2 April 2020

Dear Parents/caregivers

On Friday 26 March you received a letter from the Minister for Education informing you that due to the challenges of COVID-19 you are able to keep your children at home. This presents an unprecedented and challenging shift in practice, and we ask you to be patient as staff, students and yourselves become familiar with working in new ways. We appreciate your support by keeping your children home last Friday for a student free day.

To continue this work four student free days have been provided from 6 April to 9 April to plan and reorganise what and how we teach, and develop new on-line materials. This includes new ways of teaching and planning ways to support both students in school or at home.

**Learning in a COVID-19 on-line environment**

This week teachers have started programs for students who are attending school or at home using our current timetable. We quickly realised that it would not be viable to continue working in this way given the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be challenging to meet the expectations of every student and parent for immediate access to teachers in the new on-line environment. COVID-19 has already led to some teachers being unavailable.

**Teaching and learning in Term 2**

Many parents/caregivers have contacted the school to inform us they will be keeping students home until the end of this term. We need to find out what is intended for Term 2, whether the students will be attending school and will access a Learning on Site program, or not attending school and Learning at Home.

Following this letter you will receive a survey link that asks about your intentions regarding Learning on Site or Learning at Home for Term 2. It also asks about access to internet and devices at home. Please respond as soon as possible.

For the 10 weeks of Term 2, students will access on-line materials with on-line learning where they take greater responsibility rather than relying on ‘in the moment’ classroom interactions. Communication will not rely on real time connections. Some learning will involve face-to-face video conferencing or instant messaging using Daymap or Microsoft Teams. Students should take the responsibility of engaging with material before or after scheduled contact times, find self-reliant ways of finding out about what they don’t know and work collaboratively to solve problems.

Our Stage 1 and 2 students are our top priority and we will continue to offer current timetabled face-to-face classes, with usual teachers, using on-line learning platforms that are accessible to students at home. Teachers will teach, assess, provide feedback and monitor student participation online while also catering for students with additional learning needs. If students or parents have concerns about the pandemic’s impact on SACE studies, the SACE Board has a video with the Professor Martin Westwell, Chief Executive of the SACE Board and, the SATAC Chief Executive Andrew Mossman answering student questions about implications of COVID-19 for SACE students at https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/covid-19-coronavirus

As mentioned above it will not be viable to continue our Year 8 to 10 classes using our usual structures and routines. How learning is structured will be quite different to how we currently
work. Teams of teachers will work with groups of students to deliver core curriculum along with capability building options that incorporate learning from our specialist subjects. I will provide more detail about what this means in a future letter.

We need to be realistic about what we expect of teachers and students. Students can contact teachers directly through Teams or Daymap. Teachers will do their best to respond as well as to emails from parents, if time permits. We ask for your patience as this is a new way of working.

We also need to be realistic about what to expect of students and families. We are aware some families do not have access to adequate internet services at home. We will prepare printed material that can be collected, and dropped off when the work is completed. This will take time to organise, so please bear with us. We expect to be ready by the beginning of Term 2.

**On-line learning platforms**

Daymap and Microsoft Teams are the most frequently used on-line platforms. Students are able to download Microsoft Teams as part of the Office 365 license each student has. Students are able to follow the instructions attached to email with this letter to download Microsoft Teams. Google Classroom is being used by some teachers. Most teachers who are using Google Classroom are continuing with what they began before this situation arose and students would already have been provided with instructions.

*** Instructions for downloading Microsoft Teams are attached to this email

The school’s internet was disrupted over the last two days due to a failed fibre transmission card in equipment located at the Telstra exchange in Murray Bridge. The disruption affected many schools in the Riverland and did not get on-line learning off to a good start. We expect this to be a once off and not affect our plans for Term 2.

**Advice to parents - managing the home learning environment**

Remember that by choosing to have your child at home, you are taking the responsibility for their care and supervision.

The Department for Education has developed the Our Learning SA website at [https://www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa) to provide resources for students, families and teachers to support learning at home. It provides advice about:

- What to expect from your child’s teachers
- How you can support your child
- Setting up a learning environment at home
- Routines and expectations
- Communicating with your child
- Wellbeing
- Connecting with family and loved ones


Consider that a school day includes roughly 5.5 hours of learning time yet teachers will not necessarily set 5.5 hours of work tasks. A normal school day involves class discussions, explicit teaching and hands-on lessons. Students are not always sitting at a desk. Therefore it would
not be reasonable to expect students will be sitting and completing online activities from
9.00am to 3.00pm every day. It is more useful to vary the subjects studied or activities the
student is attempting. We have considered this when planning an alternative timetable for
Term 2:

- ‘Classroom’ based learning early to late morning
- Physical activity in the middle of the day
- Practical based learning in the afternoon
- Morning tea and lunch breaks

As parents and caregivers think about the environment you are creating for learning:

- A learning space that helps students to focus and engage
- Check that children are accessing the correct content as prescribed by teachers
- Use a public area as the work space
- Monitor the amount of screen time
- If possible, try to establish some set routines
- Where possible, to not work from the bedroom
- Check Internet filters

