

Dear Parents

I am emailing to inform you of some practices to be implemented, changes and cancellations due to directives from the NSW health dept about CoVid-19 and implications for schools and communities.

I take the advice from our Catholic Schools Office team who in turn take advice from CSNSW (Catholic Schools NSW) and the NSW Dept of Health and government agencies.

Firstly, we have taken a whole school calm approach to the new information and directives and how we are sharing this with the children. I spoke to the whole school about personal hygiene practices and then spoke to each year 3-6 class re: cancellation of events that affected them. Yes we are disappointed but we are also resilient and can move on from this. The children understand this is about the safety and health of everyone in our community.

As the information can change on a daily basis this is what I have at this stage.

School closures:

- There is no Government-mandated closure of schools
- The dates of the upcoming school holidays remain unchanged
- The advice from Commonwealth and NSW governments to keep schools open and operational will be revisited regularly

Preventative measures:

Firstly, the three most important things each and every one of us can do to help manage the spread of the virus are:

- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly.
- Sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, disposing of the tissue straight away and then washing your hands.
- Stay home if you are unwell and in schools, send home staff or students who show signs of being unwell through the day.

At school we:

- Have implemented supervised handwashing for each grade before each meal break.
- Are replenishing the soap and hand towels daily in the bathroom.
- Are disinfecting taps and other surfaces in bathrooms daily.
- Are promoting cough and sneeze etiquette into elbow.
- Are increasing ventilation in classrooms
- do not have any supplies of hand sanitizer in every class. We are trying to source this via the CSO at the moment. You may send personal hand sanitizer with your child if you wish. This will only be for their personal use.

Inter School and whole school events

- Sports Gala days are cancelled this week
- Broken Bay trials for Rugby League, Netball and Hockey are cancelled this week (only applies to those children who had signed up)
- School assembly is cancelled in the hall. We will have a child only (no parents) assembly outside on Wednesday afternoon
- Hot dog day (Wednesday) and canteen will still be on.
- St Joseph's Day Mass on Thursday in the church is cancelled, we will be having a child only short liturgy in the playground

- Any event involving other schools (chess tournament, environment leaders day, year 6 leaders day) are cancelled
- All teacher professional learning at the CSO is cancelled until at least the end of term

Updated travel restrictions, self-isolation and student absence

- The Australian Government has now updated this advice to require that from midnight on Monday, 16 March, any person arriving in Australia from overseas will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.
- The Australian Government also advises all Australians to reconsider their need for overseas travel at this time. Regardless of the destination, age or health, if overseas travel is not essential, people should consider carefully whether now is the right time to travel.
- If you or someone in your household arrives home from overseas you will need to be self-isolated for 14 days. On advice from our CSO officer- **Please also keep at home your child and monitor their health for 24 hours**
- Please inform the school if you intend to travel overseas during the school holidays.
- The health and safety of our students and staff is paramount. If students are unwell or with respiratory illness, they should remain at home until symptoms resolve. Please follow the usual procedure for contacting the school for a child's reasons for being absent. (Compass)

These are certainly interesting and uncharted times. I thank you for your support of these changes and procedures and your continued support of our whole school community. I will endeavour to keep you informed as new information is shared with me.

Please check your school app for push notifications if we need to communicate immediately or on the weekend.

Please do not email your class teacher separately for information about these changes. We are happy to take your call in the office.

Warm regards

Virginia Outred
Principal
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School