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COVID-19 update 17 March 2020

Dear MPC Students, Parents and VET Coordinators,

The staff of Mount Pleasant College (MPC) continue to monitor the developing situation with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At all times MPC is cognizant of its responsibility to develop and employ strategies that are consistent with the recommendations and requirements of the appointed health authorities and the Federal and State Governments.

It is our desire to keep you informed about the measures being taken to assist all of our stakeholders as we try to do what we can to manage the impact of the coronavirus and restrict its spread.

Please excuse the long email however it does contain important information that will enable everyone connected with MPC to be informed about our response to:

- Isolation requirements,
- Exclusion of Staff and Students with COVID-19 symptoms,
- Hygiene and Health Safety practices,
- Planning for Possible School/College Closure,
- Student wellbeing.

Isolation requirements

The Australian Government has recently introduced a mandatory 14-day self-isolation period for all persons entering Australia from overseas and for those who have come into close personal contact with someone who has tested positive to COVID-19.

If staff members or students have recently returned from overseas or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive to COVID-19, they are required to advise MPC that they will be absent from classes during the 14-day self-isolation period.

Exclusion of Staff and Students with COVID-19 symptoms

Staff members and students who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are to notify the College and thereby excuse themselves from attending MPC until either they are cleared by medical test or have completed the 14-day self-isolation period.

In the event that a staff member or a student develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while attending classes at MPC, they are to report the situation immediately to College Reception. If the person demonstrating symptoms is a staff member, that person will be instructed to leave MPC immediately and attend a medical practice for the purpose of being tested for the virus. If the person is a student, they will be isolated from other students while a College staff person contacts the parents and school to make arrangements for the student to be collected from MPC. If the staff member or student tests positive for COVID-19, they will be required to notify the College and self-isolate for 14-days.



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Hygiene and Health Safety Practices

MPC has implemented a range of Hygiene and Health Safety practices to ensure that as far as possible our staff and students are not exposed to the transmission of diseases while attending our College.

Over the past few weeks, our trainers and assessors have been encouraging the students to develop increased awareness of the importance of maintaining good hygiene in the classrooms and with the equipment/instruments that are being used. To emphasise the importance of this habit, the College has introduced some new measures to keep the focus upon hygiene at the forefront of every person's thinking and behaviour. Those new measures include the provision of hands-free opening equipment for bathroom doors, the supply of hand sanitiser at strategic points around the College facilities, and a daily cleaning schedule for computer keyboards and equipment.

In addition, the organisation of the teaching schedule for media classes will be adjusted in order to ensure students will be using only one computer terminal during the day. Previously students changed computer labs for different units. However, as from the beginning of this week [from Mon, 16 Mar 2020], the trainers will change labs which will allow students to remain with the one terminal for the whole day. At the end of each day's teaching, the trainers will thoroughly clean each keyboard, mouse, and all bench surfaces with alcohol-based cleaning fluid so that the students attending the following day may be assured of a clean work environment.

Planning for Possible School/College Closure

It is important to note that although MPC is not a school, approx. 90% of our students are of school-age and come to us on a one or two-day-per-week basis from sending schools and as private students. That means the teaching schedule and the timetable structure at MPC follows very closely the cycle of the school year.

Therefore, in the event that the Western Australian Government moves to close schools in this state, MPC will observe those same restrictions and require that all of our students (including those who are not of school age) do not attend our premises during the period of school closure. Parents, students and schools however should be assured that our staff and trainers will continue to work during that period of closure to deliver training to our students in an off-site and on-line mode.

The continued delivery of learning and assessment materials to our students, of course, is a very high priority. From the beginning of this year, MPC has moved across to a system of on-line submission for most items of assessment. We are confident that all current students have access to our teaching and learning materials via an on-line Learning Management System, Moodle. In each of our classes during this coming week [ie, week beginning Monday, 16 March 2020], our trainers and assessors will be ensuring that all students do indeed have access to those learning materials and are familiar with the processes involved for completing and submitting work while in an off-site situation.



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In addition, our staff are continuing to develop a number of options for the implementation of live-streaming and video-based training for students to access via the internet in the event that Governments commence school closures.

Student Wellbeing

The staff at MPC are aware that the increased media attention to the danger posed by the Coronavirus and the impact that this is having within our society may lead some students [and some parents] to experience heightened levels of anxiety.

We do not want to find ourselves making hasty decisions based upon an attitude of fear; rather it is our intention to do everything within our power to maintain MPC as a calm place of learning where students continue to exercise and develop their creative abilities while gaining valuable skills and knowledge in their chosen field. To that end, all staff at MPC are committed to providing the best personal care for each of our students, their parents and the Education Assistants who are in attendance each week.

We will continue to provide all of the usual opportunities for students to make requests for reasonable adjustments to specific assessment items and/or to obtain an extension of time to submit an assessment where the circumstances warrant such action. Our desire is to see all students succeed in their chosen course of study and we value the input of parents and school staff members in that process.

We will also make certain that staff are available to answer all of the enquiries that come from parents, EAs, and from school VET co-ordinators.

Finally, I simply must state the obvious: this word will not be the last word!

It is abundantly clear that the situation with which we are faced currently is unprecedented and, therefore, it is inevitable that more changes to the way that we do things at MPC will need to be made in the near future. Communication of updated information for our students, parents, EAs and schools will be provided as it is demanded by the changing circumstances.

I trust that this note is informative and will help address some of your concerns.

Warm regards,

Mick Stringer
Head of College