



28 April 2020

Dear Kuyper Families,

A new term will begin soon without the normal routines of school and meeting together. No welcome back assembly and no large communal events and gathering of students. This on the surface is disappointing, but we won't let this drive our thinking, rather let's look for new challenges that we can achieve from this new life season. The new term will require new ways of dealing with the learning framework we find ourselves in. As a school it has been a mammoth task keeping abreast of the communication that comes our way in managing the outworking of this pandemic and then responding to it with thorough learning strategies. We are seeking to honour our leaders of Government and the expert medical authorities in how we respond. We are launching a new micro website this week that will be the source for all information that revolves around learning from home and dealing with school life within a pandemic. Thus, we have called the site **School@Home**. A link to the site will be sent to you directly, and will also appear on our existing Kuyper website later this week. I highly commend this site to you for your ongoing use. Updates and information, daily devotionals and videos will be shared through this site for all the family.

You may have heard talk in the media about schools returning to pre-COVID operations in the near future. While some schools are choosing to return students at an accelerated pace, Kuyper will follow the State Government's advice for a phased and structured return.

Five Government recommended phases to get us back to full onsite school operations:

Phase 0. Schools open for families who cannot complete online learning at home.

Phase 1. Students at school at least one day per week.

Phase 2. Students at school at least two days per week.

Phase 3. Students at school five days per week, with social distancing measures

Phase 4. Students at school five days per week, with full school activities

The way forward for Kuyper Christian School

The following is a road map for the coming weeks at Kuyper. Please note that this plan is subject to change should the medical advice in NSW change.

Week 0. Curriculum Week 27 April-1 May is Pupil Free.

Week 1. Commencing 4 May. Students work from home using the School@Home framework and Google Classroom. (Phase 0)

Week 2. Year 11 and 12 return 2 days per week on Tuesday and Wednesdays. (Phase 1 for seniors)

Week 3. K-10 return 1 day per week on a roster. (Phase 1 for the remainder of students).

From Week 1, Kuyper will be open for any students who cannot work from home. We trust this will be the exception rather than the rule as the roster system commencing in Week 3 relies on families playing their part for the greater good of the community.

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Learning

As has been recommended by the Premier, the learning will be the same at school as at home, using the online delivery portal. Students who come to School will be completing lessons delivered through Google Classroom, the same lesson being completed at home in Google Classroom by those at home on any given day. Only Year 11 & 12 will have normal structured lessons apart from the Google Classroom, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays commencing Week 2. It will be expected that Year 11 & 12 will complete Google Classroom work for the remainder of the week.

We are acutely aware of the concerns felt by teachers, students and their parents, particularly those working towards their HSC credential this year. You will see above an initial focus on returning our seniors earlier to assist them in their HSC studies.

Online Survey

We understand there will be different views in our community on whether to send students back to school at all. This is a parent's individual decision and will be based on each specific need and situation. No child should be disadvantaged at home or school as they are completing the same work at this stage.

Please complete the **online survey** that has been sent to you asking for your intentions about sending your children back to school or not this term. We ask that you respect the rostered days for us to better supervise your children unless you have no other solution to manage at home. Please see the attached family attendance roster should you want to send your children back to school.

Technology

A large quantity of School laptops have been borrowed by families. If your child attends School on their rostered day, they must bring their charged school laptop with them to use at School. The quality of the internet connection in Kurrajong during the pandemic has been problematic, necessitating some staff to work from home to gain adequate internet service to deliver online learning. This is also restrictive to the number of students we can have on site learning in an online capacity. We are hopeful that the NBN will change this later in the year (around June/July) if we are still learning in this way. Thus as the rostered days unfold, we will evaluate the level the system can cope with.

At this point I would also like to draw your attention to a pitfall for students working online. It is imperative that you visibly supervise their activity online. Students are very good at covering up their tracks and screens when adults come by. This is part of the known sinful nature of humanity. Students can waste much time watching YouTube, chatting online and watching other non-educational, unsavoury material. As parents we must give time to curtailing this from wasting valuable learning time at home. Handwriting is still an important skill, so encouraging students to hand write their work is essential some of the time. The HSC is still a handwritten test that requires continuous writing for up to 3 hours.

Some have asked the question: Why are we not utilising more Google Meetups or Zoom meetings with students? A significant reason is the varied quality of the internet in homes in the Hawkesbury. After some trials, we decided that too many would miss out and that variances in quality would bring distraction that would render the initiative futile. A greater emphasis has been on the use of video whereby students can download the video at their existing speed and watch at their leisure.

Sickness

If your child or you are sick please stay at home. We do not want to compromise the health of our community. If a child becomes sick at School they will be sent home immediately. The same will apply to Staff. Please be vigilant in monitoring this with your family and don't place the greater community at risk.

Principal's Instagram

A new initiative that is available to connect with the community in a more casual reflective way. If you are interested, follow **principal_kuyper** on Instagram for weekly musings on School life at Kuyper.

In conclusion

Be assured that advice from authorities will remain ongoing, with the Kuyper team placing health and safety at the forefront of decision-making. Having said this, we know that our God is bigger than this virus and we don't want to raise the importance of the virus above other more significant truths of life. We are under God's sovereign rule and loving hand, and we should not forget other calls on our lives to be the hands and feet of Jesus to people in need at this time.

I want to end by acknowledging the effort of our teachers and staff for this term. Their resilience, creativity and initiative in accommodating change, delivering engaging lessons and providing continuity of learning for students of all years, across new channels, has been extraordinary. I also would like to thank families who have spent time with their children to engage with the learning at home.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'I. Shaw', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ian Shaw
Principal