



St Benedict's Primary School

PO Box 59
NARRABUNDAH ACT 2604

Ph: 02 6295 8027

Email: Office.StBenedicts@cq.catholic.edu.au

Thursday 30th January 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Current Safety Matters

I am conscious that there are a number of health and safety issues which may be concerning you at this time. I hope the following information will assist you in understanding how our school is responding to these.

Novel Coronavirus

You will be aware that there have now been a small number of confirmed cases of the Novel Coronavirus within Australia. Catholic Education has reviewed advice from Australian Government departments and agencies to coordinate our response. Catholic Education will apply the same response as the NSW Government Departments of Health and Education for all of our schools in ACT and NSW.

- Children who have visited China in the past two weeks must not attend school or childcare services until 14 days have lapsed from their date of departure from China.
- Children with a confirmed case of Novel Coronavirus, will be excluded from school or childcare services until they are medically cleared to return.
- If your child has been informed by government health authorities that they have been in close contact with a confirmed case of the Novel Coronavirus, irrespective of whether the child has developed symptoms, they must not attend their school or early childhood centre until the government informs you that it is safe for them to do so.
- If your child has recently travelled to mainland China and develops symptoms, you should contact your primary care provider. Your primary care provider will liaise with relevant government authorities and determine whether or not your child needs to be excluded from their school or early childhood centre.

If you have spent time in Hong Kong, the above advice applies. However, if you have simply transited through Hong Kong airport, it does not apply.

The information below from the NSW Department of Health gives details the guidelines for exclusion from school and early childhood centres and outlines symptoms.

https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/news/Pages/20200128_05.aspx

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/latest-news/advice-for-schools-regarding-novel-coronavirus>

This advice must be followed. Parents and carers need to inform the school if their child has travelled to China or been in contact with someone who has a confirmed case of the virus.

Bushfires

Bushfires have had a direct impact on a number of schools in recent months. Fires continue to burn and may pose an ongoing threat. There is also the very real danger of new fires starting while the weather conditions

remain hot and dry. There may be a need in some cases to close schools in order to ensure the safety of students and staff. Decisions about whether schools should be closed on a particular day are made in collaboration with Emergency Services agencies. Considerations include such factors as the proximity to existing fires and the relevant fire danger ratings for a given day. If a decision is taken to close the school, we will communicate advice to you as soon as possible.

Air Quality

Aside from those schools directly affected by bushfires, many schools have experienced extended periods of poor air quality due to smoke, which has often have come from fires far from where the schools are located. Air quality ratings issued by Government agencies are not accompanied by specific advice for schools. Given the variability of air quality through the course of a day and as different locations may experience different air quality, I have been advised that each school should individually, regularly assess the air quality based on observations and make appropriate decisions. This may include the following precautions:

- Avoiding strenuous outdoor activity;
- Minimising outdoor activity by students whilst at school;
- Taking appropriate preventative precautions for students considered to be at high risk;
- Keeping windows closed and utilising air conditioning systems. Evaporative coolers should not be used where smoke is present as these tend to draw unfiltered air from outside.

I would encourage you to access these resources for further information:

ACT Air Quality

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/environmental-monitoring/monitoring-and-regulating-air-0>

NSW Air Quality

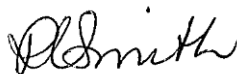
<https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/air-quality/current-air-quality>

Bushfires and Asthma

<https://www.nationalasthma.org.au/living-with-asthma/resources/patients-carers/factsheets/bushfires-and-asthma>

Should you have any concerns for your child's safety on a given day, you are welcome to have them remain at home.

As always, please contact me with any question or concerns.



Rachel Smith

Principal