



School Office Circular (SOC)

SOC Directive	X
SOC General Information	

Date: 23 March 2020	Title: COVID-19 - Advice Current 23 March 2020
No.: 05.20	Key Search Words: COVID-19, Advice
From: Executive Director	To: All Principals
<i>Please share the attached communications (Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C) to staff and families as you see fit.</i>	

Dear Principals

In light of the Premier's announcement on 19 March 2020 regarding the requirement for people entering Tasmania as of midnight Friday 20 March 2020 to self-isolate, the school office circulars (SOC) dated 2 March 2020, 16 March 2020 and 18 March 2020 have been superseded.

Hence, please be advised that this SOC replaces the above three COVID-19 related SOC's.

The key principles of this SOC are:

- We aim to constrain contact by students with the broader community and restrict all activities as far as possible to the core practices of the school.
- It is our intention to keep schools open while it is still deemed safe and consistent with government direction.
- We continue to comply with appropriate social distancing measures. This means physical distances are maintained to the recommended distance wherever practicable.
- We alleviate associated risks and anxiety for school communities.

Directives:

1. Permissible student-based activities:
 - b. Normal classroom teaching / learning activities
 - c. Existing class structures
 - d. Intra-school gatherings beyond single classes that can comply with social distancing requirements
 - e. On school grounds PE
 - f. Year 11 and 12 outdoor education course work assessment – see Directive No. 4

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- g. Organised VET work placements
 - h. Single class religious events held on school premises
 - i. Recess
 - j. Lunch
 - k. Student transport to and from school
2. Non-permissible student-based activities include, but not limited to:
- a. Assemblies
 - b. School performances involving an audience e.g. musicals, plays
 - c. School sport training
 - d. Excursions
 - e. Incursions (CET employees are exempt but limited where practicable) – parish clergy are welcome at all times under the usual social distancing and sanitisation requirements
 - f. Inter school events and competitions
 - g. Sports carnivals
 - h. Camps
 - i. Learn to swim
 - j. Interstate and overseas travel
 - k. Visits to offsite churches / religious activities
 - l. Work experience
 - m. One day schooling
3. Non-core school activities to be cancelled forthwith or postponed for the foreseeable future include, but not limited to:
- a. Fundraising
 - b. Socials/Discos
 - c. Fairs
 - d. Fetes
 - e. Public Mass
 - f. Open days
 - g. Parent teacher evenings
 - h. School advisory board meetings
 - i. Parents and friends' meetings
 - j. Setup for Success events
 - k. Any other non-core activity
4. Year 11 and 12 outdoor education course work assessment is permitted to take place off-site provided:
- a. small group
 - b. no incursions (meaning no non-school staff)
 - c. no camping / overnights
 - d. only school staff may attend
5. All Catholic Education Week activities are to be postponed.
6. School staff attendance at off-site face-to-face professional learning (PL) and network meetings is cancelled. Note: CET is examining the provision of online access to PL. Advice will be forthcoming.
7. School staff attendance at intra-state staff meetings is to be cancelled.
8. All school interstate and overseas travel for 2020 is to be cancelled.
9. All staff interstate and overseas business travel for 2020 is to be cancelled.

10. All staff and students returning from interstate and overseas travel must self-isolate for 14 days before attending school or any Catholic Education Tasmania (CET) premises.

For guidance on staff returning from travel please see the flowchart in Appendix A.

11. Any staff member / student / family member / volunteer / contractor suspected of having the COVID-19 infection because they are unwell and have recently travelled overseas or have had contact with someone who is infected with COVID-19 must be advised to contact the Public Health Hotline on 1800 761 738.
12. If a member of staff thinks they might be infected with COVID-19 they are to be discouraged from going to their GP and must instead phone the Public Health Hotline, 1800 671 738.
13. Should any member of staff or a student or any member of their immediate household:
 - a. be informed by public health authorities to undergo either enhanced health screening for COVID-19 or a COVID-19 test, or
 - b. be diagnosed as being infected with COVID-19

then all members of the household including the member(s) of staff or student(s) must not enter a CET school or CET premises until:

- with respect to 13 (a):
 - i. the person(s) required to undertake screening or testing has been informed by public health authorities it is safe for that person(s) to return to their usual activities
 - with respect to 13 (b):
 - i. the member of the household with the COVID-19 infection has been informed by public health authorities it is safe for that person to return to their usual activities, and
 - ii. other members of the household have completed their 14-day self-isolation period without developing COVID-19 symptoms or have been cleared by public health authorities.
14. Staff must advise you or your delegate as soon as it is practical that a public health authority has required them to undergo COVID-19 testing or to self-isolate. Similarly, staff must advise you or your delegate as soon as it is practical of their COVID-19 status upon receipt of test results or the 14-day self-isolation period has expired without the person showing any symptoms of COVID-19 infection.
 15. If you have a confirmed COVID-19 infection in your school community, you must discuss the situation with Mr Sean Gill, Deputy Executive Director, before implementing any course of action.

