

Dear parents/carers

The latest guidelines from the Department of Education and Training (DET) for schools to implement in keeping schools open relates to cleaning, attendance and social distancing.

Cleaning

The Department has ordered extended and additional cleaning to commence in all schools through to the end of term.

This extended and additional cleaning will focus on the cleaning of high touch points throughout the school. Cleaning will happen progressively throughout the day to ensure that the risks of transmission are reduced.

This will involve increased disinfectant and detailed cleaning of the common touch points, including washbasins, all entry and exit points and shared surfaces including chairs and desks.

Casterton Secondary College is currently trying to source hospital grade disinfectant. Once available, all teachers will spray desks, chairs etc. at the completion of a class to ensure the surfaces have been disinfected in readiness for the next class.

Attendance

Schools are not obliged to support continuity of learning where the school remains open and parents choose to remove their children from school due to general concerns in relation to COVID-19.

Casterton Secondary College will not be providing work for students not attending due to parent/carer choice.

Social distancing in schools

Social distancing is important to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). One of the recommendations from health authorities is that people should endeavour to keep a distance of 1.5 metres between themselves and others. It is important to note in this context that the Victorian Chief Health Officer's advice is that the risk of transmission represented by children appears to be low.

Below is a brief outline of some of the steps DET has provided that schools can take to implement social distancing.

- Greetings should take the form of non-contact greetings.
- Where possible, staff and students should endeavour to keep 1.5 metres distance from each other.
- The highest standards of hygiene should be practiced in staffrooms, including washing drink and food containers with hot water and detergent and regularly wiping down surfaces with disinfectant.
- Schools should suspend any large gatherings of staff and students at one time, such as whole school or sub-school assemblies and large information evenings.
- Schools must not hold any events that involve over 500 people.
- In order to reduce the gathering of large groups at any one time, schools should consider staggering the start and finish of the school day (where this does not extend the school day to an unreasonable degree) and staggering recess and lunch breaks and other key transition times.
- Where students line up to enter class, they should be encouraged to keep 1.5 metres between each other where possible.
- Where students usually enter and leave class in an unstructured manner, this practice can be changed so students enter in a more structured way so a distance of 1.5 metres is maintained.
- Students, especially in secondary schools, should be encouraged to keep a distance of 1.5 metres between each other and between themselves and staff.
- Where possible, classroom furniture should be rearranged to provide maximum space between tables.

Casterton

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- Seating arrangements should also be changed to maximise distance between students. For example, students can be seated along the short edges and well as long edges of tables, and tables can be moved to the full front, back and side walls of the classroom.
- Student group work should be suspended, except where students are collaborating using digital technologies.
- Except for very young students, student work can be handed to a teacher for feedback rather than feedback being provided immediately by the teacher in close proximity to the student.

This morning, 20th March, CSC staff informed students of the 1.5 metre distance recommendation. We are trialling (with Year 8) the impact it will have on learning. For example the time it takes to enter and exit a class, seating arrangements, learning (group work, one-to-one feedback from teachers etc.), in locker areas and bus travel.

Learning from home

In the advent that Casterton Secondary College may be closed, teachers are preparing work for their classes.

- Year 11 and 12 students will continue with learning linked to their respective Study Designs which could include video conferencing via the Department's preferred tool Webex.
- Year 7-10 students will receive 1-week and 4-week assignments.

We are aware that we have families where more than child attends CSC which makes online learning difficult because most homes only have one desktop/laptop. As such we have prioritised Year 11 and 12 for video conferencing (when required). The school will provide a laptop and a USB for students who don't have a computer, laptop or iPad. Communication with students will be via XUNO and/or Microsoft Teams.

Finally

The school has placed an Internet Audit on XUNO (an SMS has also been sent out) to gauge the level of student access to a computer and the internet. Thank you to those who have completed it.

There are a number of parents/carers who have not signed up to XUNO (it's free). I ask that you do so to ensure you have an open line of communication with the school, especially if it is closed.

I will continue to keep you updated via XUNO.

On behalf of staff I thank students, parents/carers for their support during these challenging times.

Please contact the school if you have any questions.

Kind regards



Meridith Walker
Principal
20/03/2020