



Weetangera School

'Our vision, as a community, is to inspire
a passion for learning'



ACT
Government
Education

Weetangera School is an
ANAPHYLAXIS AWARE SCHOOL

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to provide you with information about Weetangera Schools preparedness to resume face-to-face teaching from Monday 18 May with Years P-2.

We are looking forward to Monday. We acknowledge it will feel different to a normal return from a break as we pivot back to face-to-face teaching. As our families of P-2 return next week in our planned stage return to face to face teaching this staggered approach enables the teaching staff of Years 3-6 the time and space to plan for the staged returns to school over the next 3 weeks.

Many things will be the same. Some things need to have changed to ensure we are all safe and that we do our part, as a community, to support each other.

Over the past week the school improvement team have designed policies and procedures for staff, students and parents which outline expectations relating to safety, hygiene, conduct, and teaching and learning.

Weetangera School has taken a highly precautionary approach to keeping our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with national expert health advice. Equally, the ACT Government has approached the return of face-to-face learning and work in ACT public schools with careful planning, drawing on national and local health advice, in response to the current and emerging needs of staff, students and families.

The Directorate acknowledges that the returning of face to face learning and work in our school requires a range of preconditions to be in place to support staff and family confidence that our school is a safe place. Additionally, on the advice of the ACT Government, social distancing is not practical or necessary for students, however social distancing will remain for adults which will include all spaces in the school and the front office area.

We take our responsibility of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our staff and students very seriously. As such, the Directorate has worked with ACT Health on the development of guidelines to ensure our schools are safe places for our students to learn and our staff to work. I will continue to stay in touch with you in the weeks ahead. You can also visit www.education.act.gov.au for the latest information about ACT Public Schools policies. At Weetangera School:

- To support the safety of staff and students at Weetangera School, parent/carers are encouraged to drop off and collect their children without entering the school building, noting that some children may require additional support. For any inquiries

Newsletter No. 13

14 May 2020

Week 3

COMMUNITY DIARY

Inclusions may be added in the diary at the front office.

ASSEMBLIES 9:15 am

**ALL ASSEMBLIES
POSTPONED
UNTIL FURTHER
NOTICE**



Attachments

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Parent Reps. Yehuwdiy Dillon - 0458 866 937, Amy Begley - 0403 498 397, Vijaya Porwal

Principal - James Barnett 61422600; **Teacher Reps.** - Natarsha van den Boogaard

Weetangera School
Southwell Street
Weetangera ACT 2614

Telephone: 6142 2600
Canteen: 6142 2621

Please read our web site:

at the school, please report to the front office via the main entrance

- All students and staff will be reminded to wash their hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser on arrival, available in each classroom and throughout the day, cough into their elbows or a tissue, place tissues straight into the bin, avoid touching eyes, noses or mouths, not share food or drink, not use the school water fountains or bubblers, and strict hygiene practice before and after eating and playground time
- Students will stay at home if they are unwell
- Students will inform a staff member if they are feeling unwell
- Students experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated in sick bay with suitable supervision and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible
- A new school cleaning plan has been developed to ensure regular cleaning of high touch surfaces, frequently used objects, indoor and outdoor equipment and student bathrooms throughout the day
- Students will be reminded that COVID-19 does not differentiate between borders, ethnicities, disability, status, age or gender. Stigmatising of students who may have been exposed to COVID-19 will not be tolerated and students displaying this behaviour will be managed in line with the schools' student management and wellbeing policy.
- The canteen will be closed until further notice

I need to impress that these are not suggestions. This is what is needed. We appreciate all aspects may not be the ideal outcome for every stakeholder, however, with wisdom, judgement and thoughtfulness, the Weetangera School community can support each other.

I thank all our families for your ongoing support for our community. We know that you appreciate and understand the responsibilities we have to each other and that we can expect high standards of safety, care and kindness as we journey further during this remarkable experience.

Regards

James M. Barnett
Principal

PS... Creative expression

Creative expression

As a famous person once said, *'Most modern calendars mar the sweet simplicity of our lives by reminding us that each day that passes is the anniversary of some perfectly uninteresting event.'* In each newsletter this term we will include a perfectly interesting event to expand everyone's mind and take an imaginative leap to stimulate creative expression to encourage our students to respond. This week with a written response!

Today in 1978

Schweppe and Company (the original makers of Schweppes) was formed.

