

## **FAQs IN RELATION TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

There are two sets of FAQs below:

SECTION A: Information and requirements for those staying in College; and

SECTION B: Information and requirements about suspending residence.

In drawing up these FAQs, our top priority is the health and safety of our students, staff, and the wider community.

Please note: **any breaches of the requirements set out below** will be regarded as serious breaches of College discipline, as well as of community expectations and State and/or Federal law.

Students staying in residence **must** abide by these requirements, both to ensure that we stop the spread of the virus, and to enable the College to remain open.

**Every one of us has a responsibility to act and behave appropriately and safely, both inside College and in any essential trips we make outside College.** Not doing so is not only thoughtless and dangerous, but in many cases is now an offence under State and/or Federal law. This is serious.

### **SECTION A**

#### **INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THOSE STAYING IN COLLEGE**

##### **1. Can I stay in College if I want to, and/or if I'm unable to go home?**

Yes, we are continuing to stay open and operational, and you are very welcome to stay in College and continue your studies here.

If you stay, you are required to abide by relevant State and Federal requirements and the requirements stipulated by the College regarding hygiene and social distancing set out below. We will update these in light of evolving advice and legislation.

We have moved to a one gigabit connection so you can all watch your online lectures and attend online tutorials at the same time, and academic tutorials and other support for students are continuing.

##### **2. What if I want to stay but can't afford to pay my fees?**

If you have been significantly financially affected because of the pandemic, and/or family members who would usually provide you with financial support have been significantly

financially affected, please apply to the Student Support Fund we have created - the deadline for the first round of applications is 4pm Thursday 26 March:

<https://www.stmarkscollege.com.au/news/covid-19-pandemic-student-support-fund-first-round/>

We don't want you to have to leave because you can't currently afford to be here. If you are in this position, please talk to us.

### **3. What if I want to leave College because of the pandemic?**

Please see Section B below, about suspending residence.

### **4. How is College implementing the updated State and Federal legal requirements and expert advice around social distancing?**

It is **essential** that all students in residence abide by the following requirements:

#### **(i) Distance rule**

- At all times, there must be at least 1.5 metres between people.
- This is essential whether you are standing, walking, queuing, eating, playing sport, etc.
- It applies inside and outside College.

#### **(ii) Hall**

- Entry to Hall is staggered in three groups, as follows:
  - Lunch - from:
    - 12.15: Newland
    - 12.40: Memorial and East Wing
    - 13.00: Flats and Hawker House
  - Dinner - from:
    - 18.00: Memorial and East Wing
    - 18.20: Flats and Hawker House
    - 18.40: Newland

We will review and amend this as numbers alter in different parts of College.

- You must keep 1.5 metres apart from others when queuing, whether inside or outside the Hall: make use of the green taped markers on the floor.
- There must be no more than 4 people per table in Hall, maintaining appropriate distance.

- There must be no more than 4 people on each of the outside tables, which have been separated so there is no longer one long table. Appropriate distance must be maintained.

**(iii) Gatherings and limits on numbers of people**

- There must be no gathering of more than 10 people, indoors or outdoors - and this is only permissible in spaces that allow this while also observing distance of 1.5m.
- There are specific limits on numbers in specific spaces, in keeping with the 4m<sup>2</sup> rule, as follows:
  - Tutorial rooms:
    - LC1 = 3 people max
    - LC2 = 6 people max
    - LC3 = 6 people max
    - LC4 = 3 people max
    - AC1 = 6 people max
    - AC2 = 6 people max
    - AC3 = 4 people max
  - Music room = 5 people max
  - Chapel = 6 people max
  - Ballroom = 10 people max
  - Council Room = 9 people max
- There are to be no more than 2 people in a student room at any one time, **including the occupant**. The only exceptions to this are where there are extremely large rooms where an increase in the cap of 2 students has been explicitly approved in advance by the Dean. At all times, there must be at least 1.5 metres between people.
- Corridor chats are only permitted if there is 1 student per door entrance, so that social distancing is maintained.
- In flats, the same rule applies as for student bedrooms: there are to be no more than 2 people, including the occupant, in a bedroom at any one time. In addition:
  - There are to be no more than a total of 'n+2' in a flat at any one time, where 'n' is the number of residents currently living in that flat.
  - That is: if a flat has 3 occupants, there can be no more than an overall total of 2 visitors at any one time in that flat, so no more than 5 people at any one time in that flat. If a flat has 2 occupants, there can be no more than an overall total of 2 visitors at any one time in that flat, so no more than 4 people at any one time in that flat.

