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Media Release

Welcome First Step to Returning Students to the Classroom

Queensland schools will take an important first step towards re-opening following the Premier's announcement today that the state's oldest and youngest students would be the first to return to the classroom on Monday 11 May.

The peak bodies representing independent schools and their families – Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) and the Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network (QIS Parents Network) – welcomed the decision.

ISQ Executive Director David Robertson said ISQ supported the return of face-to-face teaching starting with students in Years 11-12, Kindergarten, Prep and Year 1 on 11 May, with all other students proposed to return on 25 May.

“Student learning, growth and wellbeing are best served when students and teachers are interacting in that all-important social classroom and school environment,” Mr Robertson said.

“This is particularly true for our youngest students who have just embarked on their schooling journey and our senior students who are coming to the end of theirs,” he said.

“Year 12s also have the added complexity of being the first to study new subjects with new assessment arrangements under Queensland's revamped senior schooling and tertiary entrance system.”

Mr Robertson said independent schools would look closely at the full range of logistical issues such as their timetabling, physical classroom settings, lunch breaks and drop-off and pick-up procedures to safely accommodate students, staff and parents.

“Independent schools will adopt different approaches based on their individual circumstances informed and guided by the latest Queensland Government and Australian Health Protection Principal Committee advice for schools.”

Mr Robertson said ISQ acknowledged and thanked school leaders, teachers and other school staff who had worked tirelessly to ensure every student has had continuing access to high quality education programs.

QIS Parents Network Executive Officer Justine Cirocco said restarting some aspects of school life would bring a sense of much-craved normalcy to families and communities.

“As a mother of three children – including two-school age children – I understand this has been a challenging period for many families and I applaud and thank all parents, their teachers and schools for working together to maintain student learning,” Mrs Cirocco said.

“During this transition period it's vital that parents work closely with their schools – that they follow school directions about new procedures for arrangements like drop-off and pick-up. Routines will be different and we all need to continue to adapt,” she said.

“While parents of children in other year levels may also be eager for their children to return to school as soon as possible as well, it's important that re-opening schools is done in a staged and careful way to best protect the health and safety of everyone in the community.”

ISQ and the QIS Parents Network will continue to work with independent schools, State and Federal Government education and health officials on Queensland's return-to-school arrangements.

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