In these circumstances, CET will only close the relevant school if requested by the Director of Public Health. It is expected such closures would be for 48 hours to allow cleaning and Public Health to trace who has been in close contact with the infected person. It is reasonable to anticipate identified close contacts would be directed by Public Health to self-isolate for 14 days in order to ascertain if they are infected with COVID-19. Once the tracing and the self-isolation of close contacts has been completed it is anticipated that the school would reopen.

16. The Director of People and Culture, Mr Paul Adams, or his delegate as published, must be contacted before any direction or approval is issued to any member of staff regarding standing down, working from home or the taking of leave as a result of:
 - a. a direction issued by a public health authority or CET, or

b. personal circumstance arising from a COVID-19 related matter.

For guidance regarding COVID-19 related staff absence / leave please see Appendix B.

17. Any member of staff or student with a cold or influenza must be directed to stay home until no longer contagious as determined either by a medical practitioner with infectious disease qualifications or as per the following guidance regarding typical adult contagion periods.

Illness	When you're first contagious	When you're no longer contagious
Flu ¹	1 day before symptoms start	5-7 days after you get sick with symptoms
Cold ²	1-2 days before symptoms start	Until symptoms no longer present

1. US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention

2. UK National Health Service

18. COVID-19 cleaning and personal hygiene practices are to be implemented in all schools forthwith.

The required practices are outlined in Appendix C.

19. If parents are choosing to remove students from school without medical advice to do so / not supported by a medical certificate, then these students should have their absence marked as: Unexplained – Not an excusable circumstance. Where non-attendance is due to a CET direction or 14-day self-isolation in accordance with a medical certificate/advice, this is to be recorded as Explained - Other and in the Notes: section enter 'COVID-19 related'.

To re-iterate, CET remains in close contact with Public Health and the Department of Education regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Any action taken in response to a suspected or positive COVID-19 case amongst CET staff or students will be determined by the TCEO Response Team, aligned to Public Health advice and education sector agreed protocols.

