



The Cottage School Inc.

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

The Cottage School to close physical campus due to COVID-19

Key Points:

- The Cottage School is a small community school in Bellerive catering to children Pre-Kinder to Grade Six
- The Cottage School will be closing its campus effective Thursday 26 March, 2020 in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- This decision has been made with the safety of children, parents and staff in mind as well as our responsibility to the wider community.
- Children will be provided individual learning packages, supported by staff through phone, email and video conferencing while learning at home.
- A formal online program will commence in Term Two if necessary.
- The Cottage School will negotiate alternative arrangements for families where parents are in the health or essential services sectors, or those with extenuating circumstances.
- This decision will be reviewed regularly.
- There have been no identified cases of COVID-19 at The Cottage School, nor any close contact that we are aware of.

As the global Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation develops, The Cottage School are continuing to support and place the health and wellbeing of our students, families, staff and our community at the forefront of everything we do. We take our responsibilities as global citizens seriously. We also understand and are committed to our school vision: *To be a leading independent school pioneering a curriculum that improves social fabrics by building resourceful, resilient and compassionate leaders.*

With the current COVID-19 situation in Tasmania and everything that we have learned about the importance of 'flattening the infection curve' we believe we should act decisively as a school to minimize the spread of the disease in our school and the wider community. While we are doing as much as possible to implement current health guidelines around the spread of this disease it is proving increasingly difficult to implement as effectively as we think necessary. Children simply don't do social distancing well!

Increasing numbers of students are being quarantined at home by their parents. 36% of our students were absent yesterday. As a small school we do not have the capacity to support those absent students at home as well as teach those attending school.

In this context The Cottage School held an extraordinary meeting (via Zoom) of the school's governing body ('Committee') on Thursday evening and made the following decision: *That The*

Cottage School closes the campus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic from and including Thursday 26th March, 2020 until further notice. The School will make every effort to negotiate alternative arrangements with parents employed within the health care and essential services sectors, and with those experiencing extenuating circumstances. Current learning programs will continue until the end of Term One, supported through email, phone and video conferencing. A fully online education program will commence from the beginning of Term Two if required. Committee will review this situation regularly and as required. This was a unanimous decision.

The Cottage School will remain open for in-class teaching and learning until the end of the school day on Wednesday 25th March. Between now and then, teachers will be preparing students for ways they can continue their learning from home. They will also be preparing learning packages and resources for students to take home with them. We will be installing the necessary software onto student laptops and iPads to enable students to use this technology to stay connected in various ways to their teacher, teacher assistants and classmates. We will teach them how to use these learning platforms.

We understand the challenge this decision may cause for some. We have confidence in the resilience of our school community and the support we will provide for one another. We will be providing individual learning support to each of our students while they learn at home in the most effective way possible for that child. We will also be distributing information to parents about how to make this extra time with children as valuable as possible from a learning perspective.

**For more information contact:
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