



# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## WA EDUCATION POSITION AND UPDATE

### Number 14

This page was last updated and is current as at **Friday 3 April, 1:30pm** and will be updated every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Additional updates will be provided as required.

Blue text: Information which has been edited to provide greater clarity, or updated to reflect an update in Department of Health wording.

Purple text: New information since the 1 April update (update 13).

Black text: is information that was included in previous editions, and has been reinserted.

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## Key messages

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The Department is working closely with the Department of Health, particularly Dr Andrew Robertson, the WA Chief Health Officer. We will continue to follow their expert advice.

On 26 March the State Government announced all public schools in Western Australia will remain open until the end of term, Thursday 9 April. In the final two weeks, schools will operate differently from usual.

- Coordinated learning programs cease on Friday 3 April for students.
- Schools are not expected to provide work for students who are not in attendance for the balance of Term 1.
- From Monday 6 April to Thursday 9 April teachers will prepare teaching programs for Term 2 and during this time students who attend school will be supervised.

The Minister for Education and Training reiterated that continuity of education for as long as possible is best, but families are now encouraged to keep their children at home.

## Latest news

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### Early childhood education and care relief package

Prime Minister Scott Morrison and the Federal Minister for Education, Dan Tehan, announced on 2 April a plan to help the early childhood education and care sector effective from 6 April 2020. The plan will support families, while also ensuring the sector's 13,000 child care and early learning services can keep their doors open for workers and vulnerable families who need those services. Read the media release [here](#).

### Rent relief

Premier Mark McGowan and Treasurer Ben Wyatt announced on 30 March that \$25 million had been allocated for a rent relief plan for small businesses and not-for-profits that lease from Government agencies and trading enterprises to assist lease holders to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. Read the Minister's media statement [here](#).

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## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

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### Coronavirus (COVID-19) information for Aboriginal people resource

Health WA has published a website containing information and resources for Aboriginal people:

[https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-information-for-Aboriginal-people](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-information-for-Aboriginal-people)

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## Attendance

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The State Government recognises there will be families who need to send their children to school to continue their learning prior to the end of term. These may include:

- children of parents and carers who need their children to attend school to maintain employment
- children who live in families with aged relatives
- children where it is safer for them to be at school.

Parents/carers and staff should notify their 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.

### Lesson Attendance codes for Week 10, Term 1

[Recording student absences](#) related to COVID-19 in Term 1 Week 10 is to record:

- students in attendance with the present code (/);
- students not attending with a Q code (for all students K - 12); and
- student absent due to a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 with an N code, Notified sick.

Add the following comment in the notes fields:

- 'Student Attended COVID-19' for present students;
- 'Not required to attend COVID-19' for Q code;
- 'COVID-19' for N code.

Schools do not need to enter any other information.

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## Cleaning

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## [Cleaning of schools and workplaces](#)

Cleaning guidelines have been developed based on advice from the WA Department of Health, in consultation with the United Worker's Union. The guidelines have been updated to reinforce that equipment and items that are used by multiple staff or students (such as sporting equipment, musical instruments and iPads) should be disinfected between use. [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for cleaning schools and workplaces have been developed.

These [guidelines](#) must be followed by any staff undertaking cleaning duties in schools and other workplaces.

### **Additional cleaning requirements**

Additional funding for increased school cleaning has been provided to schools, schools should now be able to view the operational response amount in the School's Resourcing System. The operational response provides funding for the estimated 26% increase in cleaning time and a \$2500 allocation for the additional cost of supplies.

The allocation will be provided in two instalments, the first allocation has been calculated based on the increased cleaning time from Week 7, Term 1 to Week 10, Term 2 plus the \$2500. The second instalment will occur prior to Term 3 and will cover the remaining 2020 requirements.

Should schools have any queries regarding their allocation, they can contact School Funding on [SchoolFunding@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:SchoolFunding@education.wa.edu.au).

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## **Communications**

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Principals need to report all positive confirmed COVID-19 cases in the community (parents/carer or siblings) to Marcia Czerniak at [marcia.czerniak@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:marcia.czerniak@education.wa.edu.au). You must contact Marcia before sending any information out to parents/carers – support will be provided for this.

We have developed [materials](#) to assist you in responding to questions from members of your school community. We will continue to update these materials as new information arises.

Public schools should contact the Department of Education Media Team on 9264 5821 for advice before responding to COVID-19 media queries.

If you would like support to communicate with parents/carers about COVID-19, you can contact the coronavirus support team and principal advisors.

