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24th March 2020

Dear Parents/ Caregivers

Over the coming weeks I will be communicating regular updates relating to the Coronavirus with you via newsletter and our school website www.acaciahill.nt.edu.au.

The advice that I will be providing is from the updates that we are receiving regularly from the Department of Education which is informed from advice from the Australian and Northern Territory Government. You can access up to date information from the NT Government at <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/>.

Our primary focus is ensuring that we continue to provide education in a safe environment. This includes increasing reminders about the good hygiene practices which are always required in our school and also supporting students who may be feeling anxious about the current situation.

Please find attached some tips that may support you in these conversations with your child/ren. The link below is a video message from Professor Di Stephens, the Deputy Health Officer for the Northern Territory Department of Health that provides practical advice from a health expert. [Click here](#) to access video message from Professor Di Stephens.

Just a reminder of when to send your child to school and when to keep them at home:

- People who are not sick will not require testing for COVID-19 and should attend work or school
- People who are sick and meet the criteria – have travelled overseas in the last 14 days or have had **close** contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, will be tested
- People who are sick but **do not meet the criteria** will not be tested. In this situation they should not attend work or school.

As we have many very vulnerable children at our school, please contact the school if you are unsure if your child should attend school in a certain situation.

Current Contact Details

It is important that we have your most up to date contact information in case we need to contact you in the near future. If you have changed your phone number or email address please let us know as soon as possible.

Pandemic Plan

Along with all NT Government schools, we have prepared a pandemic plan for Acacia Hill School. This plan includes procedures in the event of school closure, although at this point in time, the advice is that schools will remain open and until the end of Term 1, parents/carers have the option of choosing whether or not to send their child to school. At the end of this letter, I have included tables and Attachment A from the Pandemic Plan which guide what we would do in various scenarios.

Recent decisions

We are keeping a close eye on the situation and have made some recent decisions in the light of Attachment A in our Pandemic Plan. These decisions are:

1. Minimise visitors to the Acacia Hill School given that we have many very vulnerable students:
 - a. Only essential movement of AHS staff between sites
 - b. Tradespeople come after 3:00pm
 - c. Parents/carers pick up children at front office
 - d. Preschool entry gate is used by some parents/carers. Continue with morning routine as is for the moment. At home time, Preschoolers sit outside and wait for parents there.
 - e. External service providers no longer visit students at school. This includes NDIS and CDT allied health practitioners
 - f. No external use of hydrotherapy pool as of 23/03/2020
 - g. University student programs suspended until 2021
 - h. No pre-service teachers until further notice
 - i. Where a staff member has to move between school sites during the day, strict hygiene routines will be followed
2. Reduce movement of students between sites
 - a. Art and PE lessons provided at host schools
 - b. Assemblies cease to end of Term 1
 - c. Senior Years students Cert I Hospitality will continue at Centralian Senior College kitchen.
3. All local area excursions stop by Wednesday 25th March.
4. Town Pool closed from midday 23rd March.
5. Hydrotherapy pool will remain open
 - a. Julie has advice from the coronavirus hotline that it is safe and the three special schools in Darwin are keeping their hydrotherapy pools open at this stage
6. EAP meetings will be conducted by phone

Yours sincerely

Julie Permezel

Table 2. Travel, Illness, Exposure, and Confirmed Cases
 Contact Director QSSS for any support required including communications.

