing Boarding for the full duration of Term Two, rather the immediate future, choosing to continue to have conversations and gather the constantly evolving information, to make an informed decision, as the term progresses.

The College will next week credit all Full time, Weekly and Flexi Boarding charges for the duration of Term Two. The College will also arrange for the reimbursement of funds should your family have paid them in advance. Should Boarding be able to reopen during the term the College will then charge any relevant fees at that time. The Finance Team will be in touch to check in with the individual circumstances of each family, however, should you have any specific queries please do not hesitate to contact our Business Manager, Mr Andrew Ballesty via email at [aballesty@stpats.vic.edu.au](mailto:aballesty@stpats.vic.edu.au) or by calling 0409 010 583. I reaffirm EREA's position that no student will have his education compromised at this time for financial reasons.

So, as we enter this new environment, what does this mean for your son. Firstly, let me say that I have been privileged in recent weeks to witness the amazing work being done by our teaching staff to prepare for this move to online (remote) learning. Just the innovation alone is testimony to the notion that it is when we are challenged that we are at our finest. I have no doubt that your son's learning will not be compromised, in fact it will continue to be engaging, highly informative and rewarding.

Likewise, our wellbeing staff have put together an extensive program to support our students at this challenging time. I know we could all agree that there will need to be a degree of flexibility, especially in these first few weeks, but, as I said at the beginning, we are all in this together, so please do not be alarmed if all does not go perfectly.



Please be assured that there are many here at the College to support you and your son through these challenges.

You will have all heard me say on numerous occasions that the strength of our Boarding program is not the bricks and mortar, but the support we are able to provide to meet the individual needs of our Boarders. This will not change.

Being a Boarder is about having a greater network of support around you and we shall continue to provide this. I sat with Tam and Ryan yesterday afternoon and am genuinely excited at the opportunities we will have to connect with you on a daily basis and support your son, even whilst he can't be physically with us.

Our Boarding cohort have been 'divided' between our Boarding staff to ensure the highest possible levels of support and a consistency to this support, however to all of you, their parents, I shall continue to connect with you all and be your principle point of contact.

We shall organise ways in which we can gather as year level cohorts, present challenges for all our Boarders and (where practically possible) bring our whole Boarding Community together!!

In the coming days either myself, Tam or Ryan will touch base with you, at these times please do not hesitate to tell us how we can help your son or our Boarding Community more broadly.

Finally, on a personal touch, I have been humbled by the many messages of care and concern for Ainslie as we draw near to the birth of our second child. She wishes me to pass on her thanks and that she is well, as is the baby. I promise to keep you all posted on any updates.

Once again, I wish you all a safe and enjoyable Easter.

Warmest regards,

**Director of Boarding**