



WEST LEEDERVILLE
PRIMARY

Dear Parents and Carers,

Update School Operations and COVID-19 1 March 2022

We have been so lucky at West Leederville Primary School that we are still operating with preventative measures and are yet to experience a COVID-19 positive case. This has meant that we have had a stable first five weeks with minor changes and the ability to establish a strong and predictable routine for our students. We know that we will have to respond to a COVID-19 positive case at some point in the near future.

My thoughts and compassion go out to other schools, students, families and staff who have not had the chance to establish these routines, and any time to settle into the new school year before experiencing a major disruption to learning.

Thank you once again to our community for your vigilance, communication and support. Your kind words, emails and small tokens of appreciation are keeping us going.

Over the past week the Department of Education, WA and the Department of Health, WA have announced further changes to the way public schools operate due to the increasing number of cases in the community, and over 250 schools now identified with positive COVID cases amongst their students and staff.

The changes are as follows:

- Schools will now be responsible for contact tracing procedures within their school community. This will include contacting parents and carers with the requirements for quarantine. The Department of Health will advise schools in this process but you will no longer receive communication directly from them in relation to positive cases and close contacts in the school environment, all communication will be from the school.
- At 12.01am on Thursday 3 March WA will move to Level 2 Restrictions which includes Year 3-6 students wearing a mask. This means our students in Year 3 and above will now need to wear a mask indoors at school. The usual exemptions apply, such as removing the mask to eat, drink, take medicine or do vigorous exercise. You may wish to speak to your child about wearing a mask, and that their friends will also be wearing them. Wearing masks in the classroom will help to reduce the spread of the virus. If your child is in Kindergarten to Year 2, you may wish to let them know that they will see other children around the school wearing a mask, just like their teacher does. Our staff will continue to explain to our students the importance of wearing a mask to support each other and help keep our community safe.

In the following pages I have provided some details in relation to these two significant changes. I have provided as much information as possible so that our community understands the processes the school will be following behind the scenes, and when and how they will receive communication.

I thank you in advance for your time reading this information, and for your cooperation as we navigate these uncertain and fluid times.

In addition, in response to the uncertainty and unfamiliar territory parents and carers are negotiating when supporting their children with social, emotional, academic and physical wellbeing in the current landscape, WLPS is currently working with our School Board and other schools in the area to prepare a special Webinar. The Webinar will have a panel of experts to answer all your questions and provide support/information on how to help your child/children when explaining COVID, and changes to their daily lives with reference to difference regulations implemented. Please keep an eye on SchoolStream for further information.

I also take this opportunity to remind you to monitor yourself and your child for symptoms of COVID-19, and keep your child home from school and get them tested if they are unwell.

Warm Regards

Sheri Evans
Principal
March 1, 2022

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN A POSITIVE CASE IS IDENTIFIED IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY?

When a positive case is identified at the school the following process will be followed by the school principal (or delegate):

1. Parent, carer or staff member contacts the principal (or delegate) or school via phone/email to report a positive case.
2. The principal (or delegate) will advise their Director of Education and the COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT) via email.
3. An incident management liaison is assigned to the school and will phone the principal (or delegate) with instructions. They will be the schools' main point of contact and will provide us with support, approved communications, and updates as required.
4. The school will refer to the principal guide and complete a close contact report determining classes, rooms, students and staff groups as per close contact definition provided by the Department of Education WA (close contact of a positive case is either 15 minutes of face-to-face contact, not wearing masks OR more than 2 hours in a small room (including classroom), not wearing masks).
5. Principal (or delegate) will determine key quarantine and testing dates for all close contacts.
6. The principal (or delegate) will communicate this information to the COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT) liaison for approval.
7. Approved communication with details of quarantine periods will be sent to parents, carers and staff. At WLPS parents and carers will receive an automated text message asking them to refer to SchoolStream for further information.
8. When determining quarantine periods, the day of last exposure starts will be counted as 'Day 0'. A final PCR test should be completed on Day 6. Day 7 will signify the end of the quarantine period with students and staff returning to school on Day 8.
9. Within 24 hours an online learning package will be distributed to students who are asymptomatic. Students who are symptomatic are not expected to complete online learning (please refer to COVID Learning from Home Plan distributed on SchoolStream Tuesday 22 March).
10. Close contacts can return to school on Day 8 if no symptoms AND the test result is negative AND no new household members have tested positive. Positive case can return to school on Day 8 if no symptoms. Principal does not need to sight a negative test.

