

12th May 2020

Dear Damascus Families,

This morning in a press conference Premier Daniel Andrews announced that Victorian schools would make a staged return from Tuesday 26th May. The media release from the Premier's office is attached, and I encourage you to read it.

Damascus College, in line with other Victorian Catholic, Independent and State schools, will continue to follow the Chief Health Officer's advice and follow the return to school plan. The College Leadership team are working through the information provided by the Victorian Government and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV), and we will share the specific implications for our Damascus community, as the week unfolds.

The priorities for the Damascus community throughout the pandemic will be important to continue through the staged return. The priorities continue to be;

- Maintaining the safety of the entire Damascus community
- Ensuring we remain connected and support one another
- Ensuring continuity of quality learning and teaching
- Being willing to adapt, change and try new things, recognising that we will make mistakes at times.

This morning's announcement from the Premier and Minister for Education advised (all progressing well) that cross-sectoral agreement has been reached around:

- Monday 25th May - Pupil free day for schools to prepare for the next stage
- Tuesday 26th May – Return of Year 11 and 12 (plus Year 10s in VET/VCE classes)
- Tuesday 9th June – Return of Years 7-10 (subject to continued low rates of transmission)

The press release indicated a range of operational facets that we will need to work through and understand more fully. Some of these things relate to social distancing for adults, staggered breaks, student drop off and pickups, cleaning regimes, and testing regimes for those who work in schools.

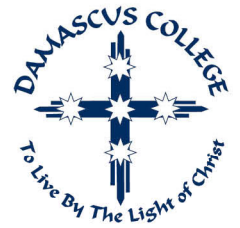
The two week notice period is for parents/families and for schools to prepare and ease the transition.

The Premier offered a very strong vote of thanks for parents, schools, principals, teachers and staff. The Minister thanked educators, principals, teachers, support staff for their incredible work, with parents and students. This has been echoed by the Director of Catholic Education for the Diocese of Ballarat, Audrey Brown.

The Damascus community; students, staff and families (demonstrated through the responses to our surveys), have affirmed the strength of the care for one another and

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the capacity to respond appropriately throughout this crisis. As we move into the next phase, we will continue to support one another and work in the best interests of this community. I thank everyone for the support you have extended to date and encourage you to reach out to the College if you need support.

I will provide another update in my newsletter tomorrow. It is great news that we will be back together soon!

Regards

Matthew Byrne
Principal