What an interesting week it has been for all of us. As predicted, we have had some fantastic successes and some hiccups as we all learn what remote learning can and cannot be. As we progress, I will be encouraging staff to discuss what the realistic expectations are for each lesson, finding the right balance between maintaining a rigorous program and looking after everyone’s wellbeing.

Due to current circumstances, we will be foregoing our usual newsletter and instead I will publish a statement, sharing recent news from both DET and our school community. I would like to start by again welcoming our new staff. What an amazing way to start a new job! To their credit Safari Kaberuka (Mental Health Practitioner), Margaret Borg (VCD/Art) and Alicia Hillman (English) have taken the challenges presented to them in their stride.

I would also like to thank those who have taken the time to send emails of thanks and sharing positive experiences. Each morning we have a staff briefing and I make a point of sharing one of these each day with the staff. They appreciate the feedback and the acknowledgement of their hard work. Keep them coming!

There has been very little formal communication from DET this week. We are anticipating an announcement next week as to how VCE/VET will continue for the remainder of the year and in particular a more concrete timeline for end of year exams and expectations for SACs. It may be that students studying units ¾ may have to attend in small groups to complete some of their practical/laboratory style SACs. We will communicate this information as soon as it becomes available.

Logging in to Edupass has been the biggest issue in the past week. Students have been issued login details but some have misplaced this information. It is essential that this log in be used, as it enables access to Microsoft Teams, WebEx etc. This login is different to our students’ DVC login details for COMPASS or DVC email. Thank you to Leon Kolbe and Richard Fox who have dealt with hundreds of enquiries over the past weeks. To assist Leon, Richard and our students we have extended the number of people permitted to reset Edupass passwords to include myself, Justin and the General Office team. Please do not send a request to all of us, it will not work if we all reset your password, it will instead cause greater confusion and frustration. As a first point of call contact the General Office, they will assist and then seek the support of Leon if the support you require is more technical.

Can you discuss with your child/ren the importance of online etiquette? Yes, it has been exciting to be in touch with friends and classmates but now we need to settle in to the routines of teaching and learning. The chat facility in Microsoft Teams needs to be kept free so that teachers can see the questions coming from those that need help. As I have said all along, we are all learning and we will constantly fine tune and resolve issues as they arise.

(Continued over page)
On a similar note, can I ask that parents be mindful that if they email staff out of hours they may not get a response until the next workday? I am encouraging staff to limit their screen time out of school hours and really look after their own health and wellbeing. This means they need to take a break from emails.

A question has been raised about immunisations that are usually delivered by Banyule Council onsite at the College. I am waiting for final confirmation but it is likely that they will adjust the timing of the schedule to account for current circumstances. They are committed to ensuring the schedule of immunisation is maintained as it is deemed an essential service. Keep in mind that your local GP can give vaccinations or alternatively you can take your child to one of the clinics run by Banyule Council. They can be contacted at immunisation@banyule.vic.gov.au.

There are many resources available to you as a support in these difficult times and I encourage you to contact us if we can be of any help. We have nearly exhausted our supply of netbooks but there are one or two still available for loan and we are waiting for advice from DET regarding support with internet access.

A guide to help parents and carers talk to their child about coronavirus (COVID-19) that includes tips on how to have a safe conversation and links to resources to help parents and carers is available on the DET website.

Attached to this is a communication from Jenny Atta Secretary for DET, which was issued earlier this week. We have been asked to forward it to all families.

Please take care, stay safe and continue to be patient with us.

Allison Bennett
Principal
Dear parents and carers

The Victorian Government has advised new arrangements for school education for Term 2, 2020. All children who can learn from home must learn from home.

This course of action has been determined to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), based on the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer.

Our schools have been re-orientated to support learning from home. Principals and teachers have put in place plans to provide a learning from home program for all year levels. This includes provision by the Department of Education and Training through your school of laptops or tablets and network access, if required.

In order to protect the health and safety of your children, your family, your teachers and the whole community, it is important that you follow the Victorian Government’s direction and keep your child learning at home this term.

On-site school attendance is available as a last resort where parents and carers are not able to put in place arrangements to supervise children at home. Your school will have provided you with further information about this.

Information for parents and carers to support you supervise your children at home can be found here: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your own circumstances, please talk to your school or phone the Department of Education and Training parents’ and carers’ hotline on 1800 338 663.

Thank you for your cooperation and your support for our teachers, schools and community.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Atta
Secretary