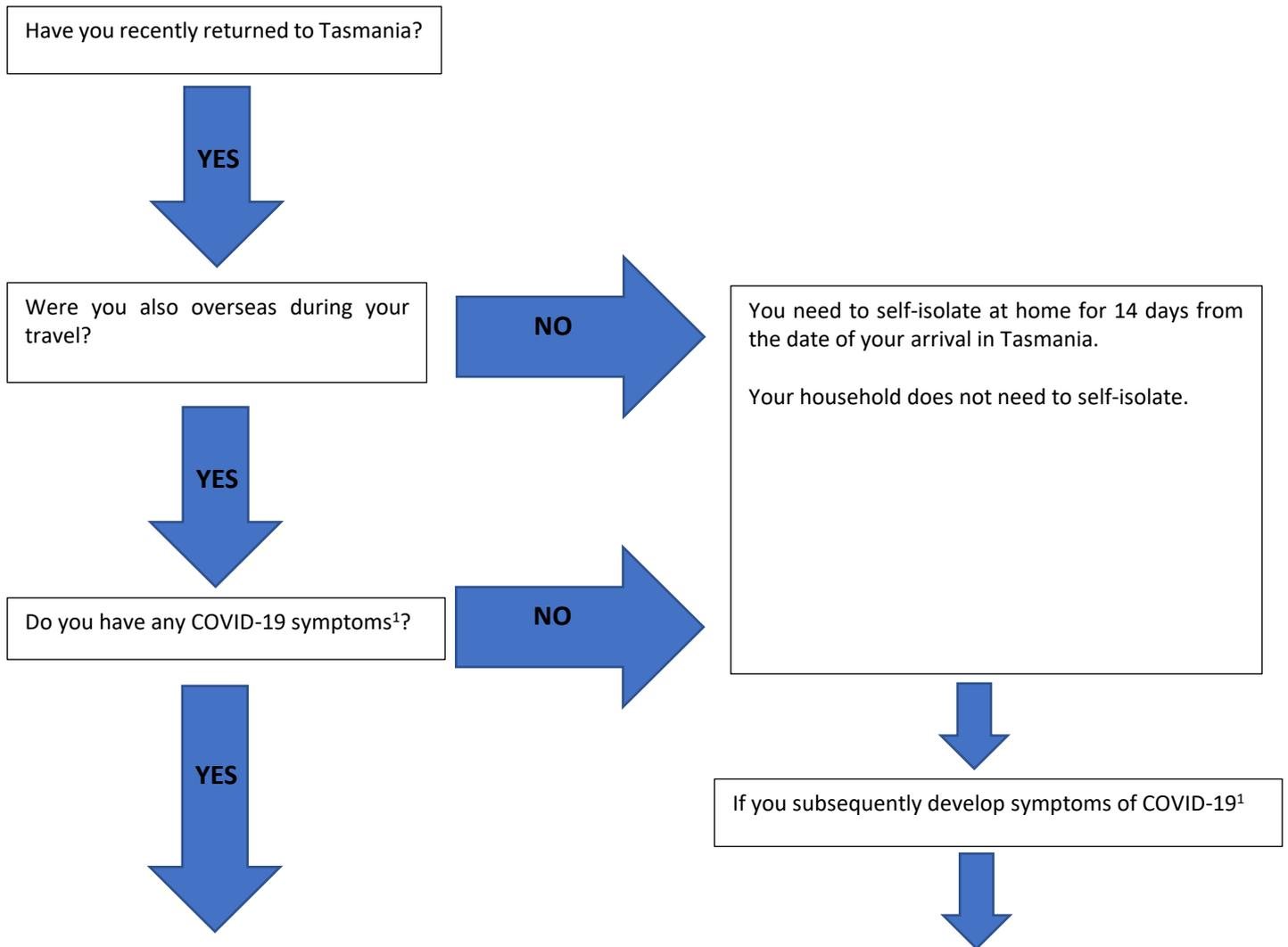
With respect to the possibility of extended school closures, CET will act in-accordance with government direction.

Yours in Christ



Dr Gerard Gaskin
Executive Director
Catholic Education Tasmania

Appendix A – Staff Travel Management Flowchart



In addition to self-isolation, you must call the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.

If you are required to undertake enhanced health screening for COVID-19 or a COVID-19 test, members of your immediate household must self-isolate until you are cleared to return to normal activities by public health authorities.

If you test positive to COVID-19, all members of your immediate household will need to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of their last contact with you.

Any member of the household who tests positive for COVID-19 must not enter a CET school or CET premises until informed by public health authorities it is safe to return to their usual activities. All other members of the household must not enter a CET school or CET premises until they have completed their 14-day self-isolation period without developing COVID-19 symptoms.

1. COVID-19 Symptoms: Fever, a cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath.

Appendix B – Staff Absence/Leave Guidance

Members of staff who have a confirmed case of COVID-19 infection are required to follow the relevant health advice and observe the isolation periods as required. These employees are entitled to use personal (sick) leave for the period of their illness. Where the member of staff does not have enough personal (sick) leave to cover that further period of absence, they should contact Mr Paul Adams, Director: People and Culture for further advice.

Where self-isolation requirements apply to staff who are not ill, their line manager and the member of staff are required to first consider ‘working from home’ arrangements provided it is practical and appropriate for some or all of the self-isolation period having regard to operational requirements and the suitability of the work. Note: working from home is contingent on compliance with WHS requirements.

The table below documents a range of COVID-19 related staff absence / leave scenarios.

