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Hello to all Carers and Staff,

Firstly, I want to thank staff again for their sustained hard work and commitment to the students in their care. Unless you are working in this arena, I don't think you can really understand just how intense this period has been for educators (and it is certainly not a simple matter that relates to contact time).

As you can imagine, it has been a hectic couple of days for schools as they re-consider options moving forward. Port School is in a fortunate position, in fact I would say almost unique. We are a small school with a spacious campus and generally very small class sizes. This will enable us to be much more successful at putting in place social distancing measures, which I know is one of the major concerns of larger schools.

Having carefully considered the research and tested various scenarios, we plan to re-open the School for face-to-face teaching on Tuesday April 28.

Families will still be given the option of keeping their child at home and we will endeavour to support them with work packs and staff support.

I don't plan to rehash all of the research and related articles looking into Coronavirus, but here are a few key points:

- Nationally, the growth rate has been under 1% for seven consecutive days.
- Nationally, Australia has one of the highest testing rates per capita.
- Nationally, Australia has one of the best symptomatic case detection rates in the world.
- In WA, if one takes out the cruise and overseas travel-related cases, the actual number of cases diagnosed through community transmission is incredibly low. There were no new cases reported in the last 24 hours and only two in the previous 48 (one directly related to travel and one a close contact of a traveller).
- In terms of children aged from 0-9 years, there are 2.3 cases per 100,000 residents and for 10-19 year olds, that figure is 6.3 per 100,000 residents.
- The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) are still indicating that this respiratory disease does not appear to behave like normal flu-like infections, and that children do not appear to have caused any types of outbreaks across a global scale (as adults via weddings, aged care facilities and the like have been shown to do). Hence their advice from the outset has been that schools appear to be safe places. Even within a school context, how we manage adults will be significant.
- For those who want more information, this is a helpful link that I have been tracking closely: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-17/coronavirus-cases-data-reveals-how-covid-19-spreads-in-australia/12060704>

**Key reminders regarding hygiene and health to continually reinforce in the home and at school:**

- Continued emphasis to be placed regarding regular and thorough washing of hands (for twenty seconds).
- Coughing and sneezing into an elbow or a tissue (with the tissue to be discarded immediately, bins are available in all classrooms as well as placed around the school).
- Social distancing measures need to remain in place (1.5 metres).
- If your child is sick and shows any symptoms whatsoever of a respiratory illness, keep them at home.
- Self-isolation requirements remain in place if symptoms develop and a test is undertaken until such time as that person (or family) is cleared by a medical practitioner.

**School processes that are being developed:**

- Parents are to remain in their car during school drop-offs.
- Break times will be managed, if necessary, to allow social distancing.
- The classroom physical layout will be modified to manage social distancing requirements.
- There will be no co-curricular activities, school assemblies or other mass gatherings for the remainder of the term.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles. There will be one refill station.
- There is to be no sharing of food. The canteen will still be open, serving takeaway food only.
- Hand sanitiser will be located in all classrooms.
- Doors and windows will be open throughout the day to minimise touching of hard surfaces and to improve air circulation.
- We are still in the process of sourcing contactless thermometers, but regardless, there will be, at a minimum, spot checks taken to gauge any signs around fever.
- Posters will be placed around the School reminding everyone to wash their hands regularly and to maintain the 1.5 m social distancing requirements.

**Cleaning:**

- Additional cleaning regimes will take place on campus during the school day, in addition to the existing after hours cleaning arrangements. Regularly touched hard surfaces and the bathrooms will be cleaned regularly throughout the day.

I have tried to keep this communication brief but thorough enough for you to have a clear picture as to how we plan to manage the return to school. We encourage all families to strongly consider sending their child back to school. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have further queries.

Best Regards,



Barry Finch  
Principal

21 April 2020