

# Coronavirus (COVID-19)



## Advice for school staff to support parents and carers

*This fact sheet contains information to help school staff support parents and carers during the COVID-19 pandemic – assisting staff to provide advice and information to ensure parents and carers can access appropriate support for the range of stressors that they may be experiencing.*



### Impacts of COVID-19 on families

While COVID-19 has been first and foremost a health crisis, it has also produced an economic and job crisis, which has led to significant personal, financial and social stress for some families. Many parents and carers in our school communities may be facing hardships and challenges in one or more of the following areas:



Fear of family members contracting Coronavirus (this fear will likely be heightened for those parents/carers who work in frontline health services).



Concern over supporting their own or family members' mental health.



Financial stress and uncertainty due to under- or unemployment.



Feelings of social isolation.



Heightened worry for family members who may be vulnerable (for example parents and carers with elderly parents).



Stress and conflict caused by the stay at home period (especially for families who have unstable/inadequate housing or where there is domestic and family violence).



Increased caring responsibilities due to support services being cut off/decreased.



### Keeping school communities connected

We know that schools provide an important sense of community for students and their families and that many parents and carers will be coming to school staff for advice and support. This can be overwhelming for school staff, who are working hard to teach and support to students, while also dealing with their own personal hardships during COVID-19.

While access to schools continues to be limited for parents and carers, all schools will be implementing creative and meaningful ways to continue to interact with and support families in their school communities. Some examples include:



Guidance officers and other support staff making themselves available to parents and carers and informing the school community how they can be contacted.



Sharing information and stories on the school's Facebook/social media pages, including examples of good news stories or support services available in the community.



Continuing to provide families with school newsletters (virtually or in the mail) to ensure continuity of this important mode of communication.



Emails home from the Principal or school staff.



Virtual meetings or check-ins with parents and carers from the principal or classroom teachers (where appropriate, viable, and able to use DoE approved forms of communication).



### Helping parents and carers to support their families

If staff believe families are in need of additional or more intensive advice and support, it is important to be able to point them in the right direction. Information is provided on the following pages about how to access health services and other support during COVID-19. By pointing parents and carers in the right direction, you are supporting them to access the support that they need to keep their family safe and well through this crisis.



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## Available supports



### Emergency

Call 000 in a physical or mental health emergency.



### Primary and Allied Health Services

To support access to primary and allied health care during the pandemic, the Government has provided \$669 million to expand Medicare-subsidised telehealth services for all Australians.

This means that Australians are able to access support in their own home using their telephone, or video conferencing features like FaceTime to connect with GP services, mental health support, chronic disease management, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health assessments, after-hours consultations and nurse practitioners, services to people with eating disorders, pregnancy support counselling, as well as services to patients in aged care facilities and children with autism.

- For more information on what services are eligible for Medicare-subsidised telehealth, go to the [Australian Department of Health Medicare Benefits Schedule website](#).



### Health Advice

- For health advice call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) any time for practical medical advice, including an over-the-phone nurse assessment if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Visit [Queensland Health's coronavirus webpage](#) for the latest information and advice.
- For doctor appointments, medical advice, and to get information on testing (including results and testing locations), call your local doctor or [search online for a GP](#).



### Mental Health Support

- For 24 hour phone and online counselling from mental health professionals contact [BeyondBlue](#) on 1300 224 636. Beyond Blue also has a dedicated [Coronavirus Mental Health Support Service](#) for people experiencing mental health concerns due to COVID-19.
- Contact [Lifeline](#) telephone counselling service on 13 11 14 for information, referral and advice.
- Contact [MindSpot](#) on 1800 61 44 34 for online assessment and treatment for anxiety and depression and also to access resources, or guidance on accessing the right services around Coronavirus.
- For support for women and families experiencing perinatal anxiety or depression, contact [Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia \(PANDA\)](#) on 1300 726 306
- For information about mental illness, treatments, where to go for support and to help carers contact [SANE Australia](#) on 1800 187 263.
- For confidential telephone counselling services and support following the loss of a loved one, contact [GriefLine](#) on 1300 845 745.
- For children, call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 or visit the [Kids Helpline](#) website.
- For young people aged 12–25 and families supporting young people, call headspace on 1800 650 890, visit [headspace's dedicated page](#) about coping with stress related to Coronavirus, or contact headspace for professional support.

### Suicide Prevention Support

- Contact [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14 for 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.
- Contact the [Suicide Call Back Service](#) on 1300 659 467 for immediate suicide support and long-term counselling.

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### Practical support

- If you need to continue to isolate and need food or other essential supplies, call the [Community Recovery Hotline](#) on 1800 173 349.
- Navigate [OnePlace](#), an easily accessible directory of community support services to help Queensland families access the right service at the right time (from parenting groups and classes to domestic and family violence support services – there are more than 53,000 records listed in OnePlace).



### Financial and Housing Advice and Support

- For information about the Australian Government's support for people impacted by COVID-19, including Economic Support Payments and allowances for people who are in self-quarantine and can't work, visit the [Services Australia website](#) or call 132 468.
- For information about how to contact services including Centrelink, Medicare and Child support call myGov on 13 23 07.
- For those experiencing financial difficulty, call the [National Debt Helpline](#) on 1800 007 007 to speak to a financial counsellor to get advice.
- To access information about emergency and temporary housing visit the Queensland Government's [Housing assistance](#) website.



### Relationship and Domestic and Family Violence Support

- For LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships, contact [QLife](#) on 1800 184 527.
- Contact [Relationships Australia](#) on 1300 364 277 for relationship support for individuals, families and communities. Our phones are open every day from 8am – 10pm, while WebChat is available every day from 8am – 9pm.
- Call [1800RESPECT](#) (1800 737 732) for 24 hour support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.
- For women experiencing domestic or family violence, contact [Womensline](#) on 1800 811 811.
- For men who need telephone and online support, information and a referral service, to help deal with relationship problems in a practical and effective way, contact [MensLine Australia](#) on 1300 78 99 78.



### Carer Support

- Call [Parentline](#) on 1300 30 1300 for confidential phone and WebChat counselling and support for parents and carers of children.
- Contact [Carers Australia](#) on 1800 242 636 for counselling, emotional and psychological support services for carers and their families.
- If someone in the family is receiving NDIS or My Aged Care services, contact the service provider to seek support in the first instance.  
Alternatively, families can call:
  - The National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080
  - The NDIS Contact Centre on 1800 800 110.
  - The My Aged Care contact centre on [1800 200 422](#)
  - The National Relay Service Helpdesk on 1800 555 660.