

# Prairiewood High School



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CRICOS NSW Department of Education CRICOS Provider Code 00588M [www.deinternational.nsw.edu.au](http://www.deinternational.nsw.edu.au)

## **NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE – 23 MARCH 2020**

Dear parents and carers,

There is no doubt this past week has been difficult and stressful for everyone – students, teachers and families. At a press conference this morning, the NSW Premier has urged parents to keep their children home from school but has stressed schools will remain open for those who need them.

### **What will happen now?**

**We are working to ensure every student has access to a computer and a code to access their work on line.** Students are being asked to access their student portal email address as we will be using Google Classroom. Access is at: <http://portal.det.nsw.edu.au>

We ask that students do not use a personal Gmail address as official invitations to Google classroom will only occur through the *education.nsw.gov.au* email.

**I sent a survey to students and parents yesterday to assess the level of technology of our students so that we can ensure every student has access to learning.**

- Parents can access the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P95V9XP>
- Students can access the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PY66DZX>

I have also attached a paper version and encourage you to complete it through this form if the online forum is not available.

**For learning resources, please regularly check the school website as we have created a page, COVID-19 Continuity of Learning page.** The school website can be accessed at: <https://prairiewoo-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

When all Google classrooms are set up, the access passwords will be found on the school website. Students should also receive an email invitation. On the website, there is a video tutorial on how to access Google Classroom through the Student portal.

### **Looking after each other**

As we continue to face the effects of the pandemic, we need to be mindful of our emotional wellbeing. Many in our community will be facing economic difficulties. Please contact the school if you need support. I personally thank all of our families and students who are working in supermarkets, chemists and others retail suppliers, and in the medical and health care professions who are dealing with unprecedented demands.

I have been overwhelmed by how the staff at Prairiewood High School have pulled together. They have been working hard to support students. Teachers have been putting in extra effort and time to prepare for online and remote learning should schools close. Teachers have been sharing their skills and knowledge and running learning sessions in the use of software such as Google Classrooms.

Below is a message with specific advice from our school psychologists for you as a parent.

It can feel stressful and overwhelming during an event like the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and we can all be affected differently. You or your children might feel overwhelmed by the information, conversations and the increased levels of stress in your community. It can be hard to know what information to trust especially in a situation where things are changing so quickly. It can be helpful to keep up-to-date, but it's also okay to switch off from the 24 hour media cycle if this is getting too much. Following is some advice accumulated from the Australian Psychological Society (APS) and Headspace that may assist you to support your family's mental health as this situation continues to unfold.

Children will inevitably pick up on the concerns and anxiety of others, whether this be through listening and observing what is happening at home or at school. Providing opportunities to answer their questions in an honest and age-appropriate way can help reduce any anxiety they may be experiencing. You can do this by:

- speaking to them about coronavirus in a calm manner
- asking them what they already know about the virus so you can clarify any misunderstandings they may have
- letting them know that it is normal to experience some anxiety when new and stressful situations arise
- giving them a sense of control by explaining what they can do to stay safe (e.g. wash their hands regularly, stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing)
- not overwhelming them with unnecessary information (e.g. death rates) as this can increase their anxiety
- reassure them that coronavirus is less common and severe in children compared to adults
- allowing regular contact (e.g. by phone) with people they may worry about, such as grandparents, to reassure them that they are okay.

These websites may also help.

- Kids Helpline- <https://kidshelpline.com.au/coronavirus>
- Beyond Blue - <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>
- UNICEF support for teenagers: <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-teenagers-can-protect-their-mental-health-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

I have also attached a factsheet from the APS should you wish to learn more about coping with the anxiety brought about by COVID-19 or access any further support.

We will keep you updated through our social media channels as information becomes available.

We thank you for your patience and support during this time.

Sincere regards,



Ms Belinda Giudice  
Principal

A background image showing the back of a woman's head with long dark hair, looking towards a television screen displaying a news broadcast. A dark teal rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title text.

## Tips for coping with coronavirus anxiety

As the number of coronavirus cases rise across Australia, the level of anxiety within the community is increasing.