- The bubbles were put into Schweppes to make it taste like spa water
- The company was the official refreshments supplier to the Great Exhibition of 1851
- Schweppes opened a factory in Sydney in 1877

The bubbles in 'fizzy' drinks are carbon dioxide.

Word of the day

'Spa' – a health resort near a spring or at the seaside. Named after the Belgium town of 'Spa'.

Imagine...

Whoops! The delivery van has accidently dropped off bottles of laughing gas at the soft-drink factory. Write a story about what happens when people start buying soft drinks that make you laugh – and laugh! (And what happens when the bubbles get up your nose?) Send your response to Mr Barnett james.barnett@ed.act.edu.au and Ms Hoogland danielle.hoogland@ed.act.edu.au

Pps... New Basketball Court



Dear Weetangera School Community,

What a very strange journey we've been on this year! 7 weeks at school, 3 weeks of pupil free time, 2 weeks of holidays, then 3,4 or 5 weeks of learning from home depending on the year your child is in at school. It sounds like the makings of a convoluted math problem for the year 6 students!

With school recommencing for our pre-schoolers, kindy's, year 1's and 2's next week; years 3 and 4 the following week; and year's 5 and 6 the week after, we're all working very hard to ensure we can provide the necessary supports to help the children settle back in. I'll be working closely with the staff here at Weetangera, providing them with information and support to help the children settle. And ongoing support throughout this uncertain time of COVID-19.

Some children are going to be very excited to be coming back; others anxious; and no doubt many of them will have mixed feelings. For the littlies, it may be just like starting a whole new school year! What can you do to help?

Preparing Kids for the Move Back to School After COVID-19 Shut-down

Whatever they are feeling, it is important that you are as present with your child as you can be to listen to their thoughts and feelings, and to reassure them. Take some extra moments in the days leading up to your child's return to school, to explore what this will be like for them, what their thoughts and feeling are, and what supports they may need.

Keep the children informed about the timeline for returning to school. Put it on a calendar for them, you could count down the days if that's something they would like. Let them know the start dates will be staggered for different year groups: when the littlies return, there won't be as many children here as they may have expected, let them know the remainder of the students are coming back, they are getting a little extra time to help settle everyone in. The older students who really want to return may be frustrated and "champing at the bit" to come back! Some extra opportunities to connect with peers before they return may be helpful.

Re-establish routines. Talk to them about getting back into the morning and afternoon school routines, how the days will look when they're back at school. If your child needs it, you could even start practising a few days ahead of time.

Let your child know how they will get to and from school, and if they are going to before and after school care – will they catch a bus, be driven, ride their bike etc.

Drive past the school and have conversations with them about what they are looking forward to on their return, and any possible concerns they may have.

Validate any concerns that are causing them worry. It can be helpful to state "I can hear you've got some worries about ...(put the worry in here)", before moving on to talking about how you might resolve those issues, or who you could talk to for more information.

Discuss with the children what they will be doing when they get back to school, who they will play with at school, know who their friends are, as this this will be a key support group at school.

If your child is feeling worried about leaving you, let them take a familiar object to school, possibly something of yours (although nothing so precious it would be a problem if it were misplaced, or anything that shouldn't be at school).

Keep explanations simple and communication open about how the children feel about the move back to school, both positive and negative.

Discuss any concerns they may have related to COVID-19, such as worries about their health; other people's health; and most importantly, you.

There are many resources available about how to speak to children about COVID-19. There are links below to two online stories I really like – one for the littlies, one for the older children. Have a look and choose the one you think is appropriate for your child.

And, finally, **chat to your child's teacher if you have significant concerns about their return to school.** There are a small number of students who may have particularly difficulty, perhaps due to pre-existing conditions, or if their family has gone through a particularly traumatic time. Extra advice and support for these children can be accessed through the school psychologist – me! Talk to your teacher in the first instance, and they will be able to assist you to contact me if needed.

Our teachers have done a marvellous job managing all these changes. You and your children have done a marvellous job with all these changes as well! We're looking forward to working with your children back at the school, and we'll stay in touch and work together as a community as we navigate the uncertainty and changes COVID-19 will continue to bring for the present.

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Carmel Jean Seymour
School Psychologist

This storybook 'Birdie and The Big Illness' developed by Queensland Health may be a useful resource for young children when explaining illness outbreak in the community.

<https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/chq/our-services/mental-health-services/qcpimh/natural-disaster-resources/storybooks/>

This comic developed by NPR is another resource for children which may be developmentally appropriate for explaining aspects of the COVID-19 situation.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>