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Further information is available at [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus) or the Healthdirect helpline on **1800 020 080** for more information on the virus and its symptoms.

- [Information for parents and schools](#)
  - [Information for employees](#)
  - [Advice for schools about self-isolation requirements](#)
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## **COVID-19 general information**

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### **Testing**

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) releases regular updates. The latest can be found here <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc#statements->

As of Thursday 2 April, the testing criteria for COVID-19 will be expanded significantly at all COVID clinics.

#### General public testing

Any person presenting to a COVID clinic with BOTH a documented fever ( $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) AND an acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat) will be tested.

#### High-risk staff testing

Anyone working within a high-risk setting that presents to a COVID clinic with EITHER a fever ( $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) OR an acute respiratory infection will be tested. This includes healthcare workers (including aged care and disability workers) and WA Police Officers.

#### High-risk settings

Testing will also be arranged for anyone from the following high risk settings where two or more people are experiencing EITHER a fever ( $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) OR an acute respiratory infection:

- Aged and residential care
- Rural and remote Aboriginal communities
- Detention centres
- Correctional facilities
- Boarding schools
- Military barracks or equivalent
- Geographically localised areas with increased risk of community transmission
- Cruise ship passengers or returned travellers (international and domestic)..

Additional COVID-19 information, including FAQs, is available at

[https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Coronavirus](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus)

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## Curriculum, learning and assessment

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### Connected Learning Hub

The Connected Learning Hub for teachers and school leaders will be live on Monday (6 April). It will provide access to teaching resources, learning programs, support and training for remote delivery of the curriculum. It is starting with the materials that are currently available, but as much useful material as possible will be added over the coming weeks, in preparation for Term 2.

Teachers and school staff can [access training](#) in technologies (Connect, Webex, Microsoft Teams, Office 365) to support their teaching and learning. The training schedule for 3 to 24 April (through Term break) is now available with registrations through PLIS.

A large number of school leaders and principals have already contacted the [Connected Learning team](#) offering resources and support. This has been genuinely appreciated. We will be seeking to share the great examples we've received from schools demonstrating their preparations for next term through the Connected Learning Hub from Monday. [Further contributions](#) will be gratefully received.

[Principal Guide for Curriculum Continuity](#): Resources to support school leaders to prepare for Teaching and Learning in Term 2.

#### Learning Stream Leaders

Each learning stream will have principal advisors co-leading the stream. Principals are encouraged to make contact with principal advisors who will coordinate support for schools in teaching and learning continuity.

### Student learning at home

We are working to provide online access to resources for parents, carers and students. This will be through the [Learning at home](#) website. The website is now available and resources will continue to be added over the coming weeks.

Packages of work for Year 12 ATAR courses were published on the [Learning at home](#) website on Monday 30 March.

Our teachers should continue to use [Connect](#) as their primary source of teaching resources. The materials published on the [Learning at home](#) website will also be available on [Connect](#).

### **English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) learners**

The Department is currently undertaking the following work to support EAL/D learners, their parents and schools:

- translating documents
- reviewing existing resources and determining methods of publication suitable for EAL/D learners
- developing support protocols for EAL/D learning at home with input from Intensive English Centres
- developing EAL/D course packages and resources for Year 11 and Year 12 ATAR students
- supporting individual teachers and schools by email and telephone.

For support please email [LiteracyandNumeracy.EALD@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:LiteracyandNumeracy.EALD@education.wa.edu.au).

### **Primary Extension and Challenge (PEAC) classes**

A decision has been made that from Monday 30 March, face-to-face PEAC classes will be suspended until further notice. Any PEAC classes currently run online should continue to operate as usual. Consistent with expectations of all teaching staff in schools, Coordinators and teachers are asked to use this time to develop options for PEAC programs to be delivered remotely from the commencement of Term 2.

### **GATE testing**

GATE testing has been postponed. Parents have been informed and students will be provided with an alternative assessment opportunity in the future.

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## **Facilities and assets**

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Schools will have existing agreements for the use of school premises and facilities as follows:

- Community use including playgroups
- Outside of school hours care (OSHC)
- School uniform shop or canteen

In the current circumstances, schools should be temporarily suspending community use/third party arrangements, including play groups, by using this [letter template](#). Any fee payable is also suspended. This same letter template can be used to temporally suspend the school uniform shop.

OSHC must continue as required. However, arrangements must be made to ensure cleaning requirements are fulfilled, particularly where the OSHC operates during the school holidays.

