



25/03/2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Monday night I communicated on facebook that the school would be convening meetings to determine how we would respond to the expectation on all schools outlined by the Premier of NSW on Monday morning.

Every Public School in NSW is in the same boat, however, responses have been varied due to local context. In listening to other schools responses the level of online learning already in place, the size of the school and the degree of internet access for families have been the main factors driving decisions. It is, therefore, important as I have mentioned before that comparing school responses is difficult unless you know the context.

We have decided on an operational structure that will work in our context based on what we believe our school is capable of delivering and within the practical capabilities of families who will be making changes to their internal routines to cater for the supervision requirements of this new educational delivery.

It is important to realise that we will roll into this new operational regime over a period of time and it may take the next few weeks to have every part of the structure in full operation. Changing to an online delivery in every class and setting this alongside producing hardcopies for many families (up to 20% of students) there are substantial changes that need to be made across the board.

Structure of onsite and offsite Curriculum Provision

The school is developing a new timetable that will be used onsite and offsite. The common timetable will consist of three sessions (Morning, Middle and Afternoon) which is the same structure as the current timetable. There will be no individual periods though in the new arrangement. The longer sessions are to allow sustained independent learning for students and give them extended slots where they can contact teachers to discuss work which inherently will be very different to that experienced in a traditional classroom.

Session 1	9am to 10.45am	Recess and lunch will be common to students onsite and offsite. It is important that students take advantage of these breaks in learning no matter their location.
Recess	10.45am to 11.15am	
Session 2	11.15am to 1.00pm	
Lunch	1.00pm to 1.30pm	
Session 3	1.30pm to 3.18pm	

How this will work for students at school?

- Students at school will be placed into groups (how many will depend on student attendance).
- Students will have a home room where their group will work throughout the day
- Students will be working independently using the Hapara platform or information emailed to them via their gmail account
- There will be a rotation of teachers meaning students will be supervised by a different group of teachers in each session. The teachers will be from a range of subject areas
- There is no structured teaching as we know it in front of a class
- Supervision onsite will occur Monday to Friday

How this will work for students at home with internet?

- Students at home will be working independently using the Hapara platform or information emailed to them via their gmail account
- Students at home will be completing work in a routine that suits them. There is no prescribed timetable locking them into periods or lessons as they have currently
- Students at home can access teachers throughout the day based on a 'teacher availability timetable'. This timetable will be advertised to all students early next week. Students will be able to access teachers over the phone, however, it will be at a time that teachers will also be actively responding to email or Hapara messaging. **Students already have direct access through Hapara, already have staff gmail contacts whilst there will be mobile numbers set up to take in-coming calls. It is important to note that access is not available using the general school number or school email. The school purchased pre-pay phones for this purpose.**
- The 'teacher availability timetable' will show which teachers are available in all three sessions on each day except Wednesday's. Wednesday's are not included in this timetable to allow staff preparation time for the increased workload associated with preparing materials for this mode of teaching.

How this will work for students at home with no or limited internet?

- Students at home will be working independently on hardcopy materials sent to them in the mail
- Students at home will be completing work in a routine that suits them. There is no prescribed timetable locking them into periods or lessons as they have currently
- Work may or may not be required to be sent back to school. Materials released from school will have a cover page indicating whether it must be returned. The school is looking at the feasibility of including a reply paid envelope to cover costs in this regard. We are trying to get this moving immediately but the reality is that the first materials mailed out will not have this function. We are also trying to source envelopes large enough and robust enough to mail out materials from several subjects at once.
- Students at home can access teachers throughout the day based on a 'teacher availability timetable'. This timetable will be advertised to all students early next week. Students will be able to access teachers over the phone. **Students will also have access to the same mobile phone numbers mentioned in the previous section when they are set up. It is important to note that access is not available using the general school number. The school purchased three pre-pay phones for this purpose.**
- The 'teacher availability timetable' will show which teachers are available in all three sessions on each day except Wednesday's. Wednesday's are not included in this timetable to allow staff preparation time for the increased workload associated with preparing materials for this mode of teaching.