No	Scenario	Individual action	School action	Notes/considerations
1	Student or staff member returned from international travel on or after 16 March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-isolate for 14 days in accordance with Australian Government requirements • Advise principal • Work from home, or enter special leave as appropriate • Call Regional Public Health Unit 1800 008 002 with any concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal advise Director QSSS • Principal to arrange work package for affected student/s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QSSS to maintain a register of individuals self-isolating
2	Student or staff member is unwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not attend school per normal practices • Seek medical attention as required • Enter leave as appropriate • Call Regional Public Health Unit 1800 008 002 with any concerns • Self-isolate if advised by public health authorities • Keep principal informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow usual practice. • If individual has fever, coughing, shortness of breath or sore throat, isolate them until they depart the school and clean the affected areas following departure. • If individual is self-isolating under advice from public health authorities, Principal to advise Director QSSS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QSSS to maintain a register of individuals self-isolating • Staff self-isolating to work from home or access leave arrangements in accordance with advice from OCPE
3	Student or staff member is not unwell , but has had contact with a sick person or a suspected case of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action required, unless advised otherwise by public health authorities • Call Regional Public Health Unit 1800 008 002 with any concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal advise Director QSSS if individual is self-isolating under advice from public health authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QSSS to maintain a register of individuals self-isolating
4	Student or staff member is not unwell , but has been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-isolate if advised by public health authorities • Advise principal • Enter leave as appropriate • Call Regional Public Health Unit 1800 008 002 with any concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal advise Director QSSS if individual is self-isolating under advice from public health authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave arrangements in accordance with advice from the Commissioner for Public Employment apply • QSSS to maintain a register of individuals self-isolating
6	Student or staff member is advised by public health authorities that they are a suspected case of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not attend school • Seek medical attention as required • Self-isolate as advised by public health authorities • Keep principal informed • Enter leave as appropriate • Call Regional Public Health Unit 1800 008 002 with any concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate individual until they depart the school • Arrange immediate thorough clean of affected areas following individual's departure • Advise Director QSSS to coordinate departmental support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave arrangements in accordance with advice from the Commissioner for Public Employment apply • QSSS to maintain a register of suspected cases

No	Scenario	Individual action	School action	Notes/considerations
7	Student or staff is a confirmed case of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-isolate as advised by public health authorities • Seek medication attention as required • Keep principal informed • Enter leave as appropriate • Call Regional Public Health Unit 1800 008 002 with any concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate individual until they depart the school • Advise Director QSSS to coordinate departmental support • If approved, implement immediate school closure • Provide communications to school community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoE Chief Executive provides approval to close school • School closure process below to be activated • Leave arrangements in accordance with advice from the Commissioner for Public Employment apply • QSSS to maintain a register of confirmed cases

Table 3. School Closure Scenarios

Scenario	Initial Trigger	Rapid Assessment	Action Plan	Decision	During closure	Recovery and re-opening
Staff member or student is a confirmed case of COVID-19	Principal advised that a student or staff member has been diagnosed with COVID-19 Action: Principal advises Director QSSS	DoE confirms diagnosis with Centre for Disease Control Action: Director QSSS contacts Regional Public Health Unit 1800 008 002 to confirm diagnosis	Communications package developed Action: Comms and media work with principal adapt template comms for school	DoE Chief Executive approves temporary school closure of the entire school site, including any ancillary programs and services (eg OSHC, child care etc)	Principal ensures initial and regular communication with staff students and parents Where school closure exceeds three days, education provision to be provided where possible.	A decision to re-open a school will consider the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice from the Public Health Directorate. • Has the school been cleaned appropriately? • Availability of staff to meet industrial and regulatory requirements. • Approval of the DoE Chief Executive and/or the Chief Minister through TEMC.
Staff shortage that is unable to be managed within normal school processes	Principal identifies a staff shortage that affects the school's ability to continue to deliver an education program, and cannot be managed through normal school processes Action: Principal advises Director QSSS	Action: Director QSSS immediately convenes an assessment team including principal, Director QSSS, SD/ED SIL. Primary consideration is whether appropriate student/teacher ratios can be maintained. Consider options including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redeployment of staff from a neighbouring school or central office • Merging of schools or implementing a pop-up school concept 	Education Delivery Plan developed, including communications package, based on outcomes of assessment team. Options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued program for all students at enrolled school • Establishment of blended or pop-up schools • Partial program (for some students) • School closed, and alternative education delivery plan activated 	DoE Chief Executive approves Delivery Plan if it involves a school closure or partial closure.	Reasonable steps taken to protect the security of the school during the closure. If needed, Principal arranges thorough clean of school in accordance with advice from the Department of Health . If this is in response to a	Communication with staff and parents to confirm re-opening date and any special arrangements.

