



# ELDERSLIE HIGH SCHOOL

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## COVID-19 UPDATE - Phase 1 Return to School

Dear Parents and Carers,

### Phase 1 Return to School

Last week, I wrote to our school community to inform you that the NSW Government has made the decision to return students to school for one day per week from Monday, May 11 (Week 3). Since that time, the Senior Executive of Elderslie High School has been working hard to devise a suitable model for our context.

The Premier has encouraged all schools to try, wherever possible to be as family friendly as we can so that children from the one family can largely attend on the same day. Elderslie High School has therefore devised a model that delivers this. We know that this will support those of you who are choosing at present to drop your children off and pick them up, rather than use the normal buses.

Our model works on the basic premise that all students from Years 7-11 will be organised into alphabetical groups that are vertical in nature. There will be up to 15 students in each group that will be comprised of mixed year groups (Years 7-11). Surnames A-B will be able to attend on Monday, surnames C-H on Tuesday, I-Q on Thursdays and finally, R-Z on Fridays. The Support Unit will welcome its students back on Mondays as well.

Year 12 will be catered for differently. All Year 12 students will be able to attend on Mondays. On this day, they will mostly be able to see their normal teachers although we will still be required to implement maximum class groupings of 15 students to support social distancing. On Mondays, our Year 12 students will have 6 shortened lessons rather than the usual 4. The advantage of such a system is that it allows Year 12 students to touch base with all their teachers in the one day so that they can check their progress, submit work, receive feedback and ask questions. In addition to the Monday arrangements, we have organised that Wednesdays will also be available for Year 12 students who undertake practical subjects, extension subjects and off-line courses. Our decision to provide a second day of learning for Year 12 students means that we are exceeding the Premier's request to provide all students with one day at school in Phase 1. We are very happy to do this as it promotes access of students to specialist facilities such as in Textiles & Design, Visual Arts, Design & Technology, Industrial Technology and many more subjects, especially where there are major works for the HSC.

An overview of how the model will look is as follows:

YEAR 7 TO 11				
	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
GROUPS	A – B	C – H	I – Q	R – Z
9:00 – 9:25	Roll Call/Wellbeing Activity/Laptop Setup			
9:25 – 10:40	Session 1			
10:40 – 11:00	Recess			
11:00 – 12:15	Session 2			
12:15 – 12:50	Lunch			
12:50 – 2:00	Session 3			
2:00 – 2:15	Recess			
2:15 – 3:25	Session 4			

YEAR 12 – Monday		
9:00 – 9:25	Roll Call/Wellbeing Activity/Laptop Setup	
9:25 – 10:15	Line 1	English Adv, English Std, English Studies
10:15 – 11:05	Line 2	Ancient History, Exploring Early Childhood, Mathematics Adv, Mathematics Std
11:05 – 11:35	Recess	
11:35 – 12:25	Line 3	Biology, Geography, Mathematics Std, Textiles and Design
12:25 – 1:15	Line 4	Business Services, Chemistry, Industrial Technology Timber, Modern History, PDHPE
1:15 – 1:45	Lunch	
1: 45 – 2:35	Line 5	Food Technology, Hospitality F&B, Legal Studies, Physics, Society and Culture, Visual Arts, Work Studies
2:35 – 3:25	Line 6	Agriculture, Ancient History, Business Studies, Community and Family Studies, Engineering Studies, Music, Sports Coaching

#### How does my child know which room to report to on their first day back?

All parents will receive an email by Thursday, April 30 outlining the details of their child's day of attendance, the group to which they have been allocated and the room they will need to report to. On each morning within the first week, school staff will also circulate in the playground to provide support to our student so that they know where to go.

#### One unit of work

All parents should be advised that the work being completed when students attend school will still be in the one mode of delivery. This is the concept that the Department of Education refer to as "one unit of work". What this means is that whether your child is learning from home or learning on site, they will be learning the same content and in the same manner, which is largely online.

#### Can my child come to school on other days?

The school continues to be open from Monday to Friday for the children of essential workers, just as it has been all along. If you are not an essential worker and you would like to send your child to school on other days, you are able to do this however in accordance with the advice of the NSW Government and the Department of Education, we strongly encourage you to have your child continue with the **Learning from Home** work (remote learning) on other days. Your support in doing this does make a difference in maintaining a healthy community. We are very grateful to all our families for your flexibility and the arrangements you have put into place to make this happen.

#### What about blended families?

Should you have children within your household with different surnames, you are very welcome to approach us to organise to have all your children at school on the same day. This will make it easier for parents to drop off and pick up their children.

#### Social Distancing

As you know, there has been a lot spoken about social distancing in recent times in all corners of our society. Class grouping in the new Phase 1 model will follow the Department guidelines of no more than 15 students in each room and when they are this size, we have chosen the largest classrooms in our school to maximise the distances between students' desks.

In the playground, we will encourage social distancing however to promote this as best we can, there will be no ball games such as basketball, football and soccer played in breaks. While we all agree that physical activity and exercise is to be encouraged during the pandemic, we all know that students playing these games do breach social distancing regulations and so, with the encouragement of the Department of Education in mind, we have prohibited these games for the time being. We will be able to lift this ban as we progress through the various phases of the return to school plan.

