



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): COVID-19

Date updated: Version 1 – 24 March 2020

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been prepared to assist with keeping our School community informed in relation to the COVID-19 virus.

The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly, and we will continue to update you as necessary.

Please refer to the [School website](#) where a dedicated page has been created with links to important letters and information from our Principal, Mr Steven Davies, and other key people or organisations..

Updates will be shared with parents and carers by email, the School App and the School's social media pages.

During this challenging time, it is important that the School is holding up-to-date family information. If you have not updated your contact information recently, please do so via the Parent Portal.

Questions

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Disclaimer: This document has been prepared based on information from Government agencies. Our best effort has been made to ensure the information is correct at time of publication. This document will be updated regularly as required.

1. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 may experience:

- Fever
- Flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue
- Shortness of breath

2. How is COVID-19 spread?

According to the Department of Health, the virus can spread from person to person through:

- Close contact with an infectious person (including in the 24 hours before they started showing symptoms)
- Contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze
- Touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables) that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person, and then touching your mouth or face

3. How can I protect myself and others against COVID-19?

You can protect yourself and others by practicing good hygiene and social distancing. For example:

- Covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- Disposing of tissues properly
- Washing your hands often with soap and water, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet
- Using alcohol-based hand sanitisers
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and frequently used objects such as mobiles, keys and wallets
- Staying at home when you are unwell
- Avoiding large public gatherings if they're not essential
- Keeping a distance of at least 1.5 metres between you and other people whenever possible
- Minimising physical contact, especially with people at higher risk such as older people and people with existing health conditions.

For more information see the World Health Organisation's [Basic protective measures against the new coronavirus](#) and the Australian Government's [Information on social distancing](#).

4. When and how should I tell the School about a possible exposure to COVID-19?

Please notify the School immediately if your child or a family member living in the same house is being tested for COVID-19 or if there has been close interaction with a confirmed case.

Please call 9403 1300 or email principal@stmarks.wa.edu.au

5. Who do I contact at the School if I have any questions or concerns?

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the relevant person below:

Ms Linda Sweet	Head of Early Learning	9403 1386	lsweet@stmarks.wa.edu.au
Mr Brad Gill	Head of Junior School	9403 1369	bgill@stmarks.wa.edu.au
Mrs Julia McGibbon - Briggs	Head of Middle School	9403 1332	jmcgibbonb@stmarks.wa.edu.au
Ms Kelly Nebel	Head of Senior School	9403 1335	knebel@stmarks.wa.edu.au
Dr Deborah Netolicky	Head of Teaching and Learning	9403 1330	dnetolicky@stmarks.wa.edu.au

The Reverend Scott Rowland	Chaplain	9403 1300	srowland@stmarks.wa.edu.au
Mrs Carolyn Gray	Business Manager	9403 1301	cgray@stmarks.wa.edu.au
Mr Steven Davies	Principal	9403 1300	principal@stmarks.wa.edu.au
Main Reception		9403 1300	admin@stmarks.wa.edu.au

6. What is the School doing to minimise the risk of exposure to the virus?

The School is actively putting strategies into place to minimise the risk of exposure to the virus, including:

- Ensuring all bathrooms have soap and paper towels for hand washing
- Encouraging students to wash hands after break times and other key times in the day
- Making hand sanitiser available in key areas of the School, such as the sub-school Receptions
- Cleaning services, including regular cleaning of metal surfaces such as handrails and door handles
- Ventilating classrooms with fresh air and holding classes outside, where possible
- Displaying posters that encourage good hygiene
- Not sharing food, drink bottles or stationery items
- Keeping extra distance between students when lining up
- Educating students and staff on social distancing protocols
- Cancelling of all large gatherings and events, such as assemblies, Chapel services, camps and excursions
- Cancelling school-related travel, international and interstate, for staff and students
- Setting up classrooms so students have distance between desks
- Junior School students use the JS Canteen only. Secondary students use the secondary Canteen during lunchtime at staggered times – Middle School students first, then Senior School students. During all breaks, the number of students in the Canteen is controlled.
- The use of cash on the School campus has been ceased
- Asking families to keep their children home from school from 24 March, if it is possible for a family to do so

7. Who CANNOT attend School?

Students or staff cannot attend school and need to self-isolate if they have:

- returned from overseas travel, they must self-isolate for 14 days from the date of return to Australia;
- been informed by public health authorities that they have been in close contact with a confirmed case and they must isolate themselves for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case;
- been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting results should follow the advice of the Department of Health and stay away from school.