MC Students

MC students will be supported in a mixed mode. They will be integrated into the student body groups at times and withdrawn at others. Each student has an individual plan, therefore, the mixed mode will look different for each student. MC teachers will be supporting students in this time of transition and will employ appropriate strategies to promote student success.

Learning and Support

Learning and Support will integrate their programs into the new school structure to support students that are onsite or offsite. Supporting students who have learning plans in place will be a challenge, however, we will be endeavouring to achieve this within the communication and work related practices we will have in place.

Technology Support

Technology support will be available through our TSO, Mr Manderson. Mr Manderson works Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Mr Manderson can assist over the phone, via email or onsite (devices may need to be brought in for assessment). Contact via school phone 63361606 or gmail Peter.Manderson@oberonhigh.com

Assessment

NESA has relaxed the rules around HSC assessment for 2020. They have given schools the flexibility to alter assessment schedules outside the normal NESA regulations.

The school will be making significant changes to the assessment schedules for Stage 4 and Stage 5. Online learning and having two groups in very different supervision scenarios creates many issues around assessment parity and assessment security.

In all Stages assessment tasks may change in nature, number, weighting or timing. It is important that enough assessment is completed for accurate reporting, however, we must also use common sense in this area and ensure that students are able to perform at their best when required to complete assessment.

The Preliminary Examinations for senior students scheduled for next week have been cancelled. Teachers will use assessment tasks already completed to write reports and finalise grades. We will commence HSC work in all our senior courses as soon as possible. Preliminary Course results do not carry over into the HSC Course. Assessment for the HSC course starts again from the first assessment task completed in the HSC Course of each subject.

Feedback to Students

Feedback to students can be made directly through Hapara or using gmail. This has been normal practice for staff and will continue. Feedback can also be received over the phone if students call in on one of the phone numbers listed. Students, however, need to look at the 'teacher availability session' timetable to see the best time to contact individual teachers.

Feedback for students completing hardcopy materials will also be available once completed work is sent back and marked (this relates specifically to assessment tasks not general classwork that is not normally marked).

Practical Tasks

Due to the notion of social distancing practical tasks have been suspended. This means that the skills components of each syllabus must be taught and assessed using alternate means. The notion of online or distance learning inherently limits practical task completion. The expectation of 1 unit of work for onsite and offsite students means that students irrespective of learning location will not be completing practical experiences.

The one exception is physical activity where the expectation outlined by the Department of Education is that every student should partake in some physical activity on a regular basis. Students at school will have a 30 minute session of physical activity built into one of their sessions each day. Students at home have the same expectation. The time of the day has not been specified but the implied directive is that it should be between school hours.

Senior Workplacement

The whole notion of Vocational Education (VET) is up in the air at present. VET relies heavily of practical experiences to achieve the whole qualification. The inability of students to complete work placement is a significant issue. NESA is still discussing this with appropriate education and industry groups to develop a plan that may allow students to achieve qualifications through alternate means. This information is still to be disseminated to schools and there is no timeframe for this announcement.

Students completing VET courses must continue the theoretical component at a minimum. Irrespective what decisions are made surrounding workplacement the completion of mandatory course content must be a priority.

School Counsellor and School Chaplain

Stephanie White our School Counsellor will continue to work onsite at this stage. Stephanie works each Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Whether Stephanie remains onsite or will be required to work offsite is still in flux. Annaleise Todd our School Chaplain is working from home. In both cases work with families will continue but the communication mode is likely to be restricted to phone calls.

Year Meetings and SRC Meetings

There have been discussions about putting groups on Hapara so that groups that would normally meet can do so in some form. At present this is a lower priority than the organisation of work to students. It will be further investigated and may be a reality if the current situation remains in place for several months.

Canteen

Schools were asked to close their canteen due to advice from NSW Health about eliminating volunteers on site. This has caused quite a bit of disquiet with schools as the school canteen is the only easily accessible take-away option for students and staff during the day.

The school is looking at a way to manage this problem in house thus providing some food provision, even at a limited capacity.

Facebook

If you want to find the most up to date information go to our facebook site. We are updating this regularly and the Department of Education is posting information on our site. You can find us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/OberonHSNSW/?ref=bookmarks>

Craig Luccarda
Principal