

16 April 2020

Dear Parents

These are extraordinary times as in the space of just one Term, our world has been turned upside down. Who would have thought as we prepared for the new school year in January, that so much would unfold in the weeks that would follow. Our prayers are with all in our school communities.

The first priority of our Catholic schools is the wellbeing of our students and staff. Planning to support your children through alternative learning provision and continued support for their wellbeing is well underway.

The State Government announced yesterday that schools will move to an alternative education provision from 20 April 2020 until at least 22 May 2020. It is Brisbane Catholic Education's position that schools will continue to follow the advice of regulatory bodies as the impact of the pandemic continues to unfold.

Consistent with the State Government's announcement, our Brisbane Catholic Education schools will be open from Monday next week. For the first five weeks of Term 2, all students who are able to be supervised at home and learn from home are to stay home, except for children of essential workers, vulnerable children and children in designated Indigenous communities. Your principal will provide any further details over the coming days with arrangements for your school.

At system level, Brisbane Catholic Education's has also prioritised support for those families who have been impacted by the economic consequences of COVID-19 so you can continue to participate and benefit from the continuity of education, pastoral care and community support which our schools provide. To ensure that no family facing financial hardship is forced to reconsider their choice of a Catholic education for their child, financial support measures, with effect from Term 2, are aimed at supporting you at these difficult times.

Across our community of schools, Brisbane Catholic Education works with families and communities from a wide range of socio-economic and demographic backgrounds. This complexity requires an immediate response which is both fair and sustainable over the coming months.

To support our families during this challenging time, Brisbane Catholic Education has put in place a range of financial measures to support our families. These measures are:

- **Increased provision for fee concessions:** Parents whose financial circumstances have changed as a result of the coronavirus are encouraged to apply for a fee concession. A simplified application form, available on the school parent portal, has been developed to assist parents with this process. Please approach your principal for information about the process to apply for a concession. It can be confronting for families to apply for this assistance. Our Principals will respectfully and with compassion, support parents through this process. You are assured that any information you provide to make an application for a concession will remain confidential.



- **Levies and other charges:** Any Term 1 levies, paid in addition to the school tuition fees, but not spent (e.g. a levy for an excursion that did not proceed) will be credited against outstanding tuition fees. Further, a review of Term 2 levies is being undertaken.
- **Term 2 School Fees:** A 10% reduction in schools fees for all schools for Term 2, will be offered as an option to all parents. Parents who need additional financial support are encouraged to apply for a fee concession beyond the 10% fee discount. Some families may not have been financially impacted by the current economic conditions and may choose to support the school community and opt out of this 10% discount.
- **Invoicing:** Term 2 fee statements will be issued in week 4 of Term 2. This timing coincides with the commencement in May of some of the Federal Government's stimulus package that will provide support to those in our community experiencing financial hardship.

Of course, if you have any questions regarding these measures, please do not hesitate to contact your school principal.

Wishing you many blessings this Easter season and continued prayers for all those impacted by these challenging times.

Sincerely yours

Pam Betts
Executive Director
Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane