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COVID 19 Response Management Plan

Purpose

This document outlines the school's response to the COVID 19 Pandemic with clear information about procedures and decision making used to minimise the risks and impact of the pandemic on the safe and effective operation of the school.

This update is in response to a Department of Education and NSW Department of Health advice sent to NSW schools on January 2021.

Definitions

COVID 19 is the Corona Virus declared as a pandemic by the WHO in March 2020. The virus has cold and flu like symptoms that can lead to pneumonia and death. The transmission rates can be high where steps are not taken to minimise the spread of the infection.

Physical Distancing: keeping 1.5m apart where possible. No handshakes, hugs, or touching. Minimize large gatherings. Restrictive measures can be changed on short notice.

Self Isolation: stay at home for a period of 14 days from being in contact with a person with COVID 19, stay at home if you have been tested for COVID 19 and are awaiting the results, and do not attend public places, schools, universities, hospitals or aged-care facilities.

Quarantine: stay at home for a period of 14 days on return from overseas. Use a high level of hygiene in the house if living with others; wear a mask when mixing with others in the house; use own utensils, linen etc; outside only in the garden or verandah; consult a physician if you develop any symptoms.

Negative COVID 19 test: all staff and students are recommended to have a COVID 19 test if they are away from work/ school because they have flu like symptoms and be free of symptoms before returning to school.

Flu like symptoms: fever (37.5 ° or higher), cough, sore throat, shortness of breath (difficulty breathing), loss of smell. Other reported symptoms of COVID-19 include fatigue, runny nose, muscle pain, joint pain, headache, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, and loss of appetite.

School closure or restriction: The school is closed to everyone or closed to students and parents but open to staff.

Non essential persons: only staff and students are permitted on the school grounds. All non essential persons including parents are not permitted on the school grounds. Trades people and contractors give written assurance of understanding and adhering to COVID safe practices while on the campus.

Covid Safe Practices: Covid marshal/reception staff in attendance; maintain social distancing at all times; wash or sanitise hands; sign in with name, contact number and time and reason for being on campus

The Management Team

The Principal, the Executive Committee and the Board Chairperson work together to manage the response to the pandemic. The Principal takes the lead role, calling and holding meetings, phone conferences and email exchange to respond to the changing conditions of the pandemic and notifications from the various government agencies.

The Management team is also in contact with regional the Department of Education, Steiner schools, the SEA and the AIS to keep abreast of school responses to the pandemic. The Principal relays updates on an ongoing basis to the School Community and to staff and delegates tasks on an as needs basis.

The Management Team will create risk assessments as needed in any areas related to the ongoing pandemic.

Strategies

1. Adhere to advice from authorities and follow school policies

Follow advice from government departments

It is the policy of the School to follow closely the directives of the Departments of Health and Education and to implement the directives as soon as possible.

Follow school Policies and Procedures

The school also reserves the right to act according to its Policies and Procedures regarding Child Protection and Safe Environment, Work Health and Safety and other policies and procedures which may relate to response to the pandemic.

Responsibility of the Principal

The Principal must ensure that all users of school facilities and visitors to the school are aware of physical distancing, health and hygiene measures required by the school and receive written communication of this understanding.

2. Communication

The Principal keeps the school community informed on a regular basis with any changes, government directives or advice in responding to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Principal communicates with staff on a day to day basis through meeting and emails and with a regular weekly staff meeting. The Principal provides staff with a written understanding of COVID Safe practices to sign and date as understood and responsibility to adhere to.

The Principal communicates regularly with the AIS, Education Department and regional Steiner School leaders to keep abreast of all new developments.

The Principal delegates communication with other bodies such as the bus companies to ascertain their actions in regards to the pandemic and minimising contagion.

3. Health of staff and students

Staff are expected to monitor their health and if they are feeling unwell to stay at home until they have recovered. Any staff with illnesses or low immunity take extra precautions.

Parents are asked to keep children at home if they have a cough, fever or feeling unwell. Children who present with cough and flu like symptoms at school are sent to the sick bay, kept separate from others and picked up asap by parent/carer. Staff who deliver first aid or care use personal protection. Parents are advised to keep their child at home and consult their GP.

If a student has been absent due to flu like illness or develops flu like symptoms while at school, they are not to return to school until they are symptom free.

