

Urgent update on COVID-19 for Schools members

Like our members who were first and second responders to the bushfire crisis, it is again PSA members who will be relied upon in the coming days to deliver critical and essential services to the community.

The PSA stands shoulder to shoulder with members to support you through these unprecedented times.

Meeting with DoE on COVID-19

Unlike other departments, the Department of Education had not offered briefings to unions. After the PSA demanded a briefing, we were updated on what measures the Department is putting in place to protect staff during this unprecedented time. We have now received an assurance these updates will continue.

The PSA raised a number of serious concerns around staff safety, including what protective equipment has been provided and what protocols have been put in place in each school.

The Department has advised the following:

1. They are following the advice of the Health Department and all staff and students have been encouraged to maintain good hygiene
2. Additional supplies of hand sanitiser and soap can be acquired from other suppliers, given that the usual suppliers may be out of stock. There should be a stock at each school
3. There has been additional government funding for school cleaning. The Department is looking at how to

allocate the money, but it will be done quickly

4. Emails will go out to both the Principals and the school admin staff to ensure information can be shared quickly with all classifications. We encourage all Admin Managers to ensure the information provided by the Department is sent to all non-teaching staff.

The PSA strongly impressed upon the Department that it must ramp up its efforts to protect staff immediately. The PSA put forward that:

1. The DoE should produce a fact sheet on interaction with the public and colleagues
2. Clear instructions with regards to social distancing and hygiene should be displayed in all schools
3. Provision of standardised messaging for staff to use when contacted by parents.

Your safety

The Principal is responsible for the safety for all staff and students on site. If you have concerns for your health and safety, please raise them with your Principal.

If your concerns are not addressed, please lodge an incident with the WHS line. Contact the PSA if no action is taken.



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Working in the event of a closedown

As events unfold, DoE will consider all options and wherever possible if schools close, it is likely that teachers, admin staff and General Assistants and Farm Assistants will continue to work from the school. There are a number of classifications where this is difficult and the PSA will have further discussions in the event that this occurs.

Temporary staff are also protected

The PSA also raised concerns with how a shutdown or lockdown would be handled, especially with regards to temporary employees. The Department confirmed all current contracts will be honoured throughout the crisis, including both short-term and long-term temporary.

School Psychologists

The same arrangements apply for working from home and providing services to students remotely.

Ongoing briefings

The PSA insisted on ongoing regular briefings. The Department has acknowledged it needs to improve with regards to communication and committed to regular briefings and updates.

If you are a member with an individual issue you can contact the PSA on 1300 772 679 for advice and support.

Do you know someone who is not a member? Or do you have any new starters at your school? You can assist the work of the PSA and delegates so we can get better outcomes for everyone just by asking your colleagues to [JOIN](#).

