



WEST LEEDERVILLE
PRIMARY

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

COVID and WA PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2022

On Tuesday 25 January 2022, the Premier of Western Australia, Mark McGowan and the Hon. Minister for Education, Sue Ellery, held a press conference in relation to plans to the start of Term 1 in the current pandemic environment that includes community spread of COVID (particularly the Omicron Variant).

This press conference was followed by a video conference where the Director General of Education, Lisa Rogers, addressed school leaders, providing more specific details about measures and plans that have been put in place to ensure that students can attend face to face learning in the current and foreseeable environment.

Accompanying this letter, I have shared with you the Factsheet for Parents and Carers with details of the *Safe Return to School Plan*, as announced yesterday.

Summary of the Safe Return to School Plan

In summary the *Safe Return to School Plan* includes strategies for:

- encouragement and promotion of vaccination for children aged between 5 – 11 years;
- assessing ventilation in classrooms to develop specific plans for each classroom to ensure the quality of air;
- visitors to the school and adults working in the school to wear face masks until advised otherwise;
- contingency plans to continue face to face learning with the provision of additional staff to schools as needed;
- additional day cleaning;
- additional cleaning products and hand sanitiser;
- the continuation of safe hygiene practices and washing routines throughout the day;
- mandatory vaccination (including booster) for all staff working in schools; and
- mandatory vaccination (including booster) for regular visitors to the school i.e. parent volunteers, out of school care providers, canteen workers, regular tradesman.

What can you expect if COVID caseloads increase during a school term?

The following scenarios were shared with the community by the Education Minister, Sue Ellery, in the event that COVID caseloads increase during a school term:

- students in Year 2-6 may be asked to wear face masks;
- cohort arrangements to separate groups of children in the playground / when moving around the school;
- contact tracing may be carried out by the school to establish close contacts as needed;
- the development of contingency plans for online learning for students who are isolating due to testing positive, identified as a close contact or at the direction of the Department of Health, WA;
- closure of part of a school or all of a school to assess the number of close contacts and conduct a deep clean if directed by the Department of Health, WA.

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Commitment to maintain face to face learning

The Minister of Education, Sue Ellery, requested that parents and carers show patience and understanding throughout the next few months as schools adapt to the current challenges associated with COVID, community transmission and directions to isolate due to a positive COVID test or visiting an exposure site / being identified as a close contact.

There is a commitment to maintain face to face learning where practicable, but it may be possible that children in schools in WA will have different teachers throughout the year for periods of time. These teachers may be part of our permanent staff and known to you, they may be relief teachers, they may be teachers from other schools, or teachers or school leaders who have retired and are happy to return to work, or they may be from other areas of the Department of Education that have a current Teachers Registration Board (TRB) registration.

All teachers are required to develop multiple levels of planning, which include yearly, term and weekly plans as part of their normal operating procedures. These plans provide very specific detail about the outcomes and learning goals for each student, the details of each and every lesson and grouping for children, the resources to be used and the assessments to carry out to determine the next teaching goals. In the event that a different teacher needs to take a class for a period of time, these plans will be shared with the replacement teacher, as well as comprehensive handover notes.

If West Leederville needs additional staff we will follow the directions of the Department of Education WA and work closely with them to ensure the best possible scenarios and continuity of programs.

The Department of Education WA is committed to ensuring our school is a COVID-19 safe space. We have been provided with a clear direction of what we all need to do to keep students, colleagues and our community safe. We are prepared to respond to the most current advice available from the Health Department and pivot when necessary to a new plan. I know from experience that our community is also capable and supportive of the school, and the need to respond and change the plans as directed.

Caring for our school community

Over the coming months, our school will be working with our teachers and community to ensure that whilst we are pivoting to the latest health advice, we are also looking after our students, our teachers and support staff, and our community's physical and mental health. Everyone will have different feelings, anxieties, experiences and emotions over the next couple of months, as well as specific health concerns related to vulnerability, as WA looks to manage community spread and possibly large numbers of cases. In all work environments, but especially in education and health, there is the possibility that responding to COVID, and the changes with specific health directions, will lead to increased workload, tension and differences of opinions.

For these reasons, we will draw on and emphasise our PBS school value of *Kindness* for students, teachers and visitors to our school. I know that the West Leederville community will wrap around the school and the staff when needed while caring for each family that may be affected – as you have always done.

If you have any queries, please contact 9366 9750 or email westleederville.ps@education.wa.edu.au.

Thank you for your support.

Warmest Regards

Sheri Evans

Principal

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