



NEWMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Gregory Ave Newman WA 6753 T: (08) 9175 8100 F: (08) 9177 8004 W: newmanshs.wa.edu.au

17 March 2020

Dear Parents & Caregivers – I realise this is a long letter, and hope you find it useful.

This letter outlines information about the COVID-19 situation, so you understand what is currently in place, and the communication that will take place if the current situation changes.

The current situation is that the school is open and will continue to operate.

The changes in place at this point in time include:

- Cancellation of the Interschool Swimming Carnival due to be held in Karratha the end of next week
- Cancellation of Country Week activities
- Postponement of the School Ball
- Postponement or cancellation of excursions including swimming lessons and camps currently on the school calendar
- No school assemblies until further notice
- Board meetings and some other meetings will take place by teleconference.

Where deposits have been paid for events, the school will be in contact to discuss a reimbursement process.

As the school has fewer than 500 people on site, we will continue with currently scheduled recess and lunch, with discussions with students about the importance of social distancing.

While the situation regarding the COVID-19 continues to evolve, the Department of Education sector has established plans and a team to support principals and schools. It is important that as a school community we apply common sense, factual information and a practical approach to COVID – 19.

If a WA school has to close due to a confirmed case, it will be on 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 our school, close our 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 the principal will receive direct advice and support regarding the closure process and communication materials from the Department of Education's Coronavirus support team.

Upon the school being notified, all families will be immediately contacted and provided with the relevant information. This contact may be during the school day, or before or after school. It is therefore important that we have up-to-date contact details for your children, please notify the front office if these have changed.

Parents will also be advised of the extent to which class work can be completed at home during this temporary closure and provided with the details of how this will work.



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While it is acknowledged that this may be a stressful time for the community, parents are reminded that schools open and close all of the time and that the reason for any school closure will be to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

How to minimise the spread of COVID-19

- Frequently washing your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or using an alcohol based hand gel
- Refraining from touching mouth and nose
- If coughing or sneezing, covering your nose and mouth with a paper tissue or flexed elbow
- Dispose of the tissue immediately after use and perform hand hygiene
- Avoiding close contact with anyone if you, or they, have a cold or flu-like symptoms (maintain a distance of at least 1 metre).

Who cannot attend school – advice as at 16 March 2020

The Prime Minister has introduced measures placed on international arrivals into Australia. This means a mandatory 14 day self-isolation requirement will be placed on all international arrivals into Australia.

Students or staff who have been tested for COVID-19 should follow the advice of the WA Department of Health and stay away from school whilst awaiting results.

Students or staff also need to self-quarantine if they have been informed by public health authorities that they have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus. They must isolate themselves for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case.

If you are concerned about your child's health, your family's GP is best placed to ascertain if there is any risk to existing medical conditions, so please make this your first point of call in making assessments as to whether your child should be at school.

COVID-19 symptoms

People with COVID-19 may experience:

- fever;
- flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue; or
- shortness of breath.

For the latest health information and health related enquiries please visit [WA Department of Health](https://www.health.wa.gov.au) or access the helpline 1800 020 080.

COVID-19 testing

The WA Chief Health Officer, Dr Andrew Robertson, has advised people should not go to be tested for COVID-19 to either COVID Clinics or GPs unless they are currently experiencing symptoms and meet the testing criteria.



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To be eligible for testing people must:

- be currently experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough or sore throat AND have
- returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days
- OR be currently experiencing symptoms, and be a contact of a confirmed case
- OR be currently experiencing symptoms and believe they have been in close contact with a person infected with COVID-19.

How can you support your child?

Attached to this letter is some advice from the Australian Psychological Society which may be useful when talking to your child/ren.

How will we communicate with you?

The school will use the usual methods of email, the Skoolbag app and texts to alert you when we send out materials.

Could you please contact the school if you know your contact details have changed. Students will bring home a hard copy of your current contacts tomorrow, and you can return correct details through the front office or via your child.

If you have any queries, please feel welcome to contact me at the school.

Kind regards

Carolyn J Cook
Principal