



The following information update is provided to parents/carers from the College regarding COVID-19.

This information was last updated and is current as at [Wednesday 25 March](#). Additional updates will be provided as required and when information changes.

The COVID-19 crisis continues to impact schools, families and the broader community.

I know that many Ballajura Community College families are being impacted as a result of financial instability; as well as being concerned for the safety and health of your loved ones. On behalf of the staff at the College, our heartfelt thoughts are with you.

This communication seeks to provide further detail regarding the situation the College Community finds itself in due to coronavirus. I apologise in advance for the length of the communication however it is important that you read it.

The following questions are answered (as best as possible) in this communication:

- Who is advising schools?
- Student wellbeing
- Are schools staying open?
- Should my child attend school?
- If I keep my child at home, do I need to tell anyone?
- Will work be provided for my child?
- What will happen about assessments?
- What are we doing to keep my child safe at school?
- What activities or events are being cancelled?
- Parent and/or interagency meetings?
- How else can I support my child?
- What if I have more questions?

Who is advising schools?

The Department of Education is working closely with the Department of Health, with schools being directed by the Department of Education.

Student wellbeing

Given the extensive media coverage, some children are already aware of the impact of the virus and will pick up on the concerns and anxiety of others. This could be through listening and observing what is happening online, at home and school.

The Learning at home website provides advice and resources for parents and carers, educators and students. This includes a wide range of resources and information related to the impact of COVID-19 on students' health and wellbeing and the impact on families. The website will continue to be updated over the coming weeks.

Parents are advised that, if they need urgent mental health advice and support for themselves or their child, there is a 24 hour crisis support line 1800 048 636.

Are schools staying open?

Yes. We are directed that Western Australian schools will remain open until the end of the current school term. Government direction is clear - closing schools is not currently recommended for Australia.

Should my child attend school?

The WA Premier, the Hon Mark McGowan MLA made this statement yesterday, "*If parents decide to not send their kids to school, they will not face any of the usual consequences. The McGowan Government understands that parents have the right to make their own choice in this regard.*"

Please keep your child home from school if they are unwell. If they have a fever, runny nose, sore throat and/or cough they must stay home and follow medical advice. This is normal procedure and should be followed.

If I keep my child at home, do I need to tell anyone?

Yes. Parents who wish to keep their child at home **are asked to please** notify the College that you are doing so. Please call 9262 7777 or email

ballajura.cc@education.wa.edu.au

Will work be provided for my child?

Teachers at the College must maintain their focus on classroom learning programs. Due to the considerable workload associated with trying to deliver learning programs online and face-to-face, I regret to advise that staff will be limited in their ability to provide additional or specific programs or materials for students not attending school.

As I indicated in my last update to you, staff are working to increase the curriculum documents available (for all year levels) through SEQTA and the online learning platform Education Perfect.

Shortly we will send you information about how and when these documents can be accessed together with a reminder how to access SEQTA. Your child already has a SEQTA login and password and can access material currently uploaded. Parents can also access SEQTA, and many of you do so. If you cannot access SEQTA, please contact the College for information regarding this.

Please do not contact individual teachers to request work for your child. Our online curriculum will provide work (in most cases) which follows the course outline content that has already been planned for and being delivered in class. How it is presented may vary to accommodate the online environment.

As mentioned, the Department of Education has established a website “Learning at home”. It is a work in progress, although it is live. Currently, the website has resources for K – 10; although additional resources are being added daily. The Learning at home website is: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/learning-at-home>

What will happen about assessments?

Whilst school remains open in the current format, assessments at the College are continuing.

The College is investigating the use of particular online assessment tasks for senior school and lower school courses. In the event that schools close, it is expected that the Department of Education will provide direction and guidance concerning assessment of student work to ensure a consistency and fairness across all schools. Further information will be provided as necessary.

What are we doing to keep my child safe at school?

All available staff and student toilet blocks contain soap. These are being checked regularly each day to ensure soap remains available.

Students should bring their own drink bottles to school and use the water fountains to refill water bottles, rather than drink from them directly.

Students are being encouraged to wash hands, maintain distance between themselves and be aware of healthy practices.

The College is working with Balla Bites Canteen to ensure the continuation of quality food delivery and service at the College.

To that extent our canteen provider Balla Bites has implemented the following additional measures:

- All canteen staff have undertaken COVID-19 Infection 19 Control Training module provided by the Federal Government Department of Health
- All countertops and cooking utensils are being disinfected and sanitised with an extra heavy duty disinfectant and sanitiser in between the preparation of different food items
- All door handles within the kitchen/s are being disinfected and sanitised with an extra heavy duty disinfectant and sanitiser every hour
- All service delivery areas are being disinfected and sanitised with an extra heavy duty disinfectant and sanitiser prior to recess and lunch service
- All canteen staff wear food preparation grade gloves when preparing food
- All canteen staff wear gloves when serving food
- The eFTOPS machine is wiped down with sanitising wipes after each use
- The canteen has swapped to individually wrapped straws
- New queue spacing has been installed this week ensuring students keep a safe distance from each other when lining up in the canteen area

Social distancing is extremely challenging within a school environment. That said, we are encouraging social distancing wherever possible.

What activities or events are being cancelled?

- All non-essential activities have been cancelled, with the exception of some programs that operate within a classroom format, such as the homework club, where the students in these activities can be spread out and closely monitored.

Parent and/or interagency meetings?

- Generally all planned interagency and parent meetings with College staff have been postponed or are being conducted by phone conversation. Some face to face parent meetings can occur by special arrangement if the circumstances require this.

How else can I support my child?

Some thoughts that may be of assistance:

- Children and teenagers react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. Dealing with the COVID-19 situation calmly and confidently will provide the best support for your children. Keep in mind that not all children respond to stress in the same way.
- Take time to talk with your child about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer their questions by sharing facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child can understand.
- Encourage your child to practise good self-care – get enough sleep, eat a balanced diet, and continue to exercise.
- Encourage your child to manage the things they can control – washing hands, coughing into elbow and practicing social distancing.

What if I have more questions?

If you have further questions, please contact the College. Please note that, given the volume of queries we are receiving, it may take a little time to respond.

Thank you for your ongoing support and cooperation during what we understand is a stressful time for some with many unknowns. All of the staff at the College are committed to continuing to educate your children; and to minimising any disruption to the learning program. We thank you for your understanding and the support you are providing.

Yours sincerely

Leigh Cottrill

Principal

25 March 2020