



**ST PETER'S COLLEGE**  
PALMERSTON NORTH, NEW ZEALAND

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

Community Notice – COVID-19 From the Principal

**Please prepare for the likely rostering home of some year levels this week as the school tries to cope with a significant staff shortage.**

We are getting queries from parents with respect to their concerns about sending their sons and daughters to school.

At this time we ask that families follow the advice of our government and the ministry of education. They have stated the people who are over 70, people who have underlying medical difficulties such as heart disease, diabetes, autoimmune disease etc. should self-isolate. It is your decision as the parent (based on medical advice from the Government and the Ministry of Health) to determine if your son and/or daughter fits the criteria to 'self-isolate' – it is certainly not something I can give you an opinion on as principal.

The government has not closed schools at this stage as there is no strong evidence of community spread as I write this today but that might change in the future. We are doing everything we can by focusing on hygiene practices in the College, limiting mass gatherings and changing the way we do things to maintain as safe an environment as possible for the young people we serve.

Teachers are working hard to put together online education programmes and we will do our best to support our students but this will not be perfect and not nearly as effective as face to face programmes in the normal school programme. That said, we believe both the Ministry of Education and NZQA will be very supportive of schools and students and I have no concerns they will be disadvantaged. We will be sending out information in the next 24 hours to parents that will provide some guidance on what we are endeavouring to put in place in terms of remote or online learning.

In terms of the health aspects, the reality is that most of us even if we contract COVID-19 will get sick but recover quickly. It is the old and those with medical issues we need to protect and that is why it is important to follow government and Ministry of Health advice.

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**We will keep school open until such times as we are directed to close or if we do not have the staff to maintain a safe environment for our students. As of today 6 or 7 of our teaching staff plus 3 or 4 support staff have had to go into self-isolation so we will have to manage without their direct input. Relief teachers are in short supply so please be aware and plan for the following:**

- **It is likely that by Tuesday or Wednesday we may have to begin rostering home our older students so that we have the teachers to put in front of each class. It is a difficult time**

**If we do move on this we would likely put in place the following structure:**

- **Y12 Rostered home on Tuesday**
- **Y11 Rostered home on Wednesday**
- **Y10 Rostered home on Thursday**
- **Y13 Rostered home on Friday**

**We appreciate that this is not something we want to do but these students are of an age that they could legally stay home as we try and maintain our Year 7-9 students in a full programme.**

Let's be grateful for the wonderful people we have in New Zealand within government and key positions. I have confidence in our leadership but it is going to be a difficult time. I also have a wonderful staff team in the College and we do care about our community and will do everything we can to support you all. God Bless.

Yours sincerely  
Kevin Shore