



Monday April 20 2020

TO ALL PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN QUEENSLAND

During this time of COVID-19, I write to you to seek your support for your Catholic Schools and to acknowledge the ongoing support that they will provide to your child and to your family.

These are new experiences for everyone – students, families, principals, teachers and other school staff. We are all learning together how to manage this crisis and so I ask you to be patient and to just do the best you can for your child/children who may be learning from home for at least the next five weeks. We also thank those essential workers who are out there in the front line helping to ensure we are all safe and also supporting those who may have lost their jobs through the impacts of COVID-19.

This is not a time to panic – your child’s education will be ok. Catholic Education Diocesan Offices and other Catholic Education authorities, along with schools are working hard to ensure that your child can continue to learn from home in multiple ways which suit differing family circumstances. They will provide you with learning materials which are appropriate to your circumstances at home. This may be online for many but also may be paper based for those who do not have the connectivity or facilities at home to be online. Make sure you contact your school if you have any problems at all with managing learning at home. They are there to help you I can assure you of that. Everyone is learning what to do and how to do it at the same time and so if there are some hiccups then be assured that your school will work through this with you. You do not have to be the teacher – they already have one of those – but be a guiding hand at keeping them on track. Also please remember that if your young person is online then this is like a normal classroom so please follow protocols sent from your school and set them up as suggested if possible. We know that it will be different for each family. Also this is not the time for you to be talking with the teacher or interrupting them as they will have many students on line. Contact them later if you have any questions or issues.

This is a wonderful time to engage with your child’s learning and to be even more aware of their wellbeing. We talk about Parent Engagement all the time but this is truly living it. There are many activities you can do at home during this time that will enhance their awareness of the connection between what they are doing in school and how it lives out in real life. Take this opportunity with both hands and enjoy it as you will be a lot more aware of what they are learning at school and their capability in learning areas (and may have a new appreciation for teachers). – You can also have them help more around the house doing simple things e.g. helping prepare meals through measurement, size shape etc, folding washing, picking up after themselves, keeping their workspace tidy etc. as well as reading and playing games together both inside and outside. There are many activities on line that you can download and do with them or they can do by



themselves if they are older. Keep watching our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pandfqlld/>) for ideas and activities.

One more thing – it is about school fees. I am sure by now that many of you have received information about school fees for Term 2. Catholic Education across Queensland has said that no child will be denied a place at their school because of the financial implications of COVID-19. Those families that need a discount for this period of time in order for their child to be able to continue their learning with their school will be allowed to do so through applying for fee discounts. Please do this so that schools know what is happening with every family and payment. I also ask that those who are in employment with no disruptions because of this crisis continue to pay their full school fees so our schools can manage to pay staff who are working to keep your child able to learn whether at home or at school. Be assured that staff are working harder than every during this time. This full payment is very important otherwise many of our schools may struggle financially which may have implications when children return to school. After all, Catholic Schools are about working together for the good of all who are in our community. So please support by paying your school fees if you can.

There is so much advice around about what and how you should do at home with home learning that I am not going to repeat it here. Too much advice can be a bad thing. Please read whatever you are sent by your school and follow it as closely as you can but if you cannot do everything do not worry. Try to have a routine and follow it but remember just be a parent and that all of this is not worth a fractured relationship with your child over differing opinions about how things are done now and how they were when you were at school. You are all learning together.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Best wishes for the next five weeks.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmel Nash".

Carmel Nash
Executive Director