

5 October 2020

Certainty for all students and families welcomed

Catholic Education Melbourne has welcomed today's announcement by Education Minister James Merlino that Year 7 students in Melbourne can now safely return to school from next week, followed by Years 8–10 on 26 October.

Executive Director Jim Miles says the clear timeline for the return of all students to onsite learning provides much-needed certainty for families and will deliver significant benefits for students.

'Our survey of remote learning told us that many students have struggled with not being able to engage with their teachers as they normally would, and have greatly missed the social interaction with friends and classmates.

'Schools have also reported that the prolonged absence has understandably impacted the morale and wellbeing of both students and parents.

'The planned return of all students over coming weeks now allows them to look forward with excitement to reuniting with friends and teachers.

'Our teachers have been doing a tremendous job maintaining learning continuity and caring for the wellbeing of their students in the remote setting. They are also looking forward to schools returning to being vibrant and flourishing Catholic learning communities.'

Mr Miles said Catholic schools will continue to operate within the recommended safety guidelines, including around social distancing, hygiene practices and restricted access to school sites.

'We cannot afford to be complacent. It is vital we all play our part in minimising the risks of COVID-19 outbreaks causing further disruption to school operations', he said.

As planned, Years 11 and 12 return to school this week for essential assessments and the General Achievement Test (GAT) on Wednesday, ahead of a full return to onsite classes next week. Prep to Year 6 students also return to onsite learning from next week.

More than 20% of all students attend Catholic schools across Melbourne.

Media contact: Gerard Delaney on 0413 274 176 or gdelaney@cem.edu.au