



## Working at Home Information

Dear parents and carers,

Yesterday 96 students were absent from school. As you might imagine this significantly affects the dynamics of the College's operations. Along with these absences, many parents are requesting work packages for their children.

We have, as a result, been inundated with work package requests. I am writing to communicate both temporary strategies, and longer term strategies, that we are putting into place to address offsite (home) education in light of the current situation.

As parents would appreciate, teachers and staff are providing onsite learning here at HillSide. This is the primary focus for staff at the moment. Our plans for provision of offsite (home) learning are developing, and we are confident that we will have these plans in place by the start of next week. Please note the following points:

### **Temporary strategy - work arrangements for those students at home (this week)**

Parents wanting work packages this week, can access the Department of Education's website, which has generic year level work packages and lesson notes for parents. The website is organised for Years Kindergarten-10 based on SCSA's syllabuses. The link to the website is:

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/learning-at-home/learning-resources-by-year-level>

I would encourage all students and/or parents needing work immediately to use the above link above to access work packages temporarily.

At present, some High School (Year 7-12) classes are now using Microsoft Teams to access lessons. Students in these classes are aware that they are able to access work for these classes through this platform, and that they can communicate with their teachers remotely. Students absent at present might like to use a combination of the DET work packages and Teams (if available to their class now).

The full utilisation and implementation of Teams is the focus for all high school staff, who will be able to provide work using this platform.

### **Longer term strategy - offsite (home) learning for extended periods**

In the likely event of school closure, the College will provide an online learning programme. This is the longer term solution should the school be closed for an extended period.

### **Primary Offsite Learning**

For Years Kindergarten to Year 6 (Primary), students will be provided with hard copy packages to take home, which their parents can administer. The teaching instructions and communication will be via *SEQTA Engage* (online parent portal) and *Seesaw* (work sharing App.). A package has been designed with printing of hard copy materials occurring now. A whole package with specific information will be sent out shortly with detailed instructions for parents. We are confident this strategy will be released by Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March. SEQTA and Seesaw logins will be provided in the week ahead to facilitate this timeline.





## **Secondary Offsite Learning**

For Years 7 to 12 (Secondary), students will take home their textbooks to be used for hard copy materials. However, the learning programme will be provided on two electronic platforms: Microsoft Teams and SEQTA Engage (online parent portal).

*Teams* is already being utilised by many high school classes now, but its use will be extended to all high school timetable classes. Teams is a learning and communication platform where students can access school work, teleconferencing, messaging and communication.

*SEQTA Engage* will be used by teachers to communicate with parents and provides an overview of teaching requirements. At this stage, we are asking high school staff to have lessons on Teams by the start of next week, which will mean that absent students can access work from this point forward. In terms of SEQTA, this will be fully available at the start of next term. Further instructions will be communicated in the week ahead.

Year 7 students have been unable to obtain their iPads due to the Logitech cases being unavailable. This case will eventually be available, but in the interim the College will be purchasing protective sleeves to allow the iPad to be taken home. Instructions and details regarding the care and use of the iPad will be forthcoming, closer to the release date. Students in all other high school years have their devices, and should use these devices for their online learning when this takes effect.

## **Teaching and Learning Software**

To facilitate offsite access, communication, and learning, three main software programmes will be used. Further detailed information will be forthcoming shortly, along with log in details. These software programmes are summarised very briefly below:

### **SEQTA Engage and SEQTA Learn**

Both high school and primary school parents can access *SEQTA Engage*, which is an online portal. Parents will be able to see courses of learning, and interpret the requirements for work. SEQTA Engage includes many other functions that pertain to many facets of learning. Parents can communicate with staff directly through Direct Messaging.

*SEQTA Learn* is the student version. This has similar information, but is geared to students. At this stage, the school will only be allowing high school students to access SEQTA Learn. However, the main learning tool for high school students will be Microsoft Teams.

Information specific to SEQTA will be provided to parents and students. For parents this means that they will receive an email with instructions about how to log in. The programme can be accessed via a web portal on any device, or alternatively, an App. can be downloaded. For students, they will also receive an email with instructions about how to login to their account.

A link to SEQTA, and its general use in other schools, is found at the link below:

<https://seqta.com.au/customers/>

### **SeeSaw**

Seesaw is a programme that helps educators engage learners, transforms family engagement, and allows sharing of information. This will be used in the primary section only, as the programme is geared to primary age students and their parents. Teachers, students and parents are able to upload pictures, notes and communicate about activities, assessment and other relevant material. It is very interactive, and will allow offsite access through a user-friendly interface.

A website link to Seesaw information can be found here: <https://web.seesaw.me>



Parents will receive a letter and be sent information about logins and use of the programme. It is available through a web portal or App.

## Microsoft 365 Teams

As part of the Microsoft 365 suite of software, all our students have access to the full functionality of the Microsoft package. *Teams* is a collaboration App. (software package) that helps your **team** (class) stay organized and have conversations, all in one place. Teachers are able to set up a learning space for students. Only high school students (Year 7-12) have access to Teams. Every timetabled class will have a Team, which will be managed by the class teacher.

Teams will be the main learning tool for high school classes offsite. Teachers are now training and testing the Teams' environment with students. Students already have their log in details and are being educated about its use. Parents of high school students use SEQTA for teaching programme information, whereas the student uses Teams to engage in learning activities with the teacher.

Parents can view a detailed overview of Team at the link below:  
<https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/teams-overview>

## Other Communication

While the main teaching and learning software platforms (SEQTA/Seesaw/Teams) will be used for student and parent engagement, it is important that other methods of communication are provided for general information, enquires and communication. The following summary is made about communication platforms if the College were to be closed. Parents are made aware of the main other forms of communication:

1. College website – the College website is being updated now to provide key information in relation COVID-19, and access to offsite (home) education. It is a good source of general information;
2. Facebook pages – the College Facebook site and closed classroom groups are good ways to ask questions and stay connected as a community;
3. Email – should parents not be able to contact a staff member via SEQTA. We ask that no Outlook email to be used when communicating with teachers, only 'Direct Messaging', a communication system embedded within SEQTA. General enquiries to the front office can still be emailed to: [admin@hillside.wa.edu.au](mailto:admin@hillside.wa.edu.au). Please check emails regularly, as these are a key method of communication;
4. Skoolbag – parents are strongly encouraged to have this App. on a device. It is for general, whole school or section messages. It also contains a repository of files pertaining to policies and general information. Skoolbag is also embedded in the College webpage under the Parent Menu section.

I trust all the above information provide a succinct overview of the College plans to support offsite (home) education in light of COVID-19 effects. Parents and carers are asked to be aware of this letter's content so that improved communication and contingency plans can be effective.

Regards,

Stephen Lamont  
Principal  
24th March, 2020