### Why is our model different from some other schools?

All school communities are different and we would not want a one-size-fits-all approach across all the 2200 public schools in NSW. For examples, some schools are near a train station which may be why they are doing several shorter days for their Year 12 students within the week whereas Elderslie High School is not located near a station. Also, we are part of the Macarthur Trade Training Centre which means that I will be liaising more and more with other local school as we move from Phase 1 of the model into the next phases.

### Technology Access

On the day your child attends school, we strongly encourage them to bring their own laptop or device if they have one. All work being set for completion on the one day that students attend will be online and therefore they will need these devices. Should they be doing this, they will need to ensure they have registered their device with the school to ensure they can access the wifi. Our BYOD documentation is located on the school website.

Additionally, the school has quite a number of pool laptops available for use however when we step up into Phase 2, there will be inadequate devices for each child to use unless they bring their own. Students who have been issued with a loan laptop are also expected to bring it on the day they attend.

### Headphones

We ask all students to bring a set a head phones on each day that they attend so that they are able to listen to video recordings, You Tube clips and digital lessons that have been set for them. This will be especially important because of the vertical nature of the class groupings in Phase 1 where there will be students in the one room from so many different year groups.

### Phase 2

At this stage, Phase 1 of the model should run between Weeks 3 and 6 (4 weeks) before we step up to Phase 2 in which students will be able to attend for 2 days per week. Having said that, it is always possible that the NSW Government will announce adjustments in line with health recommendations and if this happens, we will of course, respond accordingly.

### Buses

Normal buses will continue to run every day. Please note that while we will encourage students to socially distance when students are waiting for and boarding buses, we cannot ensure this takes place once buses leave the school. I understand that public transport is also largely exempt from social distancing regulations and school bus transport is included in this.

### Uniform Shop & Canteen

We have received advice from Daylight Sportswear, the company who run our uniform shop to indicate that from Week 3, they will reopen for limited hours as follows:

Mondays – 8am -11am

Thursdays – 3.30pm -5.30pm

We do encourage online ordering however as this is the best way to continue socially distancing. Orders can then be collected at the above opening times. Daylight Sportswear will also adhere to all social distancing regulations for parents who are waiting at the shop and for anyone wishing to try on items.

I do not yet have any further update for parents to indicate whether the canteen will be reopening from Week 3 however I have made plans to meet with the Canteen Manager and I will provide further advice once this meeting has occurred.

### What if I don't want my child to attend?

If parents have any concerns about returning their children to school from Week 3, they are asked to make contact with the Principal or Deputy Principals.

### What happens in the lead up to Week 3?

Until the new model is launched in Week 3, our current system will continue in which all students who can complete their learning from home, are encouraged to do so. Students should continue to access the work being set by their teachers in Google Classroom and use any other mechanisms established by their teachers. If your child is

experiencing any difficulties at all, we strongly encourage you to talk to us via email or telephone so that we can support you and your child.

### NESA Updates

The school provided updates late last week when NESA released advice about Year 12 Major Works for the HSC. Effectively, students who study Textiles & Design, Visual Arts, Design & Technology, Industrial Technology have been given two extra weeks to complete their works and instead of them being externally assessed by NESA, they will now be assessed by school staff. Portfolios and Visual Arts Process Diaries will still be assessed externally. There were no further changes announced to the assessment of Extension 2 English Major Works or for the Society and Culture Personal Interest Projects.

### Further Cancellations

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the annual ski trip has been cancelled this year.

### Completion of work

We are so proud of the vast majority of our students who are engaged in the Learning from Home Platform that we have provided. Our staff provide regular feedback on this learning and have been very pleased with the efforts of a great many of our students. At the end of last term, we did receive feedback from some students and families to indicate that the volume of work was too great. We have provided this advice to our teaching staff and we have requested that they release to all classes a "Weekly Overview" that provides a summary of work due that week for each class. This will help our students to organise themselves and manage their time as well.

Conversely, a small number of students have not adequately engaged in their learning. We have spent quite a lot of time making calls to these families to make sure there is not a technology barrier that we can help overcome. In many instances, we've loaned out laptops and provided internet dongles. I have asked all teachers to now start sending N Warning letters for students in Years 10-12 who have not engaged in learning as these students are still required to adhere to NESA requirements for the award of either the HSC or the ROSA. As always, I ask that if your child requires help or is confronting an obstacle to their remote learning, then please contact us at the school so that we can support you.

### Social Distancing for Parents

I would like to thank all our parents for adhering to social distancing regulations when in the front office and at the school gate. As you know, in secondary schools, we do not see the volume of parents waiting at the school gate as in primary schools but it is still important to wait at least 1.5 metres away from others if you are waiting at the front of the school. Similarly, there are taped markings in the office on our flooring, demonstrating where we would like you to wait if you are queuing.

### Refunds

At the end of last term, we communicated to parents that where excursions had been postponed, that we would hold monies paid in readiness for rescheduling at a later point in the year. Where excursions have been completely cancelled however, refunds can be provided. Parents do need to complete the form for this purpose which was emailed out last term. I have attached another copy of this form here for your convenience. If you have any questions at all, please contact the office.

### NSW Government COVID-19 Update Page for Parents and Carers

I would like to remind all parents about the Department's dedicated webpage for parents and carers. This is a great one-stop shop for the latest advice, current news and resources that you can use to support your child as they are learning from home. The link for this page is:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>

Yours sincerely,



Mrs J. Lawrence

Principal