

17 March 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Dear Parents,

I am writing as a follow up to the announcements made on Sunday by the Prime Minister, as well as new advice provided by the Western Australian State Premier and Minister for Education. These relate to the evolving situation in response to COVID-19. But firstly, let me express my thanks to the many parents who have offered their support and appreciated the efforts the school and Leadership have gone to keep people informed, up to date and safe.

Current Situation

A pandemic plan for all WA schools is in place and is being updated by senior CEWA staff in consultation with the Department of Education (DoE) and Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA). A public communication strategy to minimise transmission in the community is in place, including proactive advice to staff and students regarding hygiene and health.

International and Interstate Travel

The Prime Minister has introduced measures placed on international arrivals into Australia. This means a mandatory 14-day self-isolation requirement has been placed on all international arrivals into Australia effective from 9pm (WST) on Sunday 15 March.

As of **Monday (16 March)**, Western Australian schools are required to introduce new precautionary measures. As with all Australian travellers, students and staff who return from international travel must self-isolate for 14 days. This includes all parents, contractors and school visitors. Ideally, students or staff members in the same house as a person self-isolating should make alternative residential arrangements to mitigate any possible spread of the virus. If this is not possible, staff and students residing in the same residence as a self-isolating person **MUST** ensure they do not have any contact with the individual.

School Closures

The Chief Health Officer for Western Australia, Dr Andrew Robertson, has clarified that the basis on which he would direct closure of a school would be a positive COVID-19 test result in a school.

The education sector in Western Australia is working collaboratively to respond to advice provided by the WA Department of Health. There is agreement nationally and at a state level that there is no need to close schools as a pre-emptive measure at this point.

Staff and Student Health is Our First Priority

To date, there are no confirmed cases of COVID -19 in WA schools. If there is a confirmed case, the Chief Health Officer will provide advice on temporary school closure while an assessment and tracing of exposure is conducted. A thorough clean would be carried out to make the school safe for the return of students and staff.

Large Gatherings and Social Distancing

As you would be aware, the Australian Government has announced that all organised, non-essential gatherings attended by more than 500 people must be cancelled from Monday 16 March 2020.

Principals are directed to cancel or postpone all organised, non-essential gatherings of more than 500 people until further notice.

Therefore, we will be cancelling the following events/activities at Infant Jesus School in the interest of all in our community:

- School Assemblies
- Faction Swimming Carnival
- P&F Colour Run
- School and Parish Masses
- School Excursions
- Year 6 Camp (we may look to try and reschedule but cannot make any promises)
- Sports Events (Interschool)
- Some planned Holy Week liturgies and activities
- Fundraising Activities e.g. Cake Stalls etc.

I am aware that some parents have made the decision to keep their child at home for health and safety reasons. As a school, we are in the process of developing a program of learning that will enable students to continue to learn at home. However, given that our teachers are still currently in class teaching this may take some time. Additionally, the work that is provided needs to be consistent with the Learning Intentions and Learning Outcomes for each year level at this particular time. The staff are developing *worthwhile and assessable Learning Activities* that can be delivered at home easily by parents.

Initially, this will be in the form of various worksheets/booklet and activities that students can do. This will be available for parents to collect from the class teacher on Wednesday morning before 8.30am or after 3pm in the afternoon.

However, our aim will be to move to more of a **digital platform** (OneNote, Teams, Explain Everything, Seesaw, videoing lessons etc.) in the coming week/s (particularly if we go into a School Closure situation). This will especially suit our students in Year 3 – Year 6 who are all very capable and competent with the use of their iPad and technology, as well as accessing the different Apps they consistently use in class. Our Year 2 students also have access to an iPad and are all competent with these devices.

Class teachers will continue to communicate to parents via the Seesaw App.

How You Can Assist the School

- Stay Calm.
- Continue to talk to your children about safety procedures and good hygiene practices. Yesterday, Miss Clare Moffat and I spoke to every class about good hygiene and the things we need to be really considerate of at this time
- Monitor your own child's health. There are some members of the community (students, parents and staff) that have various health conditions (e.g. low immunity deficiency) that make them more susceptible than others. If your child is unwell, keep them at home.
- If you have a spare cake/bar of soap (or sanitiser) that you could provide your class teacher that would be tremendous.

- Use the drive through in the morning and afternoon to reduce the number of parents in the school (Obviously not Pre-Kindy, Kindy & Pre-Primary parents)
- Continue to check the **Connected App** and **Seesaw** for updates
- Continue to keep the school informed if you are planning to travel/ or have travelled outside of Australia

I want to reiterate what I have stated all along. We, including all staff, are taking this situation very seriously and are doing everything possible to ensure the safety and well-being of all our students, staff and parents in our community. Thank you for your support during this very difficult and challenging time.

Regards



Paul Hille
Principal
Infant Jesus School