Scenario	Initial Trigger	Rapid Assessment	Action Plan	Decision	During closure	Recovery and re-opening
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of relief teachers • Restructuring/combining classes • Partial delivery (e.g. to year 11 and 12 only) Need to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Council Chair briefing • AEU consultation • NAPLAN and other critical assessments • Impact and alignment with FAFT, ECEC, OSHC services. 	Action: ED SIL approves delivery plan (or endorses to DCE and CE if it involves a school closure) Comms and media prepare comms to staff and parents		confirmed case of COVID-19, DoE will work with the Public Health Directorate to facilitate this work.	
School is to be closed as an emergency management measure	Chief Minister decision		Template communications package developed in readiness School based action plan implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work packages provided • Comms plan enacted • Security processes activated 	Chief Minister determines that school is to be closed.		

Table 4. Education provision in the event of school closure

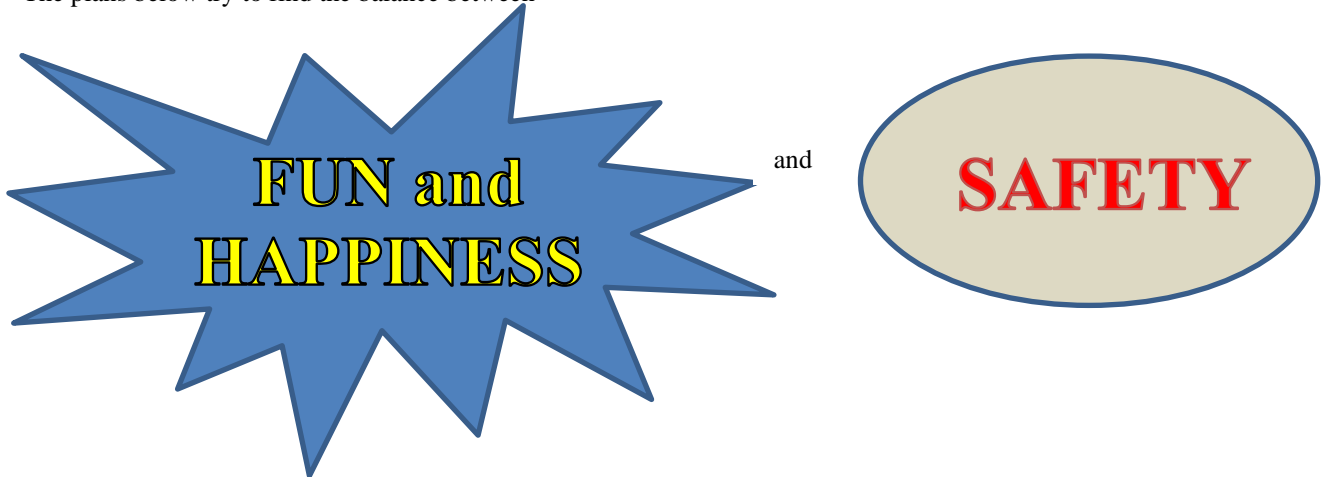
Scenario	School responsibilities	Department responsibilities
School is closed for up to 3 days or as otherwise advised by NT Health Directorate.	Nil educational provision required in the event a school is closed for up to three days. Communication with families and staff regarding school closure.	Corporate comms to provide template for correspondence to staff and families
School is closed for longer than 3 days	Provide a 14 day package of school work in the mode identified by the school – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paper based work package - Pre-existing Online learning program/platform - Blended mode 	DCIS provide support material to guide teachers on how to maximise Skype for teaching and learning provision Corporate comms to provide template for correspondence to staff and families
School is closed longer term and due to staff illness is unable to create teaching and learning programs	Principal to notify Senior Director of School Improvement and Leadership that staffing illness has resulted in the inability to create and deliver teaching and learning programs.	Develop a platform to provide schools and families with access to School of the Air and Distance Education teaching and learning materials

