



## **Update on managing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in our schools**

**16 March 2020**

As you would be aware, events are moving swiftly in relation to the national and ACT Government responses aimed at limiting the potential spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in our community.

### **Cancellation of school events**

Over the weekend a meeting of the National Cabinet, the Australian Government announced that all organised, non-essential mass gatherings attended by more than 500 people must be cancelled from today, Monday 16 March 2020.

This announcement does not recommend school closures however, it does apply to a range of school events and events organised by school communities.

From today, the following events will no longer proceed in ACT public schools, including ours:

- school or regional/ACT swimming, athletics and other sporting events, large band or other music concerts where there would be large gatherings of students
- school assemblies
- parent/teacher nights
- school open days/nights.

For us, this means assemblies will not be held. This starts today. We are also cancelling Running Club, Choir, Year 1 Botanical Gardens excursion, Cross Country and Zone swimming. We will be running a modified Harmony Day - there will be no events on the kickabout, and activities will happen within class time. Please encourage your child to dress up.

For the year 1 excursion we will reschedule later in the year so we will hold onto funds and reallocate to the excursion when it occurs.

Our school community will also need to look at how this impacts on planned school events, celebrations and other large gatherings we have planned in our school calendar in coming months.

### **Cancellation of school excursions**

All local and interstate school excursions, including camps are also being cancelled - effective from today 16 March. This includes excursions outside the school such as visits to cultural institutions, art galleries, theatres and sporting events or facilities (other than those



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at local facilities regularly used by the school such as sporting grounds or swimming pools). All camps scheduled to commence from tomorrow must be postponed and rescheduled, or, if there is no other option, cancelled.

We understand that this will cause some disruption and inconvenience but the safety of our staff and students remains our paramount concern. These measures are all precautionary to support slowing the rate of infection not because schools are at increased risk. The ACT Education Directorate will continue to be guided in our response to these unprecedented times by, ACT Health.

### **Frequently asked questions**

A Frequently Asked Questions document is now available for school communities. You can access this via the COVID-19 link on the front of our school website. I have also attached this to this email. This document will continue to be updated this document in coming days and weeks.

You can keep up to date through the ACT Health website ([www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)). This is where the latest health advice is available. People can also call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on [1800 020 080](tel:1800020080) for further information on COVID-19. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### **Alert for regular updates**

I anticipate that there will be further developments as the ACT Government plans for the spread of COVID-19 in our community. Please be alert for regular email updates from me as we keep you posted on all developments in this rapidly evolving situation.

### **Additional information and resources**

The Australian Government's advice on how to manage isolation and other information on COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncovhealth-alert>.

ACT Health advice can be found here:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/coronavirus-faqs.aspx>. The Australian Government has a dedicated Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Information Line, which operates 24-hours a day, seven-days a week: telephone 1800 020 080.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we navigate this unprecedented situation and finalise carefully considered plans, centred on the ongoing safety of our students, staff and the Franklin Early Childhood School community.

Regards,

Kate Flynn  
Principal