The above also applies to all parents/carers, contractors, visitors and volunteers on school sites. Parents/carers and staff should notify the School or line manager if the student or staff member will be away for the isolation period and confirm the date in which they were last overseas, or have been advised by the Department of Health to isolate.

8. Who CAN attend School?

Should a traveller return from overseas or interstate and be in self-isolation for a period of 14 days, the rest of the household DOES NOT need to self-isolate if their returning person has no symptoms. However, they should practice social distancing (maintaining a 1.5 metre distance from the person)

as best they can, and increased hygiene standards should be adopted - the same standards everyone should be adopting with COVID-19.

St Mark's has continued to monitor closely the decisions being made by Government and Health officials as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact on Australian society. In response to the growing concern around the COVID-19 outbreak, St Mark's, along with all ASC schools, has moved into our distance learning program. Our School remains open, but we strongly urge families to keep their children at home commencing Tuesday 24 March.

Where families cannot take care of their children at home, including families where parents are frontline health or essential workers, supervision will be provided at school DURING NORMAL SCHOOL HOURS in this instance. The length of the school day, and start and finish times, remains the same for those students attending school.

Week 8 of the school term (23 – 27 March) will be a transition process to the new mode of teaching and learning. The School will move exclusively to distance learning from Monday 30 March and will continue this learning until the last day of Term 1 on Thursday 9 April. The School remains open for those families who cannot keep their children at home. The usual school holidays dates will apply.

Our Distance Learning Plan is shared with you so that you can understand how it will operate within each of our sub-schools. It may be accessed via this [LINK](#). While learning will look and feel a little different for our students for a while, it is very important that learning does continue through this time.

The reduced number of students on site allows us to ensure appropriate social distancing for the safety of our students and staff as well as provide support to families who cannot be spared from their essential jobs during this time.

9. Should my child wear a face mask at School?

The Department of Health does not recommend the use of face masks for the general public to prevent the risk of contracting COVID-19.

For more information see the Australian Government's [Information on the use of surgical masks](#) website.

10. Will the School close if a student or staff member is confirmed as having COVID-19?

If a WA school has to close due to a confirmed case, it will be on advice from the WA Health Department's Chief Health Officer.

The Chief Health Officer may, if there has been a positive COVID-19 test result in our School, close the School temporarily while assessment and tracing of exposure is conducted.

In this situation, AISWA and the ASC will work with the Principal to provide direct advice and support regarding the closure process and communication.

11. Do I need to self-isolate?

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or possibly exposed to the virus, you must stay at home and self-isolate to prevent the spread of the disease to other people.

The Australian Government has also mandated that all travellers returning from overseas after Sunday 15 March 2020 must self-isolate for 14 days. As of 1:30pm on Tuesday 24 March, anyone arriving in WA will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.

Staying at home means you:

- Do not go to public places such as work, school, shopping centres, childcare or university
- Ask someone to get food and other necessities for you and leave them at your front door
- Do not let visitors in - only people who usually live with you should be allowed in your home.

The Prime Minister has stated that if an individual in a household is in self-isolation due to overseas travel that the rest of the household DOES NOT need to self-isolate if the returning person has no symptoms. However, they should practice social distancing (maintaining at least 1.5m distance from the person) as best they can, and increased hygiene standards should be adopted.

For more information see the Australian Government's [Home Isolation Information Sheet](#) or the [WA Department of Health's website](#).

12. I am experiencing financial stress due to the virus pandemic. Who can I talk to?

The School understands that this is a challenging time for many of our families due to the uncertain economic climate caused by the virus. If you have any concerns regarding payment of School fees, we encourage you to please contact Kaye Smith, our Family Accounts Officer on 9403 1338 or familyaccounts@stmarks.wa.edu.au, or our Business Manager, Mrs Carolyn Gray, on 9403 1301 or cgray@stmarks.wa.edu.au.

Coronavirus Health Information Line

Call this line if you are seeking information on coronavirus (COVID-19), run by the Department of Health. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

1800 020 080

References: This document has been prepared using information from the following websites: [Australian Government Department of Health](#), [WA Department of Health](#) and [World Health Organization](#).