

18 September 2020

20-315/UNI4018/DF20/8

***The Principal via email***

Dear Principal

It's been a very tough year and the challenges are not over yet. I'd like to start by acknowledging that school leaders like you have shouldered a huge burden this year in balancing the safety and other needs of staff, students and the whole school community.

Most independent schools have successfully risen to the challenge, and I extend my thanks to the many school leaders who have managed to maintain a safe and compassionate working environment for our members. We've seen time and time again that where schools have been supportive and consultative, teachers and general staff have gone above and beyond and done extraordinary work to ensure that our students receive quality education and care in these very difficult conditions.

You will be familiar with the Department of Education Guidelines regarding a staggered return to on-site schooling next term. I would like to emphasise the importance of all schools adhering to these Guidelines. The largely consistent approach across government, Catholic and independent schools throughout this crisis has been critical and will continue to be so over coming months.

In particular, the Guidelines highlight the importance of keeping staff attendance to the minimum required for the delivery of education and supervision programs. For schools in the Melbourne area this will be of critical importance. In regional schools, the earlier return to on-site teaching will necessitate higher staffing attendance, but staff should not be required to remain on campus when they do not have relevant duties. I encourage you to ensure that large gatherings of staff (such as in-person meetings) are avoided, and that particular consideration is given to individual members of staff who have heightened risk factors or relevant family or caring responsibilities.

I also ask you to ensure that your school's Health and Safety Rep and IEU Rep are actively engaged in discussions and consultations around staffing and safety arrangements for Term 4.

We look forward to continuing to work constructively with you. The IEU office is here to assist in any way we can – please don't hesitate to get in touch via [info@ieuvictas.org.au](mailto:info@ieuvictas.org.au).

Yours sincerely



**Debra James**  
General Secretary