Feelings of worry and unease can be expected following a stressful event, such as the recent declaration of a global pandemic, however, it is important that we learn to manage our stress before it turns to more severe anxiety and panic.

This information sheet outlines some useful strategies which can help both adults and children cope with the stress or anxiety experienced as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

### Learn the facts

Constant media coverage about the coronavirus can keep us in a heightened state of anxiety. Try to limit related media exposure and instead seek out factual information from reliable sources such as the Australian Government's [health alert](#) or other trusted organisations such as the [World Health Organization](#).

### Keep things in perspective

When we are stressed, it is easy to see things as worse than they really are. Rather than imagining the worst-case scenario and worrying about it, ask yourself:

- *Am I getting ahead of myself, assuming something bad will happen when I really don't know the outcome?* Remind yourself that the actual number of confirmed cases of coronavirus in Australia is extremely low.
- *Am I overestimating how bad the consequences will be?* Remember, illness due to coronavirus infection is usually mild and most people recover without needing specialised treatment.
- *Am I underestimating my ability to cope?* Sometimes thinking about how you would cope, even if the worst were to happen, can help you put things into perspective.

### Take reasonable precautions

Being proactive by following basic hygiene principles can keep your anxiety at bay. The World Health Organization recommends a number of protective measures against the coronavirus, including to:

- wash your hands frequently
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- stay at home if you begin to feel unwell until you fully recover
- seek medical care early if you have a fever, cough or experience breathing difficulties.

## PRAIRIEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL PARENT SURVEY - Getting prepared for distance learning

Learning from home refers to the way a school will maintain teaching and learning in the event of a prolonged school closure or student absence. At Prairiewood High School, although we are still open, we would like to gain an insight into the resources that families have to support learning from home in case we need it.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ADD ALL YOUR CHILDREN'S NAMES TO THIS SO WE CAN GET A TRUE PICTURE

We are sending this same survey out as a note as clearly if you don't have an online option you might miss this online survey.

Thank you for your patience and support in this rapidly changing situation.

Ms Belinda Giudice  
Principal  
Prairiewood High School

Please complete the online survey on the school website.

If submitting in hard copy, please post back or drop in to the school.

Thank you

\* 1. Your Name (Parent Name)\* and email contact

\* 2. Your child(ren)'s name, the year group they are in, and their mobile phone number for contact:

**3. Will your child(ren) have access to the internet at home?**

(Please mark only one oval)

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

**4. Will your child(ren) have access to a digital device for learning?**

We may use Google classroom as well as a range of online services that work on desktops, Chromebooks, Windows, Mac OS and Linux computers as well as iPad's and iOS and Android mobile phones. Clearly screen size is an issue though many phones can be projected onto modern TV's.

(Please mark only one oval)

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

**5. What device(s) will your child be using if learning from home?**

(Please mark the main oval your child will access)

- No access to device
- Laptop Computer
- Tablet device, such as iPad
- Desktop Computer
- Mobile Phone
- Other (please specify)

**6. Does the device have a webcam or front facing camera?**

A webcam may be useful to allow more person to person interaction in online learning sessions. All iPad's, Apple Macintosh, most laptops and Chromebooks have these. Also mobile phones have front facing cameras that can be used.

(Please mark only one oval)

- No access to device
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**7. Will your child(ren) be sharing this device with other family members (including siblings or parents working from home or perhaps at those at TAFE or University?)**

(Please mark only one oval)

- No access to device
- Yes
- No
- Other

**8. Specific access to technology?**

**- Do you have access to a printer at home to print off work sheets?**

A printer in the home would help to print off worksheets and other offline materials.

**- Do you have a scanner, document scanner or a mobile phone capable of taking pictures of documents your child(ren) have worked on?**

A mobile phone can take good pictures of documents and some free apps such as the Microsoft Office (app) on iOS and Android the images can be converted to PDF format. Your child(ren)'s free G Suite account and Microsoft Office 365 account work well with this solution.