- There can be no more than 2 people in a flat bedroom at any one time, and no more than 3 in a shared living / kitchen area at any one time. At all times, there must be at least 1.5 metres between people.
- Any larger gatherings will be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **(iv) Gym**

- No more than 4 people are permitted in the gym at any one time.
- All users **must** observe the 1.5m distance requirement.
- You must **not** use a piece of equipment if someone is using a piece of equipment next to it.
- It is essential that the requirements on notices in the gym – e.g. about wiping down all equipment that is used, both before and after use – are observed in full.
- No guests are permitted.
- If these requirements, and those already posted in the gym, are not observed in full, access to the gym will no longer be possible.

#### **(v) Cars and carpooling**

- There are to be no more than 2 people in a car: the driver in the front, and a passenger in the back.

### **5. Are visitors allowed in College?**

The National Cabinet's latest advice is that we all must 'stay at home unless it is absolutely necessary you go out'. Visitors to the College therefore must be kept to an absolute minimum, both in number and frequency.

We have an overriding need and responsibility to keep the community as self-contained as possible in coming days and weeks in order to limit the risk of virus spread.

- Visitors are strongly discouraged, and ideally there would be none;
- No guests other than partners and family are permitted except with prior approval of Dean;
- No guests are permitted at meals;
- No guests are permitted in the gym, Academic Centre or other shared facilities;
- No one may have more than one guest at a time;
- External tutors will only tutor online; and
- You are responsible for the behaviour and actions of a visitor at all times.

Government regulations or decrees may require a complete ban on visitors to the College in the near future.

## **6. What if I need to go into self-isolation?**

There are several categories of student who may need to self-isolate:

- i. Those who are self-isolating within their existing accommodation because they are at risk (e.g. because of their own medical circumstances, such as compromised immunity or asthma). If you are in this category and would like additional support from the College (eg around meals, shopping, cleaning, access to shared spaces), please let us know;
- ii. Those who have been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 and who need to self-isolate while awaiting test results, or for 14 days, as instructed by their healthcare professional;
- iii. Those who are unwell with COVID-19 symptoms, or who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, and need to self-isolate for 14 days; and
- iv. Those who are required to self-isolate because they are returning from interstate. If you are planning to return to College from interstate while self-isolation requirements remain in place, please remember to allow yourself enough time to fulfil these requirements (as of 23 March 2020 all individuals entering the State must self-isolate for 14 days from their return).

The College has allocated specific areas where self-isolation can occur, and we can provide you with meals etc. Peter (Dean) and Kathy (Registrar) will be able to advise you on this.

Students in categories ii, iii, and iv will have a notice on their door making clear that there is to be no entry to that room, except with prior approval by the Dean. (Students in category i - voluntary self-isolation due to risk to themselves - are welcome to have such a notice if they wish.)

## **SECTION B**

### **INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS ABOUT SUSPENDING RESIDENCE**

## **7. What if I want to leave College because of the pandemic?**

We completely understand that some of you may wish to leave College for some or all of the duration of the pandemic. We want you to be able to make the right decision without financial pressures being a determining factor.

If you wish to suspend your residence because of the pandemic, you are free to do so without any financial cost to you - that is, you will not pay fees for the period after Monday 23 March during which you are not in residence.

If you wish to suspend your College residence please let us know in advance: email the Head of College (Professor Markewell), copied to the Registrar (Kathy Radoslovich).

If you have already left but not yet advised us by email, please do so now - again, to the Head of College, copied to the Registrar.

If you inform us that you are suspending your residence, and you have a College car parking space, we expect that you will take your car with you unless you let us know otherwise. Please see FAQ below about car parking spaces.

## **8. How will calculations regarding fees be made if I am suspending residence?**

First, we need to know when you're leaving so we can keep track of dates - so please keep us informed if you are moving out, and let us know when you intend to move back in again (once you know this yourself).

