



Family Update - Week 4

Friday 6 August 2021

Dear Hurlstone students and families,

After a month in lockdown, our Hurlstone community has taken learning from home in its stride. Beyond the virtual classroom our Wellbeing Team, School Counsellors, Student Support Officer, Careers Adviser and Teacher Librarian continue to provide valuable support to our students via the MSTEams platform and email and we have seen students come up with creative and inventive ways of adapting to online learning.

Our students have participated in a range of initiatives designed to keep spirits high and make the learning from home experience more enjoyable. Our Senior Leaders have encouraged all our students to get involved in some fun activities as a distraction from the challenge that is lockdown and learning from home – head to our [Facebook page](#) to see more. Next week, the SRC will be running the Hurlstone Bake Off with the theme 'Hurlstone Pride'. We look forward to seeing what our students create in the kitchen.

Screen time

We are aware there are concerns about excessive screen time. The school Executive met this week to ensure that students will be provided with a 'catch up' lesson once a cycle (on average) after the roll has been marked to allow for a screen-free period with no additional content. Please encourage your child to step away from the screen regularly and make the most of the time between lessons also.

Families should also encourage students to manage their time online safely and wisely. The eSafety website has some useful resources for families to frame their discussions with students about staying safe online: www.esafety.gov.au.

Self care for parents and carers

COVID-19 has impacted all of us, including the parents and carers of our students. The NSW Department of Education has created an 'essentials' toolkit packed with self-care tips and handy lists for families. This can be found at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/parent-and-carers-toolkit/download-the-toolkit>. Please be kind to yourselves.

Attendance

Attendance data plays a significant role in our monitoring processes and we have high expectations for student attendance. We know that regular attendance at school is essential for our students to achieve their educational best, realise their social and emotional potential, and increase their post-school opportunities.

While we students are learning from home they will be considered attending if they engage in their online lessons.

Students must present themselves to their class teacher in the first ten minutes of the lesson for roll marking (replying to a post on MTeams; responding to roll call in a video meeting) and participate in the lesson. If a student arrives late, they must notify their class teacher to advise them that they are online and present so as not to be marked absent for the period. Students are expected to complete the work set by their teacher and should engage with the teacher through the MTeams platform.

Students are not expected to attend online lessons if they are unwell. Rather, they should concentrate on recovering. Please notify the school via the Sentral Portal if your child is absent due to illness and continue to send through medical certificates where applicable through the usual channels to ensure our attendance records reflect this accurately.

Information for our HSC students

As you are aware, there have been some significant developments since our communication to Year 12 students and families yesterday. We now have answers to many of the most pressing questions:

1. Are HSC students required to return to school next week?

The wellbeing and safety of students and staff are our top priority, and we can now confirm that our **students from Year 7 – 12 will not return onsite** until advised otherwise, as our school is located in one of the 8 identified LGAs. Our teaching and support staff continue to provide excellent support for student learning and wellbeing as learning from home continues.

2. What is happening with HSC Trial examinations?

The NSW Department of Education has advised that all of our school-based assessment tasks are to be **completed from home**.

As such, our HSC Trials will be replaced by **Assessment Task 4** which will be completed from home. These tasks will take place from Week 7.

Further information about Assessment Task 4 will be provided next week.

3. Will the HSC proceed in October?

Planning continues for HSC exams to proceed from 19 October in a COVID-safe way, in line with Health advice. Please refer to the [NSW Education Standards Authority](https://www.nsw.gov.au/education/standards-authority) for updates about the HSC.

4. Where can I find information about the HSC Student Vaccination Program?

Please direct all enquiries regarding the COVID-19 Vaccination Program to NSW Health, as this program is not administered by NSW schools.

Families can call the free COVID-19 Vaccination Program hotline on **1800 571 155** (available between 8am – 9.30pm, 7 days a week) or go to **nsw.gov.au/covid-19**.

We would like to express our thanks to our school community for their resilience during this time and for the messages of support we have received for our teachers and support staff. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need anything else.

Have a safe and restful weekend.

Best regards,

The Senior Executive

Hurlstone Agricultural High School