

Covid-19: School Update 5

Dear Parents/Carers,

This update is to advise you of further actions the school is taking to minimise the risk of exposure to the virus. We all know that we can't 100% remove the risk – we can just do the best we can. All these plans will be for the coming week as that is about as far as I can see (and that is being optimistic). They may change day-by-day as situations, advice and system requirements unfold.

I am conscious that changes that might be implemented have the potential to cause some children to become anxious about what is going on. I am trying to keep the changes to a minimum whilst balancing that out with risk management. Parents play an important role in helping manage children's emotions during this time. Minimising exposure to conjecture and sensationalised reporting is a key part of this. Children need to understand that we are just being careful and they need to know that one of the best places to get information from is you.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) provide the following advice to help children cope with stress during this testing time:

- Accept that children may respond to stress in different ways (become clingier, anxious, angry, agitated, bedwetting, etc.);
- Respond to these behaviours in a supportive way;
- Listen to your child's concerns and speak kindly to re-assure them; and,
- Keep to routines and regular schedules as much as possible.

GENERAL HYGIENE

Parents, Carers and children are all aware of the role that proper hygiene plays in minimising the risk of infection. Ensuring that we all wash our hands with soap and water or use sanitiser that is alcohol based (at least 60%), coughing into the inside of our elbow and disposing of used tissues will help with this. Teachers are reminding children of this and, particularly with the younger children, helping them follow these procedures. We are in the process of replacing the hand sanitiser in the student toilets with liquid soap as this will be a more effective hygiene practice.

PEOPLE IN SCHOOL

We have restricted people accessing the school to essential purposes only. This means that if it is not essential for a person to be on school the grounds, then they should not be here. Contractors effecting essential repairs and others carrying out essential programmes are welcome. Visiting salespeople, performers, consultants (for professional learning) and such like will be advised that they can no longer attend to the school (until advised otherwise). Parents/Carers are exempt from this, but I ask that you consider the necessity of your visit. Although it is very important, parent help should not be considered essential in this context.

CLASSROOM ACTION

Reading books will no longer go home for the foreseeable future. Children will still access them in class. Teachers will ensure that children wash their hands or use sanitiser when leaving and entering the classroom for recess and lunch as well as before and after using computers and iPads. Cleaning materials will be in each classroom for teachers to use during the day for high touch areas – to also support the cleaners in managing this aspect of their cleaning role. Sharing of 'touch' materials will be minimised as much as possible.

LIBRARY

We will be closing our library as of today. We have taken this action due to the ability of the virus to remain on plastic covers and hard covers for over 48 hours. As we cannot clean every book after every contact we will not open the library to children. We ask that years K – 3 return all library books to their classroom now and that all years 4 – 6 return their books as soon as they have finished with them this term. Parents who are keeping their children home for medical or precautionary reasons are asked to wipe down the outside of any school library books they have at home with a general purpose cleaner and, if at all possible, return them to school. I know that this is probably not possible for families who are self-isolating.

PLAYGROUND

Some of the extra play-time equipment we put out will be removed, but the remainder will be put out each day. This decision comes back to an earlier point of not changing everything suddenly, which can cause anxiety. As we feel the need, we will reduce access to other components of the 'veranda' equipment. We simply cannot sanitise all touch surfaces in the school grounds.

CLEANING

Apart from their general cleaning requirements, our cleaning staff will increase their focus on disinfecting high contact items in the rooms and facilities.

OUT OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM CONTINUITY

As parents and carers have previously been advised, teachers will provide a modified learning programme for children self-isolating due to underlying health concerns or legal requirements (i.e. returning from overseas or having been in contact with a person diagnosed with Covid-19). At this point in time, teachers will not be providing work for children being kept home by their parent/carer for precautionary reasons. The on-line learning programme will be delivered via See Saw or Connect. For those children who will not receive anything from their teacher, they can still access Mathletics, Reading Eggs and Eggspress on line. Also, parents/carers are able to draw on lessons from an Education Department website (<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/learning-at-home>) that has been developed for this reason. Should you utilise this site, or any other site, please **do not** send the work into the teacher for marking. Teachers have been instructed to only mark or assess work that they have set. Should the school be closed, the on-line learning programmes will be made available to all students via these platforms. Please understand that, should families be dealing with a range of matters, there is no compulsion on parents/carers to access the learning packages. It is not our intention to add to the pressure you or your family may be under.

COMMUNICATION

I know that I am bombarding parents/carers with the same messages across different communication platforms. This is done to ensure that all parents/carers will get the message, so I apologise if this is causing irritation – but it is necessary. Should we need to advise parents of changing situations or school closure (and re-open) I will use the following platforms:

- Personal email;
- See Saw;
- Connect;
- Skoolbag;
- P&C Facebook; and,
- School Facebook;

Please make sure that you subscribe to at least two of these platforms. If your personal email has changed since we last sent out a semester report, it would be appreciated if you would advise us via Bunbury.PS@education.wa.edu.au or through Skoolbag.

If you are planning to keep your child at home because you feel that is the safest thing to do, please let the school know via either of the two methods above. It is important that we monitor attendance during this period of uncertainty.

The following chart may be of help should you or your child become unwell. This is not a diagnostic tool; it is just an indicator – please seek medical advice if you or your child is unwell.

Symptoms	COVID-19 Symptoms range from mild to severe	Cold Gradual onset of symptoms	Flu Abrupt onset of symptoms
Fever	Common	Rare	Common
Cough	Common	Common	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Common
Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
Aches and pains	Sometimes	No	Common
Headaches	Sometimes	Common	Common
Runny or stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
Diarrhoea	Rare	No	Sometimes (esp. in children)
Sneezing	No	Common	No

I hope that this information gives you a clear picture of what we are doing at our school to minimise the risk and that you understand that we are doing the best we can.

Kind Regards,
Shane Doherty
Principal
24.03.2020