



Dear Parents and Caregivers

### **Update on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Preparedness**

The coronavirus (COVID-19) is continuing to be a growing concern for health authorities worldwide and we are seeing examples in a number of countries of its health, social and economic impacts.

Catholic Education – Diocese of Rockhampton (CEDR) is actively planning to manage the implications of this virus for our schools, kindergartens and services. While we hope to be spared the worst aspects of this health emergency, we must nevertheless be prepared for the challenges ahead.

In addition to the advice of our State and Commonwealth health authorities we would like to advise the measures we will implement for CEDR schools, kindergartens and services as part of our duty of care and commitment to the safety of all members of our communities. We will update this information as circumstances change in line with the professional advice we receive. Updates will be provided through your school, kindergarten/service through the usual communication methods (SMS, website, etc.) and CEDR will post updates to our website <https://www.rok.catholic.edu.au/about-us/news-events/>.

***We ask that you please consider the following advice:***

#### **Health and Hygiene**

Over the coming weeks we will be heavily promoting hygienic practices at all schools, kindergartens and services. There will be renewed emphasis on washing hands several times a day, the availability of hand sanitisers (when they can be sourced), and the correct protocols for sneezing and coughing. A range of material has been supplied to schools in support of this measure.

Our school cleaners have been issued updated protocols for school cleaning practices that prioritise human contact areas – benches, handles, handrails, toilets etc.

We are sharing this information with families to encourage matching behaviour at home. Please talk to your children about the importance of the recommended hygiene practices, especially hand washing, covering the face when sneezing and coughing and so on.

#### **Children Displaying Influenza-Like Symptoms**

As you would be aware the symptoms of COVID-19 are very similar to the symptoms of influenza. The Queensland Health [Time Out](#) sheet provides information on the recommended minimum exclusion periods for infectious conditions and will assist schools and kindergartens to meet the requirements of the *Public Health Act 2005*.

The [Time Out](#) sheet confirms that students displaying influenza-like symptoms are to be excluded until the symptoms have resolved. In the current climate it is important that students who are unwell and displaying influenza-like symptoms do not attend school/kindergarten. Please keep your child at home if they are unwell. Additionally, if you are contacted by the school/kindergarten to collect an unwell child, a timely response would be appreciated.

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### **Children or Family Members being Tested for COVID-19**

Testing for COVID-19 is managed and initiated by health authorities. All students who are being tested will be quarantined by Queensland Health. Students who may have been in close contact with symptomatic family members who are undergoing testing, based on Queensland Health advice, may be asked to self-isolate until testing is undertaken and test results are known.

### **Overseas Excursions**

We are working through a range of contractual and insurance issues but our duty of care for the safety of our students and staff means that we cannot approve overseas travel for students for the foreseeable future. This is subject to review but at this stage we do not have the necessary certainty that the risks are acceptable.

Families of staff and students will make their own arrangements for private overseas travel in the Term 1 school holidays, but please be aware – changing circumstances might mean periods of quarantine in an overseas or Australian location, or self-isolation when returning home. This may impact attendance at work or school/kindergarten and associated services (e.g. OSHC and Kindy Care).

### **Impact on School/Kindergarten/Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) Operations**

You will have seen media reports of schools being closed in areas where there have been COVID-19 outbreaks. Whether schools/kindergartens/OSHC services close will be determined in consultation with Queensland Health and other relevant state authorities. If schools/kindergartens and associated services are required to close at short notice this will be communicated to parents through SMS. Please ensure your contact details provided to the school/kindergarten are up to date.

Parents of children who attend Kindy Care/Outside School Hours Care should also be aware that if staffing numbers are significantly impacted by COVID-19, it is possible that the school/kindergarten may not be able to offer this service for a period of time. As much notice as is possible regarding any service closures will be communicated to families by SMS should this situation arise.

### **Ongoing Communication**

We have a variety of means of communicating with school families and we will continue to use these channels to communicate with our school/kindergarten families as the coronavirus situation unfolds.

Please look out for further communication from us and accept that this communication is an important part of keeping our school communities healthy and safe. We will update information provided as required.

If you have any concerns, please discuss them with your child's teacher or Principal.

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Catholic Education  
Diocese of Rockhampton

Please regularly check the following links to the most current and reputable information about the coronavirus and related topics:

[Rockhampton Catholic Education Office](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) health alert](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) resources](#)

[Smart Traveller](#)

[World Health Organisation \(including some useful training videos\)](#)

[Hand-wash- Hygiene information](#)

[Infection-control-fact-sheet](#)

Let us continue to hold all who may be unwell at this time and all involved in responding to the COVID 19 situation in our thoughts and prayers. Thank you for your understanding and support.

Kind regards

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