

## COVID-19 UPDATE # 7

[www.aspirisps.wa.edu.au](http://www.aspirisps.wa.edu.au)

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Monday 30th of March.

**New Information appears in RED**

Dear School Community,

Thank you so much for your ongoing support during these unprecedented times. As a school, we continue to act upon the regular updates provided by the Education and Health Departments. We will keep you informed as things progress.

In the light of recent developments, I encourage you keep your children with you at home. We understand that there will be exceptions to this, these include: students whose parents are both working; students who are looked after by grandparents; and students who may be unsafe at home. Many of you have already made the decision to keep your children at home, with 90% of students absent today.

### IMPORTANT CHANGES – PLEASE NOTE:

From tomorrow, Tuesday 31 March, parents who bring their children to school will be required to drop them off at the school gate or from their car. In Early Childhood, teachers will collect students from parents at the gates each morning and have them waiting there for pick up each afternoon. Students in years one to six can walk to and from their classrooms in the mornings and afternoons to meet parents at the gate.

**Note: *Only the gates on the Sunray Avenue side of the school will be available for drop off and pick up for the next 2 weeks and into term two.***

In addition, in order to comply with Government mandated social distancing requirements, in the morning and afternoon when waiting at the gates, we ask that you stand 1.5 meters apart on the marks placed at the gates and on paths.

A reminder that, during Week 10, we will be providing supervision for the handful of students in attendance with no formal teaching and learning.

As the Minister for Education has stated, the way we deliver education to students will look very different next term. Our staff have commenced working together on learning content. Next week, staff will be dedicating their time developing tools to deliver teaching and learning from the start of Term 2 in a very new manner.

Once again, thank you so much for your ongoing support during this extraordinary time.

Should you choose to self-isolate your children at any time, please email me at [noel.morgan@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:noel.morgan@education.wa.edu.au).

Please note that it still the position of the school on direction from the Department of Education and the Teachers Union remains for this week that no work will be sent home for students undertaking voluntary self-isolation however, some material is now available on our Website to assist families engage students.

Some very important advice from our School Psychologist, Mr Jon Heath:

- 1. Remain calm and reassuring.**
  - Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up verbal and nonverbal cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.
- 2. Make yourself available to listen and to talk.**

- Make time to talk and to listen. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions. Encourage them to talk their feelings and help reframe their concerns and provide reassurance. Reassure them that they have someone who will listen to them and make time for them.
- 3. Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.**
    - Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19. Also avoid jumping to conclusions about who may or may not have COVID-19.
  - 4. Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.**
    - Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety and worries.
  - 5. Provide information that is honest and accurate.**
    - Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.
    - Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumours and inaccurate information.
    - Emphasize that adults at home and school are taking care of your health and safety. Remind them that if concerned, talk to a trusted adult.
  - 6. Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.**
    - Remind children to stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick.
    - Remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.
    - Discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff. (e.g., increased handwashing, cancellation of events or activities)
    - Get children into a handwashing habit.
      - Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
      - If soap and water are not available, teach them to use hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and childcare facilities.
- **BYO water bottles**  
As per advice received from the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC), it is preferable that students bring their own individual water bottles that can be filled from the fountain as necessary. This will reduce the need for students to drink directly from fountains. The water fountains will be regularly cleaned and checked that they are working correctly with good pressure.
  - The Learning at home <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/learning-at-home/learning-resources-by-year-level> website provides advice and resources for parents, carers and students. This includes a wide range of resources and information related to the impact of COVID-19 on students' health and wellbeing and the impact on families. The website will continue to be updated over the coming weeks.

## TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT COVID-19 – MAGGIE DENT

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/parental-as-anything-with-maggie-dent/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-coronavirus/12081182>

## ONLINE SAFETY KIT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS – ESAFETY COMMISSIONER:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/blog/covid-19-online-safety-kit-parents-and-carers>

## SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES –

- **Only school staff will be allowed on site beyond gate lock in the morning and gate open in the afternoon.** If your child is late for school you will need to attend the Front Office, drop them off and Front Office staff will take them to classes.

- If you are delivering a forgotten lunch or medications etc, bring them to the Front Office and the team will deliver them to classes / teachers.
- From tomorrow, Tuesday 31 March, parents who bring their children to school will be required to drop them off at the school gate or from their car. In Early Childhood, teachers will collect students from parents at the gates each morning and have them waiting there for pick up each afternoon. Students in years one to six can walk to and from their classrooms in the mornings and afternoons to meet parents at the gate.  
**Note: Only the gates on the Sunray Avenue side of the school will be available for drop off and pick up for the next 2 weeks and into term two.**
- In addition, in order to comply with Government mandated social distancing requirements, in the morning and afternoon when waiting at the gates, we ask that you stand 1.5 meters apart on the marks placed at the gates and on paths.

- **No external providers will be allowed on site** - so externally provided Music lessons and visiting Therapists will cease until further notice.

- **Kiss and drop at the Classroom door** – All children are to be dropped off at the classroom door. Parents are not to enter the classroom.
- Events that involve students gathering together for incursions and all excursions have now been cancelled until further notice.
- All school assemblies have now been postponed for ALL of Semester 1.
- After school programs are all now cancelled (not OSH Club)
- We now ask that parents drop all children off at the classroom door and not come into the classroom.
- HEART award processes are currently being revised. More information coming soon.
- After 2 days of critically focused observation, our recess and lunch breaks will remain as they are as we are satisfied that we can maintain the current separation areas in place. There will be no change to Kindy and Pre-Primary times.
- All recess and lunchtime eating will remain in our designated areas and supervised by classroom teachers, to ensure no sharing of food, and to reinforce hygiene practices.
- Students, transitioning between classes and rooms will walk in single file.
- All children are to leave the school grounds with parents on the bell – as articulated previously. This was well done on Wednesday.
- As mentioned previously, students will not be permitted to remain on site after the school bell unless attending an approved organised activity.

