



Covenant Christian School

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18 March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

A Public Health Emergency was declared in the ACT on Monday, 16 March, and this morning the Prime Minister announced further restrictions.

At the moment we are following government advice that it is best for our children to be at school and in education and care services. The ACT Government is recommending, based on health advice and consistent with other states and territories, that schools and education and care services remain open for the foreseeable future. The Prime Minister reiterated the school closure was not being proposed at the present time. The government has restricted gatherings to less than 100 persons in an enclosed space.

Although the current number of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases within Australia is low they have been increasing rapidly within the last week. As a result, we are in the process of creating action plans for prevention and response within our school. We continue to expect that all parents and guardians within the school community will ensure that they are aware of and comply with the government requirements regarding COVID-19. If you or your child does go into self-isolation, please notify the office so that we can provide the necessary educational support for them via Google Classrooms.

School Containment Plans

Infection control: Students are being regularly reminded to wash their hands and use hand sanitizer. It has been advised by the government to keep children a metre apart if possible. Due to classroom limitation this is not possible for our school as we do not have the space or facilities. Instead, students have been talked to about social distancing, using their own belongings and safe play in the playgrounds.

Illness detection: Any students showing symptoms like coughing, itchy throats, shortness of breath, or fever will be sent home immediately. Their desks and equipment will be cleaned; however, no further action is necessary unless they are diagnosed with COVID-19.

Experts note that the novel coronavirus, the flu, and allergies have different symptoms. The main symptoms of the novel coronavirus are fever, tiredness, dry cough, and shortness of breath. Allergies have more chronic symptoms and include sneezing, wheezing, and coughing. The flu has symptoms similar to the novel coronavirus, such as fever and body aches, but influenza usually doesn't cause shortness of breath. If in doubt, please consult a doctor.

Postpone/Cancellation of School Events

As per the government recommendations we have decided to postpone or cancel most of our upcoming school events.

Secondary School Camp: This has been postponed until 21-23 October. Further information will be sent out to parents and guardians closer to the date.

Athletics Carnival: This has been postponed until Friday 16 October 2020.

School Assemblies: There will be no more assemblies of more than 75-80 students. The upcoming Year 2 assembly will be run but only the Kindergarten and Year 1 and Year 2 classes will attend. Parents are welcome to attend this assembly; however, they will be separated at the back from the students and encouraged to practice social distancing by sitting a few chairs away from other parents attending. Secondary assemblies will continue until further notice as they are less than 80 students in total.

Parent Teacher Interviews: Parent teacher interviews have been cancelled in line with the advice given to ACT public schools. Parents are requested to email the teacher(s) that they hoped to meet to arrange an interview. Teachers who indicated a [medium] or [high] level of concern for your child on the Interim Report recently sent home should be given priority. Options include a face-to-face meeting at a mutually convenient time, a telephone conference, or a Google Hangout video call.

School Excursions: Following the lead of many education jurisdictions and other schools across Australia we have decided to cancel all our school excursions.

Regional Swimming: This event has been cancelled.

Student Banking: There will be no more student banking done until further notice.

We understand that these decisions may cause some disruption and inconvenience. However, the safety of our staff, students and broader community remains our paramount concern. These measures are all precautionary to support slowing the rate of infection, not because schools are at increased risk. We continue to work closely with and are guided in our response to these unprecedented times by ACT Health.

Google Classrooms

We intend to use the Google Classroom system as our vehicle to support your children's continuing education should we have to temporarily shut our doors as a result of a corona virus infection. Please make sure that your child has login information and confirm that they can access their covenantsystems.org Google Classroom page(s). For very young students, parents/caregivers should have the access login and password – if you don't, please contact your class teacher for this information. Please attempt to actually login if you have not done so as yet. If this doesn't work, please let your class teacher know so we can resolve the issue straight away. Keep a written record of login username and password handy in case it is needed

School Closure

At this point we intend to continue to offer classes until the scheduled end of term (Thursday 9 April) and resume on Tuesday 28 April. There may be temporary closures in the event of an infection of a student or member of staff being confirmed while we follow ACT Health directives and have the school cleaned – we will notify families by email and SMS should this be the case.

Additional Resources

If you would like to keep up to date with official information regarding the coronavirus you can access;

ACT Health Website: <https://www.health.act.gov.au/>

Australian Government Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.au/>

We have established a webpage where we will post updates and other resources associated with the school's response to developments around the current novel coronavirus (COVID-19) . The link to this website is <http://www.covenant.act.edu.au/alerts-emergency-notices/>

Please note that as COVID-19 is progressing rapidly, these protocols may need to be reassessed and altered. We will update you if there are significant changes or new developments and appreciate your patience and understanding.



Martin Keast
Principal
18 March 2020