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Tuesday, November 24, 2020

Dear Families,

I hope you are going ok as we are approaching the end of our quarantine (not that any of us are counting). I am pleased that our teachers and leaders have continued to connect with our students throughout these two weeks. During this time, our Executive Team has also been meeting (virtually) almost daily to discuss and update the current situation as it stands, and to also look at planning for what Week 8 will look like when our Year 7-9 students return for the last week of school. We are really looking forward to reconnecting as a community.

Planning for next week is naturally presenting some challenges for us. We are working with competing demands of not being on site yet, anticipating possibly changing restrictions next week, and are continuously aware of the health requirements about school activities. In addition, I am mindful that I don't want our school to feel any sense of blame of negative effects of having experienced a confirmed COVID case.

It's worth noting that our COVID-safe precautions two weeks ago did what they were supposed to do. Specifically, no other person has tested positive as a result of a presence at TMC. We had a morning cleaning, split school gatherings and appropriate separation of groups at these gatherings. As a reaction to the emerging Parafield Cluster at the time, SA Health made the call to quarantine the whole school and I understand that no other specific COVID-safe actions would have prevented this. Importantly, our planning and actions prevented the spread of the virus. None of what followed was our Community's fault nor should our students and staff need to feel guilty. I also wanted to thank you for your many supportive messages for the school during this time.

The Executive and respective Leadership Teams are taking all of these elements into consideration as we plan for this return. I will use a final communication on Thursday or Friday this week to present the plan for a Week 8 return. Today I wish to provide some updates which will help us make this transition into next week. I have been in further discussions with Doctors from SA Health and the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) this week, and they have confirmed the following details:

- **Testing**- every person currently in quarantine (staff, students and their household families) **must** get tested this week; the recently diagnosed positive case from the Parafield Cluster after two negative tests remind us of the importance of this. Both Organisations have heard our concerns about last week's delays in testing for our TMC community. To hopefully ease congestion, the Doctors have said that SA Health will SMS everyone at the school on Wednesday providing to the option to be tested on Thursday at the new Smithfield or Parafield testing centres and that test results should then be back by the Friday (please note this advice comes from SA Health). SA Health have said letting the Centres know you are from TMC may even further speed up this process. You may still choose to get tested on the Wednesday if you wish. These are the options that are available and you may choose as to what works best for you and your family.
- **Quarantine** – as per updated advice which is also currently available on the [Government website for the Parafield Cluster](#), quarantine ends as follows:
 - *If students were last onsite on the Thursday 12th, then they and families are to remain in quarantine until 11.59pm Thursday 26th.*
 - *If students were onsite on the Friday 13th, then you are to remain in quarantine until 11.59pm Friday 27th.*
- **Release from Quarantine**- can only occur once there has been conformation of negative results from this second test. This may influence when you and your families choose to get tested.



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I again thank you for your patience and support during this time. In closing, I will include what I posted this week to some of my social media networks which I think sums up our Community response over the last few weeks:

“As College Principal I have a great deal of *TMCPride* for the Thomas More College, Salisbury Downs community after a big week. We are a strong and compassionate community and have looked out and cared for each other immensely. Our theme this year has been *Connected Learning* in whichever way connection finds us; connection is so important to us as it is common to our Wellbeing Values and Learner Behaviours. Our promise is that we will stay connected to each other and to our students, and continue to connect them to learning.”

I will touch base again on Thursday or Friday.

Thanks, take care,



Corey Tavella
Principal