#### **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS:**

- Our main form of communication with parents is through our school app Seesaw and email.
- We will send you a text message for urgent matters asking you to check your email.

Please ensure that we have your correct contact details. If you have changed your phone number in the last 12 months, please ensure we have the new number.

#### **HEALTH & HYGIENE PRACTICES-**

- Parents are asked to keep children at home if they are unwell.
- Children will not be permitted to play on any of the school playground equipment after the final bell.
- Our cleaners have ramped up their cleaning processes throughout the school.
- Handwashing must occur on school site before eating, after the toilet and after a break in the playground.
- No face touching (self and others)
- Soap dispensers are full every day.

- Hand washing songs that promote an effective washing time are being promoted through the school.
- Paper towel is replenished every day.
- Please discuss with your child the need to be highly respectful about the resources provided in the school bathrooms (resources are finite, and we have had socially inappropriate actions in some areas of the school that impact on our resource levels and the respect for the work of our cleaners).

## GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Aspiri Primary School Response Team. Our school currently has a school response team that meet as often as required. The team has a school closure plan that will be implemented if directed to do so by the WA Chief Medical Officer or the Government.
- In the event of school closure, our SRT team will ensure the school is in lock down mode, which includes classroom blocks, gates and general entrance to the school. There will be no access to our school until we are advised to reopen.
- Staff Absences: Staff will follow Health Department advice on when they are to stay home. We have some staff members who are either immuno-compromised or have immediate family members who are compromised. I expect our staff to make personal health decisions that are best for them just as I do parents for their children. Currently I expect our staff absences to increase over the coming days / weeks. We will do our best to replace staff when they are absent. In the case where we do not have enough teaching staff to cover our regular classrooms, as per our usual processes, we will be combining classes, keeping in mind trying not to compromise sensible social distancing. In the case of Education Assistants, we will endeavour to replace our special needs assistants. Where we cannot do this, we will endeavour to inform the parent of the student affected.
- We have collated a "Learning at Home" Toolkit which will include a list of apps, websites and links to direct you to some suggested curriculum related activities that can be completed at home. This has been placed on our website. This is a fantastic homework hub. Our aim is to look after our children and families by continuing to work as a school community. We are not currently providing individual homework packages. Our website: <https://www.aspirips.wa.edu.au/>
- **Library Books, Home Readers and study folders will no longer be sent home until further notice. Please return all items to the school if any remain at home.**
- Please do not send your children to school if they are sick. This is a Government directive and we will be asking parents to collect unwell children.
- The situation remains very fluid with updates daily from the Department of Education and Health as well as the Federal and State governments. We are doing our best to interpret this information into detail that impacts our school and our context in order to not overload you with information and provide you with the most relevant detail.
- We now have additional cleaning time allocated to cleaning of all higher risk surfaces several times during the day.
- Despite the closure scenarios being implemented by our private school colleagues, we have been given no indication at this time of any school closure scenarios or timelines. I must remind you that we can only implement closure on the instructions of the Minister for Education and the Director General of Education.
- Give careful thought to information you are hearing via online media sites and blogs that are non-mainstream. We recommend accessing reliable sources such as the ABS News site and similar.
- As expected, many parents are now choosing to keep students at home. As I am saying in my replies to emails requesting permission to keep students home, this remains a family decision which is now supported by the Governments, both state and federal and the Department of Education. In their absence, your child will be marked as Reasonable cause and will require no follow-up. Attendance rates are currently around 40 to 50% and falling.
- Our staff have done an amazing job in preparing for possible closure scenarios- whilst at the same undertaking the many other daily duties required of them. I am eternally grateful for their commitment and energy. We are well positioned to action any future scenarios in support of your child's education.

## **PLEASE NOTE: UPDATE TO TRAVEL ADVICE**

WA external and internal borders have now been closed. The State Government is advising families to stop any travel that is non-essential- both within the state and outside. The Prime Minister has introduced measures banning all new visitors from overseas unless they are Australian Citizens returning to Australia. Should they develop symptoms within this time, please attend a COVID-19 clinic or call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 and advise the school in writing or by calling.

**We recommend any non-essential travel be stopped.**

## **ONGOING .... HERE ARE AREAS WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO FAMILIARISE YOURSELVES WITH:**

1. Children are to be picked up at 2.40pm unless attending before / after school care
2. If possible students should not arrive prior to 8.25am.
3. Children are not permitted to play on any of the school play equipment before and after school.
4. Ensure your contact details are up to date- please contact the office
5. What parents can do to help control the spread of the virus- check websites
6. If your child is unwell keep them at home
7. Check other updates for complete and cumulative information.

## **STEPS THE SCHOOL IS TAKING TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

The need for additional hygiene practices;

- Thorough washing of hands
- Covering mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Avoiding touching their face
- No sharing of drink bottles or food
- Signs on doors to remind students about handwashing and instructions for thorough hand washing displayed in all bathrooms
- Continued provision of liquid soap in dispensers in all toilet blocks
- Additional cleaning of surfaces throughout the School, and particularly telephones
- No shaking of hands

## **IMPORTANT LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-covid-19-countries.htm>

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/news-media/current-alerts/novel-coronavirus>

<https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

Department of Education

<https://www.dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19>

Department of Health

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

Thank you all for assisting in these important containment and risk minimisation measures. Updates will be forwarded as required, and will be available on the school website: [www.aspirips.wa.edu.au](http://www.aspirips.wa.edu.au)

Thank you for your ongoing support to our wonderful school and for supporting the greater interests of the health of our community.

Kindest regards

Noel Morgan

PRINCIPAL