

COVID-19 and ACT public schools: pupil free days from 24 March to school holidays

Dear students and families,

I'm writing to provide you with the latest information about COVID-19 and ACT public schools.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the strength of our school community, in particular, our teachers and school staff who have been keeping our children and young people calm, happy and learning during these unprecedented events. I'd also like to acknowledge this has been a challenging period for our families and students, and I thank you for your continued support.

Pupil free days from 24 March 2020 to school holidays

The ACT Minister for Education announced that from Tuesday 24 March 2020 all ACT public schools will go pupil free until the school holidays, due to begin on Friday 10 April, 2020. Your child should still attend school on Monday 23 March.

This decision has been taken to help ACT Public Schools prepare to transition to alternative methods of delivering education for our children, in the event students cannot attend school for extended period.

During the pupil-free period, our school will continue to be a workplace for our teachers and school staff, so we can all adapt and adjust to new ways of delivering learning to your child.

Your child can not attend school during the pupil free period. Our teachers will use this time to design lesson plans for students. We ask that you give them some space to do this work, as it will position us to best support your child's continued education.

School holidays will commence as scheduled on Friday 10 April and I will provide another update before the start of Term 2.

If you work in essential services

The ACT Education Directorate will provide options for school-age children whose parents and carers need to continue delivering essential services for Canberra during this period, including teachers and health services. Further information will provided as soon as possible.

Continuing your child's learning

It is important we can provide as much continuity as possible for our children's education, no matter what the circumstances. Relationships are key to education and we want to support our students to remain connected to their current teachers wherever possible.

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All ACT public schools have been preparing to transition to alternative methods of delivering education for our children, in the event schools cannot attend for an extended period.

We have been designing age and ability-appropriate access to learning materials from home and increased use of online learning platforms to support students, parents and teachers.

Today the Education Directorate will release a resource library to support parents and children with home learning. I will provide more details and a link to the resource library as soon as it is available.

ACT public schools are among the best in the country and we are absolutely committed to ensuring your child continues to receive a high-quality education during this time. The wellbeing of our students and their families is also important. The ACT Education Directorate has compiled a range of useful resources on its [website](#).

As you can appreciate, this is a fast-moving situation and we will do our best to keep you informed. Our school website has a link to further information from the ACT Education Directorate, which is updated regularly with the latest advice. I will also write to you if further decisions are made that impact our school.

Please also regularly check the latest advice from ACT Health, available from www.health.act.gov.au and on social media.

Regards,

Craig Edwards

Principal Dickson College

23 March 2020

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