



SAINT BRIGID'S SCHOOL COLLIE

Po Box 281 COLLIE WA 6225
205 Prinsep Street Collie

Ph: (08) 97341097

Fax: (08) 97343011

Email: admin@stbrigidscollie.wa.edu.au



Monday, 16 March 2020

Dear parents/carers

I am aware that there may be some concern amongst our school community at the moment regarding the COVID-19 virus and the health of students. Please let me reassure you that the safety and wellbeing of every one of our students is our highest priority. We are working closely with CEWA support staff and following the advice of the Department of Health in dealing with risks posed by COVID-19. Our school is taking all reasonable measures to prevent the spread of the virus at school.

It is important to acknowledge that it can be normal to feel worried or anxious about this situation, parents and children alike. If your children are worried about this virus, you can help them by providing reassurance and perspective – it is unlikely that they will get sick, but if they do, they will go to the doctor. Most children have mild symptoms and feel well again soon. Also remember that speaking with them about increased handwashing, covering their mouth when coughing, sneezing into their elbow and general good hygiene practices will help them feel empowered in this time.

Please keep in mind that as leaders of our school communities, we have an important part to play in promoting good hygiene and public health messages with our students and families that will help contain the spread of this virus and protect those in the community who are at the greatest risk.

As a Catholic community, we can extend our prayers for all of those impacted in Australia and abroad, and show care and support for all members of our community. Much like the flu that affects many people each year, it is not out of the question that people we know may be ill with symptoms caused by COVID-19, and if so, it is important that we offer them our support, while we follow advice from health authorities.

If you would like to talk to your children about the virus, here are some useful resources:

- **How to talk to your kids about coronavirus**

<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/how-talk-your-kids-about-coronavirus-ease-their-fears-ncna1129851>

- **This is a comic for children explaining the coronavirus**

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

- **A 4-minute animated clip for children on coronavirus**

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

For the latest information on the virus, preventative measures, or what to do if you or your child become sick, please visit: https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus

For information on who should or shouldn't attend school, please refer to:

<https://www.cewa.edu.au/novel-coronavirus-update/>

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CEWA Information for Parents and Caregivers (updated 16/3/20)

Catholic Education Western Australia is acting on the advice of the [WA Department of Health](#) to take the necessary precautions for schools and staff.

School closures

If there was to be a confirmed COVID-19 case at a school, the decision to close a school is based on the expert advice from the WA Health Department's Chief Health Officer.

The Chief Health Officer will, if there has been a positive COVID-19 test result in a school, close the school temporarily while assessment and tracing of exposure is conducted. A thorough school clean will then be carried out to make the school safe for the return of students and staff.

In this situation, all families will be immediately contacted by the school and provided with the relevant information.

Travel

The Prime Minister has announced that as of 12.00am 16 March 2020, all people returning from international travel must self-isolate for 14 days after the date of return to Australia.

Parents/carers must notify their school that their child will be absent from school for the isolation period and confirm the date of arrival into Australia.

Parents may want to seek alternative arrangements for their child's remote learning keeping in mind that the isolation period, provided the person remains well, is a maximum of 14 days.

Students do not require a medical certificate or clearance to return to school but must remain at home until 14 days.

Mass gatherings

The Australian Government has announced that all organised, non-essential mass gatherings attended by more than 500 people must be cancelled from Monday 16 March 2020.

Each school will inform parents/carers about events and activities that will need to be cancelled or postponed.

The [WA Department of Health](#) has updated information including frequently asked questions about the COVID-19. To view this information visit healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus

Ongoing updates

The Department of Education, Catholic Education Western Australia and The Association of Independent Schools of WA will continue to respond as a collaborative team to advice from the [WA Department of Health](#) and provide updated advice to schools and staff as appropriate.

For more information

- WA Department of Health: www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus
- Call the **Coronavirus Health Information Line** on 1800 020 080
- For general or travel related queries about coronavirus please go to the [healthdirect website](#).
- Visit the [Australian Department of Health](#) website or details about the novel coronavirus.
- You can also visit the [World Health Organisation](#) website for more information about coronavirus and for updates.

Kind regards,

Daniel Graves
Principal

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