

SRE Stands by their School Community

A selection of SRE providers meet today to discuss whether they would suspend SRE lessons in light of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. This included key representatives from the Catholic Conference of Religious Educators (CCRESS), the Inter Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (ICCOREIS) and key representatives from All faiths SRE (AFSRE).

The consensus amongst ICCOREIS members is to continue to follow the directives of the NSW Departments of Education and Health and to respect the decisions made locally by individual school principals. SRE Providers will continue to be guided by and consult with the Department of Education and stand ready to respond to any recommendation to suspend SRE for the wellbeing of the community and our volunteers.

SRE teachers with underlying illnesses that make them more vulnerable to respiratory disease are advised to discuss their concerns with their General Practitioner or usual medical treating team and act responsibly in relation to their own health and that of others in the community.

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) has put in place social distancing measures to mitigate spread, rather than a strategy based primarily on case finding. These include:

- limiting non-essential organised gatherings to fewer than 500 people
- limiting non-essential meetings or conferences of critical workforce eg healthcare professionals and emergency services
- encouraging all Australians to exercise personal responsibility for social distancing measures
- initiating measures to protect vulnerable populations, such as reducing visitors to all residential care facilities and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

These measures are of most importance for people over 60, particularly those with chronic disease¹.

The best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 is the same way you would protect yourself from catching flu or other respiratory illnesses.

Remember:

1. Wash your hands

Clean your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol.

2. Cough etiquette

Cover your sneeze or cough with your elbow or with a tissue (and dispose of it immediately). Avoid close contact with people who are ill. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

3. Stay home if you are sick

If you are unwell with a respiratory illness you should remain at home until symptoms clear up.

More information on schools can be found at

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/covid-19-schools.aspx>

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/school-safety/novel-coronavirus>

Please be aware that this information can change and check the above websites for the latest school information.

¹ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-coronavirus-covid-19-statement-on-13-march-2020>