Staff Absence Situation	Leave Response
Due to a cold or influenza or other medical illness as verified and described in a doctor’s certificate	Access personal leave arrangements in accordance with Tasmanian Catholic Education Single Enterprise Agreement (TCESEA) 2018
Due to looking after a dependent who is ill as verified and described in a doctor’s certificate	Access carers leave arrangements in accordance with Tasmanian Catholic Education Single Enterprise Agreement (TCESEA) 2018
Not ill but under self-isolation requirements due to private overseas travel commenced before 16 March 2020	Arrangements made to work from home where practicable, otherwise paid normal salary (including regular allowances).
Not ill but under self-isolation requirements due to private overseas travel commenced on or after 16 March 2020	Arrangements made to work from home where practicable, otherwise can access recreational leave or LWOP
Not ill but under self-isolation requirements due to private interstate travel commenced before 21 March 2020	Arrangements made to work from home where practicable, otherwise paid normal salary (including regular allowances).
Not ill but under self-isolation requirements due to private interstate travel commenced on or after 21 March 2020	Arrangements made to work from home where practicable, otherwise can access recreational leave or LWOP
Not ill but under self-isolation requirements due to private overseas travel to a restricted country / location as advised by the Australian Government or it was reasonably known that travel would include one of these locations prior to departure	Arrangements made to work from home where practicable, otherwise can access recreational leave or LWOP

Required to self-isolate due to a directive issued by CET or public health authorities but not able to work from home	Will continue to be paid their normal salary (including regular allowances).
Had / has to travel interstate for compassionate reasons	Advise Director: People and Culture for special dispensation. If granted prior to travel, arrangements made to work from home where practicable, otherwise paid normal salary (including regular allowances).
Due to looking after a dependent due to school closure	Access emergency leave arrangements as approved by Director: People and Culture, in accordance with Tasmanian Catholic Education Single Enterprise Agreement (TCESEA) 2018. If require more than 3 days either working from home where practical or recreational leave.
Directed to leave the workplace by CET under a closure advice	Arrangements made to work from home where practicable, otherwise paid normal salary (including regular allowances).
Due to COVID-19 illness contracted from known in-school infection	Communicable diseases leave in accordance with Tasmanian Catholic Education Single Enterprise Agreement (TCESEA) 2018
Due to a concern of being "at risk"	Access recreational leave or LWOP
Due to a concern of having someone "at risk" within the household	Access recreational leave or LWOP

Appendix C - Required School COVID-19 Cleaning and Personal Hygiene Practices

The available evidence indicates that the most common way of becoming infected is from touching surfaces contaminated with COVID-19 through the cough or the touch of an infected person.

Hence, it is the clear expectation of CET that schools will comply with the COVID-19 cleaning and hygiene practices.

Achieving compliance includes ensuring adequate cleaning materials are provided to staff and students and, where necessary, expanding the scope of the services provided by school cleaners.

With respect to COVID-19 cleaning and hygiene practices in a kindergarten setting, kindergarten staff are advised to prioritise their personal hygiene and to implement the required cleaning and hygiene practices with respect surfaces and students where practical.

In addition to normal school cleaning regimes, student and staff accessed school facilities and equipment shall be cleaned as follows:

- a. All surfaces frequently touched surfaces are to be cleaned (as per points b to f) at least twice daily e.g.
 - i. door handles;
 - ii. taps;
 - iii. desks;
 - iv. bench tops;
 - v. shared equipment;
 - vi. computers;
 - vii. keyboards;
 - viii. tablets;
 - ix. touch screens; and
 - x. phones.
- b. Cleaning should be conducted using a detergent solution as per the manufacturer's instructions. Soap and water is acceptable.
- c. Surfaces should only be disinfected if a person with COVID 19 illness has been in contact with the surface. Disinfectants include products containing 70% ethanol or 0.1% bleach solution (made fresh daily).
- d. Surfaces need to be cleaned if visibly dirty prior to disinfection (disinfectant may be inactivated by soiled surfaces).
- e. Ensure that disinfectant is in contact with the surface for the required period of time (read label for instructions).
- f. Hand-held devices can be cleaned with alcohol wipes or a small amount of sanitizer on a tissue - do not use bleach on these devices and be careful not to wet the device too much.
- g. Place hand sanitizer and appropriate signage next to school front office log-in screen.
- h. Have doors and windows open to ensure air in the classroom is exchanged/refreshed.
- i. Remember to use appropriate PPE as described on cleaning product labels.

Staff and students' personal hygiene practices shall include:

- a. Cleaning of hands before entering classrooms, preferably wash hands with soap and water or sanitize if washing hands is not practical. If hands cannot be washed easily and sanitizer is used hands should be washed after every four times of using sanitizer.
- b. Hand washing before eating and after going to the toilet - every time.
- c. No sharing of food or drink, including food platters.
- d. No sharing of electronic devices. If required, devices must be cleaned as outlined prior to transfer.
- e. No sharing of pens/pencils etc.