



Principal's Update

6 April 2020

Our mission - building a caring and safe learning environment where great teaching supports and inspires all students to grow, develop and succeed.

School Attendance and COVID-19

The NSW Premier announced that parents and carers are strongly encouraged to keep their children home if possible. Any student whose parents or carers are not able to appropriately supervise their children at home should continue to attend school.

Also, it may be appropriate that children and young people with additional vulnerabilities continue to attend school.

All students whose parents keep them at home will be marked absent Flexible – which means that the absence from school will not affect their attendance rate. There is also no need to explain students' absences when they are marked as Flexible.

The current arrangements will remain in place until the end of Term 1. A decision about whether schools return to normal operations after the holidays will be taken in line with the latest advice from Government.

Additional advice for families can be accessed through the school's website or directly on <https://education.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/advice-for-families#School1>

Student and Parent Portal

I wrote to all families last week as a reminder to register for the Student and Parent Portal. Having access to the Portal will allow parents to monitor student attendance, access documents such as permission notes, book parent /teacher interviews, see their children's reports, explain absences, and see the number of positive teacher referrals.

Parents can call the school on 4579 6800 to notify us if they have not received the letter with their unique access key. The letter will then be re-posted or emailed to a verified email address.

Instructions on how to register can also be found on the school's website at <https://hawkesbury-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/parent-portal.html>

Once parents have their access key, they can register for the Portal by following this link:

<https://hawkesburyhs.sentral.com.au/portal/register>

Learning from Home

Arrangements have been put in place for students to continue with their learning from home.

While attending school also plays an important role in every child's social and personal development, the temporary measures introduced for online learning are there to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and to keep the community safe.

The school has introduced BYOD from the beginning of this year, which means that many students have their own devices which can be used to access online learning materials made available by their teachers. In addition, all classes are now set up for online learning through Google Classroom. As a school we are fortunate that all staff have received training on how to use Google Classroom as part of the school's transition to BYOD, and many students were already using it well before the move to online learning from home.

However, some key challenges remain, particularly around engagement with online work, time management, communication and – for some families – access to appropriate technology and the internet. We continue working on supporting our students, teachers and families to make the most of current circumstances. This includes making loan laptops available to students who do not have access to a device at home. The school is also exploring avenues to engage in face to face contact between students and their teachers via video conferencing from next term should current arrangements continue.

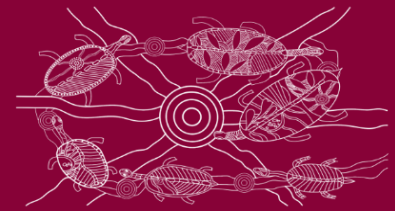
In the meantime, all schoolwork will be delivered to students online. Work will only be mailed home in exceptional circumstances, which include reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and families with no internet access.





Hawkesbury High School

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Assessment and Reporting

I have received a number of enquiries from parents about what assessment and Half-Yearly Reports will look like at the end of Semester 1. This is a good question, although I will emphasise that learning is still continuing, even if schools are delivering the curriculum in a different way. Students are submitting work, and teachers are still collecting evidence of student learning. This evidence will be used to determine students' achievement against a pre-determined standard aligned to achievement descriptors, A-E. Teachers will use evidence of student online learning to make a judgement on where they fit on this continuum of learning, whether a student has provided sufficient evidence to receive an A, B, C, D or E on their school report. This is a much better way of assessing students (formative assessment), as it allows students to demonstrate what they know through a range of activities over time rather than rely on a small number of high stakes tests or exams and marks from those exams (summative assessment).

Parents have also asked the very good question about knowing how their child compares to others in the same year group, or class. While summative assessment (exams and tests) makes it easier to quantify student achievement with a number or rank, summative tasks only compare a student to their group and does not tell parents about how students are doing overall, particularly when compared to a pre-determined, state-wide standard. To give parents additional information about their children's progress, the school will include in Semester 1 reports the percentage of students in a class or year group who have achieved each grade. For example, if your child has received an A, and only 10% of the class have received that grade, you can be confident that your child is achieving at the top of the class AND is in the top of the State in that subject.

In this example, parents can see both the distribution of grades in the class, where their child sits in relation to other students AND in relation to the state-wide standard.

A	B	C	D	E
10%	20%	45%	20%	5%

The 2020 HSC and COVID-19

The 2020 HSC is going ahead. However, everyone is mindful of the stresses and anxieties the current circumstances pose for our Year 12 students (and Year 11 students). The school has already made adjustments in relation to current assessment tasks, with all tasks due between 24 March and 9 April being placed on hold. Further adjustments will be made, pending decisions on normal school operations in Term 2.

For more detail on current adjustments, including advice in relation to practical subjects, VET and major works, please visit <https://hawkesbury-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/news/2020/3/hsc-2020---advice-to-students-and-parents.html>

As the current situation develops, I can reassure all students and parents that no student studying for the HSC will be disadvantaged. However, I urge all Year 12 and Year 11 students to continue with their studies, including working on their major works and projects where that is possible. The main purpose of studying is learning, and as long as learning continues students will achieve the desired outcomes. In the meantime, NESA and the school will continue providing advice on additional adjustments and supports for students studying for the HSC.

Student and Parent Wellbeing

The school has created an Online Wellbeing Hub for students which is accessible through Google Classroom. Resources and links in the hub will be updated regularly, so I encourage students to log in via the code emailed to them by their year advisors.

Also, I would like to emphasise that parents are in the best position to decide what is best for their child, including balancing family pressures and their children's wellbeing with the demands of online learning. We shouldn't lose sight of the main purpose of online learning – to keep our children and our community safe. This includes everyone's mental health too.

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Current advice on COVID-19 is available on the school's website and on the Department's website on <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/school-safety/novel-coronavirus>. NSW Health have processes in place to identify any close contacts with confirmed cases. NSW Health and the Department of Education are in constant and close communication, as is the school. In the meantime, I ask everyone to monitor their own health, seek medical advice if they feel unwell and maintain good hygiene practices – as we would in any case. If you or your child develop flu-like symptoms you should seek medical advice, and if any case of COVID19 is confirmed in your family, please advise the school promptly.

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