(Thanks to Brad Williams, Principal, Loxton Lutheran School)

If you are trying to help you child:

- Stand back and try to provide the right amount of support at the right time
- Reassure students that it is okay to take risks with their learning
- Use of open-ended questions
- Encourage the student to retain responsibility for their learning
- Give the least amount of help first to support the student to own the task
- Scaffold by listening to the student read through tasks and activities
- Break longer instructions into smaller parts
- Suggest messaging questions to teachers with Daymap. Teachers might not answer
straight away. Sometimes it helps to leave a task and look again later with fresh eyes

Mental health and wellbeing

Grant Fisher and Skye Beauchamp have asked me to let you know that continuing to support
wellbeing at Loxton High School is essential for optimal wellbeing. We will continue to offer the
support whether they are learning in school or at home.

- The Wellbeing leaders have added all students to a Microsoft Teams page called
  ‘Loxton High School Wellbeing’.
- The page provides weekly tips and activities, general Wellbeing information and
  resources to aid practising Wellbeing strategies.
- There is also a section for parent information.
- The top of the page has links to essential services.
- Students and parents are encouraged to use this page.
- The Microsoft Teams page will have information added to it regularly.
- Alternatively, packages can be left at the front office or posted out to people on
  request.

The Wellbeing support provided to students through school hours will continue with some
adjustments in place. The following options include:

- If students and Wellbeing Leaders are on site, they can use the same processes in
  place
- Students can make an appointment through booking an appointment at the Front
  office. A Wellbeing leader will phone the number provided to school.
- Students have an option to contact the Wellbeing leaders through Daymap. An
  appointment time can be made and the Wellbeing Leader will be in contact.
- Alternatively, students can request a video conference using the processes above. A
  Wellbeing Leader will make the video call.
In these trying times, students and parents are encouraged to look after their wellbeing. Please reach out if you have any concerns.

I thought it might be useful to pass on some links to resources to help you respond to the mental health impact of coronavirus (COVID-19).

- Be You: [COVID-19: Supporting educators, children and young people](#)
- World Health Organization: [Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak](#)
- headspace: [How to cope with stress related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)](#)
- Australian Childhood Foundation: [Staying connected with our children](#)
- The Australian Psychological Society: [Advice about maintaining positive mental health during the outbreak](#)

**Attendance: Learning at school OR learning at home**

Supporting all students to continue learning whether at school or at home will require a shared commitment by both school and home. We are asking you to indicate this choice in the Survey Monkey mentioned earlier in this letter. You are required to notify us if you change these arrangements either phone the school on 8584 7339 or email dl.0895.info@schools.sa.edu.au.

It is important that you keep us informed about your child’s attendance
- Any student learning at home with parent permission will be marked H (Home Study).
- If a student at home is ill or otherwise unable to learn, parents need to notify the Home Group teacher. The code will then be changed from H to one of the usual codes to reflect the reason for the absence (ie I, C, F etc)
- Students learning at school who are then absent will be marked as per our usual attendance process and followed up with families each day

Our usual follow up process will be used for students learning at school when they are absent.

**Keeping Loxton High School hygienic**

We have acted to minimise the likelihood of the spread of COVID-19 in the school including:
- Students have been educated and continually reminded about social distancing with steps taken across the school to keep distance between students in classrooms, while waiting for class and when lining up at the canteen.
- Soap dispensers are in all toilets
- Hand sanitizer, when available, has been placed in key areas of the school including the front office. A minimal supply was provided by the Department on Monday. We will continue our attempt to source additional supplies.
- Spray surface cleaner is available to all teachers to wipe tables between classes.
- Additional school cleaning time has been allocated in order to more thoroughly clean door handles, light switches and handrails as well as wiping down surfaces. Cleaners are also coming into the school during the day to wipe door handles and light switches.

**School buses**

As per the recent announcement by the Minister for Education that all Government schools will be closed for 4 pupil free days as from Monday 6 April 2020, Department for Education owned yellow and contract buses will not operate after the PM run Friday 3 April for the remainder of Term 1. We have not been provided with any details any details about changes to buses for the start of Term 2.

BusBiz has been advised by the Department for Education to clean buses more regularly. Drivers are cleaning all surfaces regularly and implementing social distancing. Drivers of
Department owned buses ensure that touch points of the bus are cleaned after each use and are cleaned by a cleaner during the day. Social distancing is used when students travel. Bus windows are opened where possible.

**Materials and Services charges**
The Department has recommended that schools do not action recovery of outstanding Materials & Services Charges for 2020 and other charges until further notice:
1. No invoices for outstanding M&S Charges for 2020 will be issued until further notice
2. Arrangements for regular payment by instalment will stop until further notice
3. Any automatic direct debit plans put into place by families via their bank account or centrepay should be stopped until further notice.

Further information will be made available as we receive it.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

DAVID GARRETT
PRINCIPAL