

Dear parents/guardians

I am writing to share some of the key information we have available to us at this time.

We are thankful that so far we have remained safe and well since returning to school. We are grateful that our staff and children have not suffered from COVID related illness and we pray that this will continue.

Our city is relatively small in terms of this pandemic and there appears to be a rise in positive cases. Unfortunately, some schools in the local and wider community have already had to take actions to send 'class bubbles' home to self-isolate. We are learning from all of these situations. To date, some adults and children have and are self-isolating due to 'close contact' with a positive case. We have followed strict advice from PHA for all cases and acted accordingly. We have not had a positive case within our school or class bubbles and so have avoided the need to send bubbles home to isolate. We are keen that this will continue but realise that it may be highly unlikely with the current high numbers in the community.

As a team we have plans in place to manage the range of scenarios that may arise in the coming weeks and months. The current advice is self-isolating for 'close contacts' of a positive case is 14 days' and 10 days' self-isolation if you are the 'positive case'. This is relatively short and not in any way comparable to the months we faced during lockdown. For some members of our school community they will feel well enough to complete school work during isolation while others may feel sick and unable to school complete work.

As in all schools, there will be varying scenarios where staff and children become unwell and we will have to make decisions very quickly. **It is important that you are accessible via the website app and email should we need to communicate with you at short notice.**

Please alert the teacher immediately if your child/children has difficulties with access to online learning so that we have a clear picture of the needs of each child. If your child does not have access to a digital device for learning, we will agree a plan with you that suits your situation. It is important that this happens as soon as possible. This will vary for the younger children so the teacher will be in touch with you about this. From our interactions with the children, it would appear that many are super confident and competent at using technology for social use and gaming. We now need the children to transfer these skills to online learning in a more purposeful way.

It is our intention to keep the children attending school unless we are instructed otherwise by health officials. We have been told that pupils and staff must only seek a COVID-19 test when they are symptomatic of the virus – that is a new continuous cough, a fever or a new loss of taste and/or smell. This is due to limited testing kits available making it more challenging for symptomatic individuals to access a test.

PHA has advised that only when a positive case has been identified in a symptomatic child, young person or member of staff do schools need to consider self-isolating close contacts of that individual. Close contacts must stay in isolation for the full 14-day period. They should not return to school before the 14-day isolation period as they may still be incubating the virus – regardless of a lack of symptoms.

## So what does this all mean for the us in CRPS?

### A summary:

1. Mrs Bacheta will respond to all queries related to COVID-19 by contacting the helpline desk. To do this she will need all the facts/details surrounding the suspected case.
2. There may be occasions when we are directed to send a class bubble home to self-isolate for 14 days. This could happen at very short notice so **make sure the office has at least two up to date phone contacts**. Self-isolation in this instance will require the staff and children to stay inside and remain at home for the full 14 days even if not showing any signs of the virus.
3. Siblings of the children in the bubble do not have to self-isolate unless they become symptomatic or receive a positive result. At this point further advice will be sought relevant to their case.
4. During self-isolation the children will be provided with a timetable of learning to complete at home. This will be sent out to the website/email by the class teacher, if he/she is well enough to do so. Should the teacher become unwell, learning will be directed by another staff member or substitute teacher.
5. There may also be occasions when a teacher has been directed to self-isolate. The class bubble will remain in school. The teacher, if well enough to do so, will set the work from home and it will be delivered in school via another staff member or substitute teacher.
6. Children who are directed to self-isolate will have to self-isolate for the full 14 days. The teacher will provide the learning in bulk for the period of isolation and check in with the children at least 3 times during the week. The teacher will not be accessible during the school day as he/she will be teaching the class bubble in school.
7. If a child becomes symptomatic in school, he/she will be taken quietly and calmly to our isolation area. A staff member will supervise while we contact you. This child (and siblings) will go home as a precaution until we can clarify the situation. We will be responsive to each situation as it arises.
8. It is important that we take notice of and follow the restrictions in the home and wider community if we are to keep our school community safe.

I hope this information is useful and answers any questions you may have. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We do not know what the road ahead has in store for us and perhaps that is a blessing. What we do know is, we are all putting the children and their welfare at the forefront of everything we do. We must continue to work together to build those 'brighter futures' for everyone.

See you all in the morning.

Take care and God Bless

Mrs Bacheta