



Dear Parents and Guardians

## **CORONAVIRUS – ADVICE TO PRIMARY PARENTS**

At a time when the continually changing advice in relation to the coronavirus (COVID-19) dominates our conversations and the media, it is important that our community maintains an informed and proactive approach to minimising the risk for our students, staff and families. The staff at JWACS are working to maintain a positive learning environment for all students whilst being diligent about following the advice as it becomes available. To this end, Ms Ford, our Principal has been writing to families with updates. Some considerations relate particularly to Primary and so I ask that you please read the information provided below so that we can work together to minimise the risks.

### **EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**

Young children are ‘tuning in’ to this issue as it is constantly discussed in the media, amongst families and out in the community. It is important that we take measures to ensure we support our children to stay emotionally healthy during this period. In seeking information in this regard, the Association of Independent Schools WA has sent a link to a useful document. You can access this document using the link below. It has a really helpful section relating to *Tips for talking with children about the coronavirus*.

<https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/38073179-4701-48bd-afd9-988c560ee2f9/20APS-IS-COVID-19-P1.pdf>

If you are concerned about your child’s wellbeing, please speak with your child’s teacher in the first instance.

### **IMPORTANT STRATEGIES AT SCHOOL**

#### **Handwashing**

At our recent assembly on Friday 13 March 2020, the Principal reinforced to the children this important preventative measure, sharing advice about how long and how best to wash their hands. Your child’s teacher will continue to promote this essential hygiene practice and we will now make it routine that children wash their hands before, and after break times and when using the bathroom. We would also welcome your support in reinforcing this message at home.

#### **Water bottles**

We are actively encouraging children to bring their own water bottle and not to share with others. We thank parents in advance for sending named water bottles with children each day.

#### **Social distancing**

This aspect is very challenging in a Primary environment, particularly with our youngest students. We are putting in place strategies but ask that parents support us regarding what can be achieved realistically in practice when working with young children. We have suspended the act of handshaking at assemblies, high fives during class and other similar forms of physical contact. The layout of classrooms will also alter as teachers have been provided with advice which suggests that it is best to create an environment where each student has their own space. Social distance measures have been implemented during eating times. Students are also being reminded of how it is best to cough or sneeze into a tissue or where a tissue is not available, into the elbow. Posters showing this are on display around the School.

#### **Shared fruit and birthday treats**

In our Early Learning Centre, the practice of parents bringing in food for sharing amongst our Little Wollies, Kindy and Pre Primary classes now ceases due to the risks associated with this practice at this time. Instead, parents are asked to provide their child with a small, individualised amount of fresh fruit and/or vegetables in a container which their child can open and eat from without assistance.



Across the rest of our school, the sharing of any food, but particularly items such as cake, cupcakes or any other food prepared at home or that has not been supplied in an individualised package (such as Freddo Frogs, etc.) will not be allowed to be distributed amongst students. Even though the sharing of food between students is not currently encouraged at our school, this message will be reinforced.

### **Parent help - assemblies, excursions and other gatherings**

As shared in the Principal's communication, all assemblies, services, excursions and some incursions for Primary will be postponed until further notice. Encounter experiences are also postponed indefinitely.

In particular, the following applies for Primary:

- Edu-dance lessons **will continue** but we will explore ways to share their dances later in the Term without gathering as a group if possible. There will not be a concert on the scale of previous years.
- Tee ball and Run Club **will not continue** after Wednesday 18 March.
- Due to issues with cash handling, School Banking **will not continue** until further notice.
- Swimming Training sessions at Armadale Aquatic and Fitness Centre **will not continue** as this is classified as an excursion.

### **School Closure**

Should a member of staff or a student in our school test positive, the School will close. If directed by authorities, all schools may also be required to close for a period. In the event that John Wollaston is closed, our teachers will prepare and deliver learning activities and resources using existing online platforms. Please ensure you are able to access SEQTA (K-6) and SeeSaw (K-4) as these will become important sources of information in the case of a school closure.

In order to support Primary teaching staff can you please note the following:

- It is important that teaching staff are able to focus on delivering the face-to-face program and working with students regarding the changes already mandated for schools. This is their core business. It is not my expectation that teachers will provide detailed programs for Primary students who are being kept at home during this time. They will, however, provide information in the form of a "Continuity of Learning Resource Sheet" that will be sent to students in this situation. This resource focuses on Literacy and Numeracy in the child's year level.
- In the event John Wollaston closes, teachers will be prepared for the continuity to teach your children using SEQTA and SeeSaw to communicate. Parents will be notified should this eventuate.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents who have supported our community at this time. From ideas to help minimise risks, supporting us when we have had to make decisions and following the protocols around notification and self-isolation, we are grateful to have you working alongside us.

I like to ask myself, *'What would we want to be able to say about our community's response to this event in the future?'* I hope we can say that we were informed, proactive (but not alarmist) and that we cared for each other by doing the right things at the right time for ourselves and others.

Ongoing communication and information will be sent through SEQTA. Please check regularly and do not hesitate to contact myself or our Principal Anne Ford if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely

**TRACEY ROGERS**  
**HEAD OF PRIMARY**

18 March 2020

cc Anne Ford, Principal  
Primary Staff