

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Help@Hillbrook – 20 May 2020

Life has changed for all of us over the past three months and, for many, these changes have had a significant impact. As each week passes it has become evident that COVID-19 is going to be with us for some time yet.

From a positive perspective it has given us a chance to slow down and spend more time with our immediate family. It has also altered our social habits and hygiene practices, both in some positive ways. However, we are now seeing other far reaching impacts that might be with us well into the future.

The financial impact of COVID-19 has been felt by many people across the world as well as right here in our own Hillbrook community. Whole sectors, such as travel, have almost been wiped out as well as downturns in many other areas. The knock-on effect from shutdowns has rippled into areas that have usually been protected from financial hardship and people who have never had to worry about their employment suddenly find themselves either without work or significantly reduced hours.

If you are worried about your financial future and the impact it might have on your child's education, we invite you to come in for a **confidential chat** with our Finance Manager, David Cansdale. He will be available for face to face conversations for two weeks from Monday 25 May from 8:30am to 4:00pm. To organise a time please call David on 3354 6437 or email David.cansdale@hillbrook.qld.edu.au. If you can't make during those two weeks, David is always happy to talk on the phone or via email, or he can organise a meeting with you at a different time if you would prefer to talk in person.

You might be in need of financial assistance right now, or perhaps you are worried about next year, either way, David will be happy to talk you through all the options available and help to put your mind at ease. You don't have to deal with the financial burden of school fees alone, you have support.

In addition to financial stress, mental health issues are on the rise as a result of COVID-19. The uncertainty, the financial impacts, the isolation, the worry about family members, the future, health and employment concerns – they all add up to increased worries, as well as anxiety in some cases. We would like to offer you access to our Employee Assistance Program which provides **3 (free) over the phone consultations with a qualified professional counsellor**. This is currently available to all staff members at Hillbrook and we are now extending it to our parent community. Our Hillbrook counsellors are available for students and they have been continuing to provide support as always.

If you would like to use this service, **please call 1800 818 728 at any time, they are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**. All you need to do is let them know you are from the Hillbrook parent community. These consultations are conducted independently of Hillbrook and are strictly in confidence.

We would also like to remind you about **Parents.Connect** and how belonging and connectedness is so important during this time. Belonging does look a little different

during a pandemic, yet it still provides the same benefits. Michelle Hildebrand (Parents.Connect Co-Leader) has the following message.

“You have a community of people at Hillbrook you can turn to. It can be a note, a card in the post, a text or an email; support given, support received; engaging in email chat or the app that has been set up for your class; taking time to listen or taking time to just say 'hello.’ This is what the Parents.Connect community offers.

All parents have a class contact list and are invited to reach out to each other if that is something you need or something you can provide for someone else. Parents can still connect, even though you can't sit in a café and chat. Being a Hillbrook family means we don't have to do it alone ... we have each other.”

We all belong to the Hillbrook community and we are all in this together.

Yours sincerely

School Leadership Team