We can't process refunds or make alterations to payment schedules unless we have received notice from you in writing (ie by email). Please also note that it will take us some time to make all of the necessary calculations - be assured that we are moving as quickly as we can!

There are then two options available to you:

1. If you have an anticipated return date - for example, your degree programme has paused and will restart on 27 April, so you plan to be back a few days before then (or 14 days before then if you will be coming from interstate and will need to isolate - more on that below) - we will be able to sort out a bespoke arrangement with you to cover that anticipated period of time.  
We recognise, of course, that things are changing from day to day and that your plans may therefore change, and we can be flexible around your changes.
2. If you would prefer not to provide an anticipated return date, we will calculate what your fee position is from the date that you move out, and make arrangements accordingly from that day on. When you then return to residence we will restart your fee payment schedule from your move-in date.

In some cases a student will be in credit to the College and sometimes a student will be in debt - Lorraine (Finance Officer) will be able to let you know what applies in your case.

If you do elect to suspend your residence, that means that, for that stretch of time, you will not have access to the College's physical premises and facilities, including the gym, Academic Centre, Hall, etc, unless you have made an explicit arrangement with the College

to do so. This is because we need to keep the community as physically self-contained as possible in coming days and weeks in order to limit the risk of virus spread.

**9. If I leave, what do I do with the belongings in my room?**

If you are leaving, please clear your room out completely if you can. This is because we may need your room for other purposes, eg if we need to move students to facilitate periods of isolation. If this will be difficult for you, please let us know.

If you have already left College, and left items in your room, it may be that the College will need to pack your belongings up for you at a later date - all care will be taken if we need to do so.

**10. If I suspend my residence, will I still have access to College academic and other support, even if I'm not paying fees?**

Yes, you will. We recognise that moving out of College is likely to have been a tough decision for you, but want to reassure you that you remain a full member of the community and we want to continue to support you in every way that we can even though you won't be paying residential fees. So, even though the support will be virtual rather than in person, you are still very welcome to make full use of it. Over the coming days we will be looking into how best to develop our online provision and will circulate further details.

However, if you do suspend your residence, you are not able to return to College unless you have made an arrangement with us to do so. We need to keep the community as self-contained as possible in coming days and weeks in order to mitigate risks of virus spread.

**11. What about my car park if I suspend my residence?**

If you suspend your residence, we will assume you will be taking your car with you. You will receive a pro-rata refund of the College's car parking fee. If, however, you needed to leave your car at College, you would need to inform the College of your intention and leave a set of keys with the College in case for any reason the vehicle needed to be moved.

Please be reminded that the car park will be under construction from around Easter.

**12. If I suspend my residence will I get the same room back when I return?**

Yes, that's definitely the College's expectation: when you come back, you'll move back into the same room (unless exceptional circumstances prevent this).

**13. I have been appointed as an Academic Tutor for the semester - can I continue with this remotely if I suspend my residence?**

Absolutely! The Academic Program will continue, and will be more important than ever, so we're very keen for you to continue. Please communicate your change of circumstances to the students you're tutoring and make the necessary arrangements to support them remotely, and please continue to fill in your timesheet so that we can compensate you for the tutoring.

If you feel unable to continue as an Academic Tutor because you have suspended your residence, please let Rachel (Director of Learning) know so we can find a replacement Tutor.

#### **14. I hold a student leadership position - what happens if I suspend my residence?**

We'd love you to continue in your leadership position if you're able to do so remotely - eg via facebook or messenger. This sort of support is going to be vital to enable our community to continue to grow and flourish, even though we're a bit more spread out than planned! We certainly have no intention of asking any of you to step down from your leadership position because you're temporarily out of residence.

We recognise that performing a role online is less possible for some aspects of roles than for others (certainly you won't be able to be Duty Tutor, for example), but we'd still like you to contribute to the leadership of the community in whatever forms are possible. Please come and chat with us if you're in this situation, and we can discuss things on a case-by-case basis.

**If you have any questions not answered by the above, please send the Dean and Director of Learning an email.**

**We'll be updating these FAQs over the coming days.**