We will be asking for cooperation from our parents and carers in the event of a positive case at WLPS as we follow the above 10 step process. We will not negotiate on quarantine periods nor enter into debate on the definition of close contacts, identification of symptoms, method of testing or quarantine periods.

We thank you in advance for supporting the school as we navigate the difficult and challenging scenarios that are likely to arise in the coming weeks.

Thank you for your understanding and support to help keep our school COVID-19 safe.

WHAT TO EXPECT AS WE MOVE TO LEVEL 2 RESTRICTIONS AT 12.01AM ON THURSDAY 3 MARCH WHERE YEAR 3-6 STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR A MASK?

The introduction of Level 2 Restrictions in line with the *Emergency Management Act 2005* (WA), section 72A includes a lawful direction for students in Year 3-6 to wear a mask when attending school.

This means that Year 3-6 students must not enter or remain in any indoor space unless they are wearing a face covering or one or more of the following exceptions apply to that student, at that time:

- The student is at that time consuming food, drink or medicine.
- The student is communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing and visibility of the mouth is essential for communication.
- The nature of a student's work or the activity that they are engaging in means that clear enunciation or visibility of the mouth is essential.
- The student is working in the absence of others in an enclosed indoor space (unless and until another student or staff member enters that indoor space).
- The student is swimming, running or jogging or otherwise engaged in some form of strenuous or vigorous exercise or physical activity.
- The student has a physical, developmental or mental illness, injury, condition or disability which makes wearing a face covering unsuitable. *(A person is only exempt from wearing a mask if the person produces a **medical certificate** that certifies the person has an illness, injury, condition or disability which makes wearing a face covering unsuitable).*

We are committed to working with our families and students to implement this change, and will look to support you through the coming weeks. The introduction of masks for Year 3-6 students is to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools and reduce the number of students, classes and teachers who are considered close contacts and need to quarantine for extended periods therefor disrupting the routine of school and impacting on the education and social engagement of our children.

The below information is made available to our community so that you are aware of the processes and procedures that may need to be implemented in rare cases that a student or their family are unwilling to comply.

If a Year 3-6 student at a school site does not comply with this requirement, the following action may be taken.

1. A student enters an indoor space without wearing a mask

- Any staff member can ask the student to please put on a mask.
- Any staff member can provide them with a mask if they do not have one and ask them to wear it.

2. A student refuses to put on a mask

- The student will be asked if they have a medical certificate certifying they have an illness, injury, condition or disability which makes wearing a mask unsuitable. (Staff are required to sight the certificate so students in this position should be prepared to have the certificate on person as required).

3. A student refuses to wear a mask and/or does not have any medical evidence exempting them from wearing a mask

- Inform the student of the State Government policy mandating the use of masks in all indoor settings.
- Request the student to please leave the indoor space.
- Provide an opportunity to continue the conversation outdoors, if appropriate.

4. A student refuses to leave or acts in a manner that is threatening, intimidating or offensive toward a staff member

- In the event that a student requires management, the principal or authorised person will make reasonable attempts to manage any conflict situation to prevent its escalation.
- The School can act under the authority provided by the [School Education Act 1999 \(WA\)](#) (the Act).
 - Section 63 of the Act provides that the principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school site, including all students on the site and is responsible for ensuring the safety and welfare of students.
- The wearing of face masks for students in Year 3-6 will become a requirement of student behaviour plans and procedures. Refer to the [Student Behaviour in Public Schools policy and procedures](#).
 - Division 5 of the [School Education Regulations 2000](#) (the Regulations) provide for discipline.
 - Regulation 41 sets out the school discipline powers, while Regulation 42 sets out the rules for imposing discipline.

5. Parent/carer indicates a student is medically exempt from wearing a mask but is unable to provide a medical certificate

- All students who are required to follow the State Government mandate must wear a mask indoors unless exempt.
- The School can **act under the authority provided by the *School Education Act 1999***.
 - Section 63 of the Act provides that the principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school site, including all persons on the site and is responsible for ensuring the safety and welfare of students.
- The principal may consider isolating a student while medical evidence is being sought with reference to the *Emergency Management Act 2005* (WA), section 72A, [COVID Transition \(Face Covering\) Directions](#), available on WA.gov.au.