



MARIST COLLEGE NORTH SHORE

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19 August 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I wrote to you in July outlining the College's plan at the time for Graduation in September. I now write to outline what the College has planned given updated restrictions for schools as directed by Sydney Catholic Schools and the NSW Premier.

The rituals to celebrate the graduation of our Year 12 students are among the most important of the Marist College year and this remains the case. The College has been working tirelessly in an attempt to maintain as many aspects of our traditional graduation events as possible.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has now seen further restrictions placed on schools in relation to events that can be conducted. Some of the various requirements the College needs to meet in conducting events include, but are not limited to:

- Masses in a place of worship cannot exceed 100 people.
- The length of time indoors at events should be limited to less than 1 hour.
- *"Everybody who manages an organisation a non-government school or any other entity ... mixing between organisations or between schools, is something which is not allowable under the COVID rules".* (The NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian MP)
- The Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 4) 2020 provides an exemption to schools activities that are part of normal business (Schedule 2 of the attached [PHO](#)). The statement is provided below:

A gathering at a school, university or other educational institution or child care facility that is necessary for the normal business of the school, university, institution or facility but does not include a school event that involves members of the community in addition to staff and students.

- The involvement of parents and others at a graduation ceremony would not be covered under the exemption.

Working in partnership with Sydney Catholic Schools, it was agreed that the premise of the above restriction on gatherings equally applies for similar events held at an external venue. This order aims to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, especially as Year 12 students prepare for the upcoming Higher School Certificate examinations.

In meeting these requirements and to minimise the risk to Year 12, although extremely disappointing to members of our community, holding the Graduation Mass at St Mary's Church and the Graduation Assembly with parents and the whole school in attendance will not be possible. The NSW Premier has strictly outlined that these events should not take place.

What has been organised in line with current restrictions?

Graduation Day: House Liturgy and Assemblies - 21 September 2020

The College will hold six (6) simultaneous House Graduations on the morning of the 21 September. Every student will be recognised within their individual House. We have hired a professional media company to film each House Graduation. All recordings of the proceedings will be made available to parents.

Due to restrictions on gatherings to one hour before close contact is made, the House Graduations will take no longer than one hour in duration.

Following on from the individual House Assemblies we will move Year 12 into the hall for a short whole year group assembly to award our special awards - this assembly will take no longer than 15 mins as outlined by NSWHealth restrictions.

As mentioned previously, the College has set aside 13 November 2020 for a Graduation Ball here at school, after the HSC examinations. However, this will only go ahead if the current restrictions are lifted.

We know that for our Year 12 men and families, along with the entire school community, that these changes to graduation are not ideal or how we all had planned to farewell our young men. Please be assured, that whilst parents/carers are unable to be in attendance, this will be a special day for your son and he will receive the accolades and ceremony to which we bestow upon all our graduates each year, just in a different format this year.

We thank you for your continued support at this time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Brigid Taylor', written in a cursive style.

Brigid Taylor
Acting Principal