	<p>Principal to work with Senior Director of School Improvement to identify method to notify parents of the arrangements for students to access ongoing teaching and learning.</p> <p>Principal to determine the scope of the curriculum provision that needs to be provided, specifying year levels and subject areas.</p> <p>School of the Air and Distance Education paper based and online teaching and learning programs accessed to provide teaching and learning to students.</p>	<p>Collaborative approach to the creation and distribution of education packages in online and hard copy. Identification of a production team that will support hard copy provision of programs for those families and students who are unable to access online.</p> <p>Develop a communication plan to ensure parents are aware of the location of the materials and how to access them</p>
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Acacia Hill School Pandemic Plan

Attachment A

The plans below try to find the balance between



While no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Central Australia and the NT

- Keep usual routines as far as possible.
- Run everything through
 - a COVID-19 Risk Management lens
 - if needed, run by the **Coronavirus Hotline 1800 020 080**
 - Ensure parents/carers are included in conversations and deliberations.
- Any Category A excursions still going ahead must NOT go to the hospital, health centres or aged care facilities.
- Regularly reinforce the hygiene requirements for all staff and students. All of us remind each other and senior staff walkarounds.
- Handwashing lessons for students from school nurse.
- Assemblies stopped for Term 1 due to
 - Possibility of >100 people indoors
 - Inability to comply with 1.5m social spacing
 - Staff and students from six different schools coming together into one space.
- Fly In Fly Out allied health practitioners no longer visiting students at Acacia Hill School.
- Alice Springs Aquatic Centre
 - Classes of more vulnerable students have cancelled weekly swimming after consultation with parents/carers.
- Outside users of the hydrotherapy pool are notified that if there are any cases of COVID-19 in the Central Australia, they won't be able to use the pool any more. They are required to notify the school if any of their clients have had any contact which may be a problem.
- NT DoE Work Experience program ceased 20/03/2020.



- RDA, AFL NT ceased Week 8 Term 1 2020.

If there are more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Northern Territory after the original case on 5th March 2020

- Regularly reinforce the hygiene requirements for all staff and students. All of us remind each other and senior staff walkarounds.
- Handwashing lessons for students from school nurse.
- Outside providers use of the hydrotherapy pool will cease.
- The Student-Physiotherapy program will cease.
- Run the following through a COVID-19 Risk Management lens with principal or assistant principal; if needed, the **Coronavirus Hotline 1800 020 080**; and ensure parents/carers are included in conversations and deliberations:
 - Satellite classes coming to Acacia Hill School (teacher non-contact time)
 - NDIS allied health providers and other visitors attending students in class
 - Parents or carers going to classrooms to pick up their child
 - Category A excursions
 - Swimming at the Alice Springs Aquatic Centre
 - Student use of hydrotherapy pool
 - Work experience.
- The Senior Years Satellite students will remain at Centralian Senior College. The classroom is in a position where students can remain away from other students and staff if required.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in Central Australia

- Regularly reinforce the hygiene requirements for all staff and students. Senior staff walkarounds.
- Handwashing lessons for students from school nurse.
- Satellite classes will stop coming to Acacia Hill School. Non-contact time will be provided at the host schools.
- The Senior Years Satellite students will remain at Centralian Senior College. The classroom is in a position where students can remain away from other students and staff if required.
- NDIS allied health providers and other visitors will no longer be able to visit students in class.
- If a parent or carer wants to see a child or pick them up, they will tell the office staff who will organize for the child to be brought to the front office.
- All Category A excursions will cease.
- Swimming at the Alice Springs Aquatic Centre will cease.
- Use of the school hydrotherapy pool will cease.
- Work experience will cease.