The continued use of school premises for canteens should be considered on a case by case basis. Schools are to contact Commercial Services to seek advice should they wish to suspend their canteen.

Schools can refer to Commercial Services if advice is required about ceasing any existing arrangements.

### **Capital and maintenance works (Public Schools)**

We are seeking to minimise any additional burden on businesses that are already facing the enormous challenges of COVID-19. Current advice in relation to capital and maintenance works, including the stimulus package works at your school, is that it should proceed unless the risks cannot be managed.

Contractors who come on site must comply with the self-isolation requirements and the advice issued by the Department of Health. This includes requirements for social distancing and hygiene measures.

Where a principal recommends to not proceed with any capital or maintenance works undertaken by the Department of Finance's contractors, please contact the Department of Education's Capital Works and Maintenance directorate or your Program Manager from Building Management and Works. This should be done prior to deciding whether or not to progress.

## **Security Alarm Systems**

As we move into these uncertain times and the end of term, the Department's Security and Emergency Management seeks your support in ensuring your school intruder alarm systems are armed before the last person leaves the site each day. The intruder alarm systems at your school are one way we can effectively manage security when the site is unattended. Please make sure your staff are aware of when and how to operate the intruder alarm systems. For more information on how to manage your security alarm system, please refer to Ikon:

- [Manage School Security](#)
- [Intruder Alarm System](#)

## **School playgrounds and play equipment**

The WA Government announced that as of 11:59pm Tuesday 31 March, all playgrounds in public places will be closed.

It is recommended that all schools with playgrounds and/or playground type equipment close them down until further notice. This may be done by:

1. removing easily re-moved items of equipment; and/or
2. the use of appropriate signage and hazard tape; and
3. ensuring an appropriate level of supervision of the closed playground area during school opening hours.

If a principal considers that there is a compelling school specific reason for keeping a playground and/or play equipment accessible to students they may do so if they can be completely satisfied that:

1. there is no general public access to the playground and play equipment contained inside their school site; and
2. the play equipment contained inside their school site will be thoroughly cleaned at the school's expense in each instance after it has been used.

## **BYO water bottles**

As per advice received from the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC), it is preferable that students bring their own individual water bottles that can be filled from the fountain as necessary. This will reduce the need for students to drink directly from fountains. All students should be instructed on safe usage of water fountains e.g. not putting their mouth onto equipment. The water fountains should be regularly cleaned and checked that they are working correctly with good pressure.

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## **Finance**

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### **Individual Disability Allocation**

Given the unprecedented circumstances of COVID-19 and the impact on the system, obtaining documentation for upcoming cease and review dates for the Individual Disability Allocation may not be possible. Disability Services and Support will automatically extend all cease and review dates for eligible applications until the end of Term 4, 2020; no further action is required by schools.

### **Laptop Loan Agreements**

There is no change to existing laptop loan agreements and RiskCover arrangements. Currently, RiskCover will not provide insurance cover to devices loaned off-site to students. The Department will liaise with RiskCover regarding arrangements and communicate any changes which may occur.

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## ICT

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ICT are currently reviewing options for the best way to provide remote access, where it is possible and critical to operations of schools and the Department. This work is being managed and co-ordinated in a way that will be applied consistently as instructed by the Director General and the assembled working group.

Many organisations have staff working from home due to COVID-19. This is having a major impact on the performance and reliability of telecommunications across the country.

Over the last few days, there has been

- 4 times more demand for Connect
- almost 10 times the normal use of the public website
- a tripling of Ikon use.

In response, ICT has

- more than tripled the capacity of the Connect servers
- significantly increased resources for the public website (for Learning From Home resources) and Ikon.

Further increases are underway, but the level of demand in such a short period presents an unprecedented challenge. We are also reliant on external telecommunications services to connect and deliver services to our schools, students and staff.

For students and staff studying or working from home, this means that they may

- need to allow more time to perform a task
- have trouble connecting to some services
- see short delays in email delivery and even congestion of phone calls on the mobile network.

While the telecommunications companies and NBNCo are taking steps to minimise the impact on the network, this is a unique and global issue with many challenges. We thank you for your understanding and patience.

More information can be found on [Ikon](#).

### **Web conferencing, including important security information about Zoom**

WebEx and Microsoft Teams are available for Department staff. With many staff working from alternative locations, the use of WebEx and/or Microsoft Teams for teleconferencing and video conferencing are strongly recommended. WebEx and Teams rely on your Department login details for access, as the Department has a licence for use that covers all employees. Information about accessing [WebEx](#) and [Microsoft Teams](#), as well as [meeting and event instructions for Webex](#), is available on Ikon. Important security information about Zoom is also available on [Ikon](#).

