6 June 2016

An important announcement from the Director of Schools to Parents, Students and Families of St. Anthony’s Catholic Primary School, Picton

Dear Parents & Students

As a result of the heavy rains over the past 48 hours, St. Anthony’s Catholic Primary School at Picton has been significantly inundated by flood waters, as has a large part of the Picton CBD and surrounds. A full assessment of the site was conducted this morning, and I can report that there has been a serious amount of damage caused with many buildings flooded with water up to a metre deep.

Based on this assessment I’m disappointed to tell you that the school is at present unsafe and is unable to be occupied for the foreseeable future. It is likely that the school won’t be able to be fully restored for some weeks. The safety and wellbeing of our students, staff and visitors is my number one priority.

After receiving expert advice, I am declaring that the school site will be closed, until the end of the current school Term. We are presently making appropriate alternative arrangements for all students and staff to return as quickly as possible to a stable learning environment and into a routine of ‘normality’. My aim is to provide students and families with the best alternative experience possible in these difficult circumstances and effectively arrange for the suitable provision of learning and teaching for your child during this time.

As such I am advising of the following temporary arrangements while the school site at Picton is unavailable:

1. All students will be accommodated in classrooms to cater for their learning at the most suitable alternative location, Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Parish Primary School and John Therry Catholic High School, co-located on the same site at Rosemeadow.
2. Students will be transported at no cost to families, via specially chartered and regularly timetabled buses, supervised on board by St Anthony’s teachers. These buses will depart from St Anthony’s at the normal school start time (9:00am) and return to St Anthony’s by the end of the usual school day at 3:15pm.

3. Students will be taught and supervised as usual by their own teachers from St Anthony’s.

4. These arrangements will commence on Tuesday 14 June, to allow sufficient time to set-up the learning spaces, transfer learning materials and resources and deliver and install additional furniture and chairs. This means that for the remainder of this week there are no scheduled classes for all students. I appreciate that this is likely to cause some inconvenience for families, however in these extraordinary circumstances I am grateful for your support, patience and understanding.

More details and updates will be provided to you as necessary. I understand that this is a challenging situation for students and families to have to cope with and I am also aware that many members of the St Anthony’s school community will also be dealing with damage to their homes or businesses at the same time. I appreciate the generous support of the Principals of our primary and secondary schools at Rosemeadow who have been very willing to provide this level of assistance during this situation.

I also acknowledge the wonderful leadership of the Principal, Mr Don O’Brien, so ably supported by the staff of St Anthony’s and I thank them for the care and concern they have demonstrated for the children in the school.

If you have any concerns or questions about this matter, I would ask that you contact Mr Tim Gilmour, in my office on 02 4253 0938 or via email on tim.gilmour@dow.catholic.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Turner
Director of Schools
Diocese of Wollongong