



275 North Street Wilsonton 4350

P 46390444

PO Box 9786 Wilsonton 4350

F 46390490

Dear Wilsonton State High School community members,

23 March 2020

### **COVID-19 update**

Today I am writing to you to thank you for your support of our school and to inform you of the current processes and routines that our school continues to engage in as we try to limit the spread of the Coronavirus in Toowoomba.

As you know, there are confirmed cases of this virus in Toowoomba. As I write this to you, I am not aware of any cases that have affected Wilsonton State High School. However in these times that none of us have ever experienced before, it is essential that our school ensures that we continue to support strategies to limit the spread of this virus and the rate of infection, so that our health system can continue to cope. I believe our school must contribute to the limitation of the spread by doing everything possible. Advice is regularly changing and as updated information is released, our school is continuously reassessing our practices.

Our school is open for 'business', but it is anything but usual. Student learning delivered by top quality staff continues each and every day as we maintain normal routine which is most important for our school. I wanted to let you know some of the practices and procedures our school has employed to protect student and staff safety while maintaining routine. Our school has:

- Employed additional cleaners from March 16. These cleaners have been concentrating on additional cleaning of toilet amenities blocks, the cleaning of high use areas such as bubblers, handrails, doorknobs etc. multiple times throughout the day. Soap is being regularly replenished throughout the day. As of today, we have employed further cleaners who will concentrate on the cleaning of desks between lessons and other high use items such as keyboards. We have a team of seven cleaners working in our school during the day as well as other specialist staff that are assisting eg Scientific officers.
- Cancelled all assemblies both whole school and year level. Anzac Day ceremonies across Australia have been cancelled including at our school. However, our school will still commemorate this day and we are researching the appropriate way to do this.
- Cancelled all non essential meetings including Parent/Teacher interviews which were postponed.
- Fresh air ventilation has been recommended where available, over the use of air conditioning.
- Cancelled Breakfast Club until further notice.
- All sporting events and rehearsals have been cancelled or postponed.
- All camps, excursions and non essential curriculum variations have been cancelled as of 17 March 2020.
- We have ensured social distancing measures are in place wherever possible, to keep our community safe. We have:
  - Placed desks in exam format so that students are as far apart as possible in all rooms. Student seating plans are being enforced and recorded in each classroom.
  - We have insisted on a minimum distance of 1m between each person lining up in the canteen lines.
  - Students are encouraged to maintain social distancing at all times.
  - Where facilities exist with either sinks inside or in close vicinity, staff have been asked to get students to wash hands before entry to their classrooms. If students wish to bring personal hand sanitiser supplies for their use during the day, this is certainly encouraged.
  - Students are encouraged to bring personal water bottles and refill these from the bubblers, rather than drinking directly from the bubblers.
  - Our teaching staff will maintain appropriate social distancing between themselves and their students when giving feedback.
- We like the rest of Australia, continue to source hand sanitizer so that we can make this available to our school community.

In these uncertain times my main priority is to ensure both the physical and mental health of our students, our staff and our community as we attempt to maintain regular routines, while supporting student learning which continues to be the

core priority of our school. We as a school, encourage our students to discuss their questions or concerns with you, our support team and their teachers. It is usual for students to experience different reactions in the current environment. Please remember that our support team is available for you to discuss any questions or concerns regarding student wellbeing concerns during this time. To talk with the support team, the office staff will be able to direct your calls as required.

This week we will continue to remind our students that they must:

- Stay calm
- Respect the diversity of our school
- Understand the seriousness of the current environment and not joke, especially about coughing or sneezing on others.
- Bring and use hand sanitiser regularly if available
- Wash hands regularly, especially before and after eating and using the toilet.
- Keep all surfaces clean
- Leave phones at home- hygiene concerns
- Bring a water bottle to school and use the bubblers to refill rather than drinking directly from bubblers. *Sharing of water bottles cannot occur.*
- Understand that our staff are doing all they can to maintain their duty of care. If students are asked to reduce contact or increase space between peers, please respond appropriately and respectfully.
- Look after our school toilet facilities so that they can stay open at all time and maintain cleanliness.
- Students with specific health requirements should take additional precautions as recommended. If other arrangements are needed for your child, please talk with the relevant Deputy Principal responsible for the year level.
- Students who are feeling ill must stay home.
- If you need a face mask, you should not be at school.
- Students and staff with symptoms (respiratory infection and fever) must remain at home.

Our School Captains have led our student population well and together, we continue to use their Captain's Chat videos to reinforce hygiene requirements while maintaining learning routines.

I know that you hear lots of information about school closures. I want to reassure you that our school is open for business and that learning continues to be our core priority albeit with heightened hygiene processes to keep our students, staff and community as safe as possible. Decisions around school closures are not made on a local level. I ask you to please be respectful and do not ask my office staff for their thoughts or question them as to why our school continues to be open for business.

As per COVID-19 safety guidelines,

- Have you travelled outside of Australian in the last 14 days?
- Have you been in close contact with someone with a suspected or confirmed case of Coronavirus?
- Do you have any flu like symptoms?

***If you answer yes to any of these questions please do not come into the school.***

Instead, please phone the office on 46 390444 with your enquiry.

Anyone with any health concerns are able to call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

Advice is changing by the day and so must our response to the COVID-19 virus. As changes come to hand I will endeavour to keep you as informed as possible. I thank you as always for the support that you provide our school community. It is in times like these that I know our school vision serves us well because we while we ***stand proud*** we must continue to most of all ***stand strong*** and ***stand together***.

Yours faithfully,



Marcus Jones  
Principal



Carly Young  
P & C President