

## **COVID- 19 UPDATE 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

Dear All

### **Repeated Messaging**

The following information has been compiled from a number of sources and is the most current information we have at this time.

Our focus remains on providing our education service in a safe environment whilst caring for the safety and wellbeing of all.

The key issues that most people are querying are:

- Self-Isolation
- Travel Advice
- Recording Student and Staff Absences
- Visitors to schools
- Supply Issues

The Australian Government has released a WhatsApp group as well as a new App that provide the most current health and safety advice, information about welfare support and the latest Australian statistics on the virus spread. These can be accessed by visiting [www.aus.gov.au/Whatsapp](http://www.aus.gov.au/Whatsapp) and the Apple Appstore or Google Play.

The latest health advice is available on the Australian Government Department of Health website: [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au)

### **Pandemic Plans**

Just a reminder to keep your school's pandemic plan up dated to reflect the current advice as it becomes available.

### **Term 2 - 2020**

There have been a number of definitive statements made by our Minister, The Hon. Selena Uibo, the Chief Minister and the Federal Minister, the Hon. Dan Tehan over the past few days. Please see the attached statements.

**Minister Tehan** will be varying the approval of all independent approved authorities to include a condition from the commencement of Term 2, requiring schools to provide a physical classroom environment for the children of parents who choose to access it.

A copy of the condition is included in the letter.

ISCA has sought further clarification from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment in relation to how Approved Authorities will be informed of the change and the requirements under the new condition. Please see below the response from Mark Sawade.

*The new condition imposed by the Minister will formalise and mandate the existing request that schools continue to provide the ability for children of essential workers to physically attend a school location where those children are unable to undertake remote learning from home.*

*The department will look to send out letters (via email) to approved authorities as quickly as possible (hopefully today), confirming the application of the new condition and clarifying the requirement for providing a physical classroom environment. Specifically, we will make it clear that there is no expectation that approved authorities need to deliver separate classroom based education delivery (i.e. they are able to have the students at the school undertake the same online education program that is being delivered to those students engaging remotely).*

*The inclusion of the clause in relation to school holidays is intended so that schools, in an extreme example, could not unilaterally decide to cease all forms of schooling and for school holidays or pupil free days to apply for the whole of Term 2 (or beyond).*

*However, there may be reasonable circumstances which would warrant a school requiring a pupil free day - or if jurisdictions needed to make minor modifications to their school holidays in response to the current situation, then that would still be permissible per existing arrangements in that state or territory.*

**The Minister for Education, the Hon. Selena Uibo** sent a letter to all school staff on 8 April 2020 thanking them for their resilience and commitment and stating that:

- Education is compulsory in Term 2 with delivery in Term 2 being determined by the school and tailored to the circumstance of students.
- Decisions about the schooling sector will be informed by National Cabinet and NT Health.

The Minister followed this with a media statement this morning (see attached) confirming that education in Term 2 is compulsory, and stating that:

- Unless the school contacts parents with alternative arrangements, all students are expected to physically attend from Day 1, Term 2, and
- Exceptions can be made for parents who have informed the school their child will be learning from home due to specific circumstances.

As education providers you should continue to act on the advice from Australian and Northern Territory Government.

## **Learning Together Website**

The website provides resources and advice for parents, carers and families when supporting their child's learning in the event of school closure.

<https://nt.gov.au/learning/learning-together>

By the start of Term 2, schools who indicated will also receive printed learning materials, textbooks and pencils to provide to students and families, with remote schools prioritised.

Please also find the following link to the elearn website

<https://elearn.ntschoools.net/user/login?destination=/>

## **Supporting preschool and childcare**

The Australian Government released the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package and the conditions under this package commenced at the beginning of this week.

From Monday 6 April 2020 weekly payments will be made directly to early childhood education and care services in lieu of the Child Care Subsidy and the Additional Child Care Subsidy, to help them keep their doors open and employees in their jobs.

Payments will be made until the end of the 2019-20 financial year and families will not be charged fees during this time.

There have been many concerns raised by schools and child care centres in response to the financial strain that this will place on the centres with the strong possibility of this leading to centre closures.

This has been raised with the appropriate Ministers but no advice has been received to date. It has already resulted in schools and centres having to lay staff off due to the financial burden they are experiencing after just one week into the program.

Please contact Reece Ravlich, email [reece.ravlich1@nt.gov.au](mailto:reece.ravlich1@nt.gov.au) for assistance and advice if required.

## **eSafety resources to support online learning**

The eSafety Commissioner has released resources to support schools and families to discuss eSafety with students and young children - <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

As we move to increased online learning, schools are encouraged to share these resources with families to support their child's learning from home.

## **Travel/Border Controls**

It should be noted that strict border controls remain in place. (For the Latest information from Secure NT: <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/> )

## **Remote community travel**

Remote communities in the NT are closed to all non-essential travel. Only essential workers can now visit remote communities.

Please stay safe and contact Gail for on email [gail.barker@aisnt.asn.au](mailto:gail.barker@aisnt.asn.au) or phone 0429793199 at any time with your queries.