



20 March 2020

Dear Parents, Caregivers, Whānau

Today I received a communication from Iona Holstead, Secretary for Education advising what would happen if we were to experience having a case in the Sancta Maria College school community.

- As soon as a case is confirmed in our immediate school community (e.g. a student, staff member, or member of their household), the Medical Officer of Health and Ministry of Education will inform me about this, and we will work together to get a quick and clear message out to you.
- If there was a case confirmed of someone in our school, we will likely be asked to close temporarily by the Medical Officer of Health. This will allow time for close contacts to be traced, appropriate testing to be undertaken, and a careful clean of the school to be undertaken.
- If our school does need to close temporarily, we have a plan in place to support students' learning which I mentioned in my previous communication to you.

We know COVID-19 is an anxious time for many and of course people are concerned for the wellbeing of their children. Please be assured that with no case confirmed at Sancta Maria College. Students should continue to attend school so their learning is not being compromised. Our school is safe and your children are safe here. If the situation changes, you will be advised.

Again, good hygiene is a priority at our school, and we are reinforcing this regularly with all students and staff. We know that practicing good hygiene is still the best thing we can all do to prevent illness.

We are getting the most up-to-date advice and guidance so that we can confidently make informed decisions about the safety and wellbeing of our school community.

Bishop Patrick Dunn has advised today that the **NZ Catholic Bishops Conference have agreed to suspend all Masses including Sunday Mass until further notice. He formally gives you dispensation from the obligation to participate at Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation (cc 87 #1, 1247).**

Although Mass will not be available on Sunday in this time people are encouraged to celebrate Sunday as domestic Church. Gathering to pray in small groups, particularly whanau groups. This might include reading and pondering the Scriptures for Sunday, giving thanks for all that we are blessed with, praying for the needs of individuals, families, New Zealand and the world. You will also be able to pray Sunday Mass individually or in small groups through the Diocesan website [www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/](http://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/) where Sunday Mass will be available on the front page of the website from 6.00 pm each Saturday. A number of resources are being prepared by the Diocese to support you in the journey of faith in these times. Check the Diocesan website regularly.

There are many pastoral implications to this difficult decision. I and others from the Diocese will regularly communicate with priests, parish leaders and principals, the People of God of the Auckland Diocese. Let us hold each other, our world, and all people in prayer as we look out for each other and our neighbours mindful of the love that God showers on us.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. J. Moore".

**Louise Moore**  
**Principal**