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Media Release

New Family and Learning Routines Accompany Staged Return to School in Qld

Independent school principals and staff will welcome back about 38,000 of the sector's youngest and oldest students tomorrow (Monday 11 May) as part of Queensland's gradual return to school.

More than 22,600 Year 11 and 12 students and 15,300 students in Prep and Year 1 will step back into the classroom and resume face-to-face lessons with their teachers. These students represent about 30 percent of school-age children attending independent schools.

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) Executive Director David Robertson said the staged return of students to classroom teaching would give schools the chance to establish and finetune a range of operational arrangements before the potential return of all students on 25 May, pending the State Government's go-ahead.

"First and foremost, independent schools will be implementing processes and procedures, in line with the latest state and national health advice, to ensure the health and safety of everyone who comes onto their campuses," Mr Robertson said.

"This will include reinforcing personal hygiene practices, reminding children and staff to say home if they are unwell, stepping up cleaning procedures, ensuring soap and sanitiser supplies, reducing student groups interacting through measures such as limiting movements and transitions between classes, staged lunch breaks, new school drop-off and pick up procedures, and reminding students to use contactless greetings."

Mr Robertson praised staff, students and parents for rising to every challenge resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'm sure there will be special welcomes planned and smiles all round on Monday as classrooms that have been empty for weeks fill again with the noise and chatter of students learning," he said.

"Just as it took communities time to adjust to learning from home routines, there will also be a period of adjustment settling back into classroom life and this may vary from student to student.

"Parents can be assured that independent schools will work quickly to ascertain student progress and wellbeing and tailor their teaching and pastoral programs accordingly."

Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network (QIS Parents Network) Executive Officer Justine Cirocco urged parents with children returning to school on Monday to familiarise themselves with their school's new routines, particularly for drop-off and pick-up.

"As a mother-of-three, I know dropping little Preppies and Year 1s off without taking them into the classroom or interacting with other parents may be a little unsettling for some families," Mrs Cirocco said.

"However, schools need the unwavering support of parents and carers to ensure things go as smoothly as possible for everyone's collective health and wellbeing. Schools know their communities and families need to trust them and adhere to the specific arrangements their schools have put in place."

Mrs Cirocco said resetting teen body clocks may also be a challenge for the parents of children in Years 11 and 12.

"Parents of teens know their children love their sleep and it may take a little bit of time and some patient encouragement to get them back into the regular rhythm of school life again," she said.

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

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