

## **PRINCIPAL'S STATEMENT**

At approximately 8.30 a.m. on Friday, 22 May, 2009 Ms Amorina Chirico (Deputy Principal and DSC Director), Mr Fulvio Frijio (Deputy Principal and DRC Director) and I spoke on the telephone with a senior officer of the Department of Communicable Diseases who informed us that one of our Year 11 students (male) had developed Influenza H1N1 (aka swine flu). We were told that he and his family were in quarantine and that health authorities would visit them that morning.

We were also instructed that the risk of any other person having contracted Influenza H1N1 on Thursday, 21 May (the only day the student was at school in the past three weeks due to work experience and illness) was extremely low (even impossible). We were advised not to close the College. At all times the Senior Leadership Group followed the advice of the health authorities.

Assemblies of staff, then DSC students, and later DRC students, were conducted and all were informed of the situation. Some members of the College community were already aware of the student's condition.

Some parents made the decision to remove their child from school during that day and this wish was complied with by the office staff. The Senior Leadership Group also prepared a written statement to be sent home with students at the end of the day. Only those students who departed before 3.25 p.m. (mostly Year 12 and those who left with parents) did not receive the notice. This notice was also placed on the College website last Friday afternoon.

A large contingent of media either contacted me or presented outside the front gates of both campuses in the afternoon. I made public statements and was interviewed by media representatives on a number of occasions.

No decision was made to close the school in the next week (i.e. this week) until we received advice from the health authorities. This advice came at approximately 5.00 p.m. that afternoon and the advice was that all members of the student's family (including the student) were well and that closure of the College would not be necessary. I am grateful to radio drive time hosts Lindy Burns (ABC 774) and Derryn Hinch (radio 3AW) for allowing me the opportunity to inform our College community of this advice and decision.

It was not possible to return the calls of all families and individuals who rang during the day (simply too many) but the College freely allowed parents their right to remove their child if they came to the College to collect their child. The College will investigate a facility whereby we can text message all families if necessary. We presently do not have this facility.

I am so pleased that our Year 11 student has returned to good health; I thank my staff and our students for their exceptionally levelheaded approach; I thank parents who made public comments to the media highly favorable of the College.

This College, like all other organizations, will be alert and on the lookout for any symptoms associated with Influenza H1N1 until this health problem comes to an end.