(Please only mark one oval)

- Yes, I have both a printer and the capabilities of taking pictures of documents worked on
- No, I have neither of these
- I only have a printer
- I only have capabilities of taking pictures of documents worked on (e.g. scanner, mobile phone with camera etc).
- Additional comment (please specify )

**9. ONLY FOR THOSE WITH NO ACCESS TO A DEVICE OR THOSE SHARING A DEVICE AMONG FAMILY MEMBERS**

**Would you be prepared to hire a school laptop or ipad for your child(ren) to participate in remote learning if required?**

(Note: On request to the Principal or a Deputy Principal, discussions can occur for financial assistance)

- Yes
- No
- I would need to discuss further with the Principal or a Deputy Principal

**10. Do you have any questions, comments or concerns relating to possible learning at home? Please also indicate if you would prefer hard copy work as opposed to that using a technology device.**

## Practise self-care

To help encourage a positive frame of mind, it is important to look after yourself. Everybody practises self-care differently with some examples including:

- maintaining good social connections and communicating openly with family and friends
- making time for activities and hobbies you enjoy
- keeping up a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, getting quality sleep and avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to cope with stress
- practising relaxation, meditation and mindfulness to give your body a chance to settle and readjust to a calm state.

## Tips for talking with children about the coronavirus

Children will inevitably pick up on the concerns and anxiety of others, whether this be through listening and observing what is happening at home or at school. It is important that they can speak to you about their own concerns.

### Answer their questions

Do not be afraid to talk about the coronavirus with children. Given the extensive media coverage and the increasing number of people wearing face masks in public, it is not surprising that some children are already aware of the virus.

Providing opportunities to answer their questions in an honest and age-appropriate way can help reduce any anxiety they may be experiencing. You can do this by:

- speaking to them about coronavirus in a calm manner
- asking them what they already know about the virus so you can clarify any misunderstandings they may have
- letting them know that it is normal to experience some anxiety when new and stressful situations arise
- giving them a sense of control by explaining what they can do to stay safe (e.g., wash their hands regularly, stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing)
- not overwhelming them with unnecessary information (e.g., death rates) as this can increase their anxiety
- reassure them that coronavirus is less common and severe in children compared to adults
- allowing regular contact (e.g., by phone) with people they may worry about, such as grandparents, to reassure them that they are okay.

### Talk about how they are feeling

Explain to your child that it is normal to feel worried about getting sick. Listen to your child's concerns and reassure them that you are there to help them with whatever may arise in the future.

It is important to model calmness when discussing the coronavirus with children and not alarm them with any concerns you may have about it. Children will look to you for cues on how to manage their own worries so it is important to stay calm and manage your own anxieties before bringing up the subject with them and answering their questions.

### Limit media exposure

It is important to monitor children's exposure to media reports about the coronavirus as frequent exposure can increase their level of fear and anxiety. Try to be with your child when they are watching, listening or reading the news so you are able to address any questions or concerns they may have.

## Seek additional support when needed

If you feel that the stress or anxiety you or your child experience as a result of the coronavirus is impacting on everyday life, a psychologist may be able to help.

Psychologists are highly trained and qualified professionals, skilled in providing effective interventions for a range of mental health concerns, including stress. A psychologist can help you manage your stress and anxiety using techniques based on the best available research.

If you are referred to a psychologist by your GP, you might be eligible for a Medicare rebate. You may also be eligible to receive psychology services via telehealth so that you do not need to travel to see a psychologist. Ask your psychologist or GP for details.

There are number of ways to access a psychologist. You can:

- use the Australia-wide Find a Psychologist™ service. Go to [findapsychologist.com.au](https://findapsychologist.com.au) or call 1800 333 497
- ask your GP or another health professional to refer you.

## More information

### Australian Government Department of Health

The Department of Health has developed a collection of resources for the general public, health professionals and industry about coronavirus (COVID-19), including translated resources.

<https://bit.ly/38OwHe>

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides reliable information about the coronavirus such as its symptoms, steps you can take to protect yourself, and what to do if you are affected.

<https://bit.ly/39MEml8>



### World Health Organization

The World Health Organization provides information and guidance regarding the current outbreak of coronavirus disease.

<https://bit.ly/3cQUwCw>

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