If the person presents with symptoms consistent with COVID 19 and/or there is a risk they have been a close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID 19 they should seek appropriate care and maintain 14 days of self isolation/quarantine or as advised.

All staff practice physical distancing from each other and all other adults, handwashing and good hygiene practices when coughing, sneezing and nose blowing.

The Principal manages staffing in the case of staff shortages due to illness by engaging specialist teachers and relief staff and combining classes when relief staff is unavailable.

4. Attendance records

Students are marked either:

Attending school – marked as *present*

Students who are encouraged to stay at home and provide reasonable evidence of remote participation - marked as *present*

Students who are encouraged to stay at home and do not provide reasonable evidence of remote participation - marked as *absent*

At home because they are currently unwell marked as *sick*

At home due to self isolation marked as *explained absence*

Students who are at home waiting for a COVID 19 test result are marked *explained absence*

At home because they have a medical certificate which states they are unable to attend school due to testing positive to Covid 19, an ongoing medical condition or in limited cases where there is a family member with an ongoing medical condition *explained medical absence*

A student who is absent for more than 3 days without a medical certificate is recorded as an *unauthorised absence*

5. School cleaning and hygiene

School implements an upgrade of cleaning practices with attention to door handles, toilets and surfaces. Hand sanitizers made available at all handwashing stations and in classrooms for staff. Classrooms are cleaned at the end of each day.

Where there is sharing desks and chairs, students are asked to sanitise surfaces and backs of chairs at the end of the lesson.

Cleaning supplies stock is kept up to date.

Additional cleaning or relief cleaning staff are engaged on an as needs basis.

Students wash hands with soap before eating and after toileting.

Students should not use the bubblers but bring their own water bottles to fill from the bubblers. Sharing of food and personal belongings is not permitted.

Tissues used for sneezing, coughing and nose blowing are binned. Students should not touch the bins, which need to be emptied at least daily.

Any shared items such as musical instruments and classroom tools are cleaned between uses.

7. School buses, drop off and pick up

Pick up and drop off are not times for socialising or talking with teachers or allowing children to stay and play. Parents are not permitted on the school grounds. Parents are required to remain 1.5m apart from other adults at pick up time in the designated areas and to leave immediately with their child(ren).

For the beginning of term 1 parents of children in Class 1 are permitted to park in the bottom car park and escort their children along Lilly Pilly Lane and path to the verandah near the class 1 classroom.

Kindergarten parents may park in the bottom car park and escort their children to the Kindergarten garden.

8. Special Meetings

In the case of the need for a special parent teacher meeting either with individual parents or a group of parents Covid Safe practices are adhered to. Individual meetings are booked through the office and groups meetings will be arranged using a Covid marshal and using Covid Safe practices.

9. School closure

Person on campus identified to have COVID 19

If there is a case of a staff member or student who is identified to have Covid 19 and who has been on the campus in the previous 14 days, the school is closed until thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Persons who have been in close contact with the person are identified and maintain self isolation for 14 days and seek testing for COVID 19 symptoms.

Directive from authorities to close the school

Where the school is advised by the government to minimise the spread of the contagion, the school is not closed but parents are encouraged to keep their children at home.

Where the school is advised to close its premises due to an outbreak in the school community, the local community or on the decision that all schools are closed, the school organises for the students to go home immediately.

Changing to remote student learning

In the case that the students are required to stay home, teachers prepare and send out work for the students to continue with until the school reopens. The work can be sent by email or post.

Staff activity in the event of school closure

Teaching staff prepare and send lessons to parents and respond to correspondence from parents regarding their child's learning. Parents are encouraged to maintain a daily and weekly rhythm for learning. This will be planned with the Principal, the College of Teachers and the the Subject Teachers.

Admininstration and mainteneace staff continue to work as usual and at the discretion of the Principal and in line with the advice of authorities.

The Principal will send a letter to all employees regarding expectations of work schedules in the event of the school being closed to students.

10. Financial

The school's finances will be closely managed by the management team.

Circumstances allowing, staff employment will be maintained as currently contracted or stood down by mutual agreement. The School will keep abreast of any associated Government funding.

Associated documents:

Staff COVID Safe written agreement form
Permitted visitor COVID Safe agreement form
COVID 19 Risk assessment 200824
COVID testing register for students
COVID testing register for staff