For support, please contact the ICT Customer Service Centre – 08 9264 5555 or [customer.service.centre@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:customer.service.centre@education.wa.edu.au)

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## School operations

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### **Review of non-essential functions**

Thank you to principals and school communities who have provided the Director General with feedback on non-essential functions that could be cancelled or postponed for Semester One, 2020. Semester One Public School Reviews have been postponed and the completion of 2019 School Annual Reports are now optional.



## Education Support Settings and Education Support Students

A letter was sent to all principals 30 March 2020 regarding Education Support Settings and Education Support students in mainstream settings. Included with this letter is a template letter principals may choose to use with parents/caregivers to communicate the importance of keeping students home during this time due to increased risk of acquiring and transmitting the COVID-19 virus.

## Front line services and mass gatherings

On Wednesday, 18 March the Australian Government announced that all organised, non-essential mass gatherings attended by more than 100 people for indoor events and more than 500 people for outdoor events must be cancelled from Wednesday 18 March 2020.

On Friday 20 March the Australian Government announced further measures relating to gatherings of fewer than 100 people in an enclosed space. The Government is now recommending four square metres per person. This does **not** apply to schools.

Please refer to the [advice regarding mass gatherings to support principal decision-making](#).

Please refer to [Healthy WA](#) for more information on the Prime Minister's announcement.

While schools remain exempt from social distancing requirements, the Department of Health has produced a [fact sheet on social distancing](#) for general information.

On Sunday 29 March, the Prime Minister announced further measures and restrictions to slow the transmission of COVID-19. This includes public gatherings, excluding household members, have been reduced to a maximum of two people. Whilst schools remain exempt, He also announced further measures regarding staying at home as below. It is recommended that:

- If you are over 70, you are strongly encouraged to remain at home;
- If you are over 60 with pre-existing conditions;
- If you are Aboriginal and aged over 50, you should stay home wherever possible for your own protection.

## Temporary school closure

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 will, if there has been a positive COVID-19 test result in your school, close your school temporarily while assessment and tracing of exposure is conducted. A thorough school clean will then be carried out to make the school safe for the return of students and staff.

In this situation, the Department of Education, AISWA, or CEWA will work with individual school principals to provide direct advice and support regarding the closure process and communication.

[Information for principals](#) has been developed to assist in their planning, should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19 in their school community. Principals should consider the temporary school closure planning checklist now, and determine how the steps would work in their particular school.

If you have a staff member or student who **has been tested** for COVID-19, please email [coronavirussupport@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:coronavirussupport@education.wa.edu.au). This will assist our support planning.

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## Student support

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## Student wellbeing website

Given the extensive media coverage, some children are already aware of the impact of the virus and will pick up on the concerns and anxiety of others. This could be through listening and observing what is happening online, at home and school.



The [Learning at home](#) website provides advice and resources for parents and carers, educators and students. This includes a wide range of resources and information related to the impact of COVID-19 on students' health and wellbeing and the impact on families. It also includes vital information for schools to understand how they can best support students and families to access services and information. The website will continue to be updated over the coming weeks.

A Student Wellbeing Response, Recovery Advisory Team has been established to identify and respond to emerging issues for educators and support staff. The team can be contacted on **6206 2098** or at [covid19.studentwellbeing@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:covid19.studentwellbeing@education.wa.edu.au). Please visit the information on [Support for parents and carers](#)

Parents are advised that, if they need urgent mental health advice and support for themselves or their child, there is a 24 hour crisis support line 1800 048 636.

### **Child and Adolescent Health Services**

The Child and Adolescent Health Services (CAHS) has advised the Department of Education of the suspension of services to schools from 30 March until further notice. Services to be suspended include;

- School Entry Health Assessments Program
- Aboriginal Ear Health Assessment Team
- School based Immunisation Program
- Community health parenting groups, Triple P groups and seminars.

### **COVID-19 guidelines for school psychologists and lead school psychologists**

Guidelines for school psychologists and lead school psychologists were released 25 March 2020.

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## **Travel**

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### **WA regional travel**

On 27 March 2020, the State Government announced that travel between Western Australian regions will be restricted from 11.59pm Tuesday 31 March 2020. From this time, all intrastate travel must cease and Western Australians must stay within their regional boundaries.

Some exemptions apply, including:

- travel for work purposes
- to attend medical appointments
- to transport freight
- those who do not have access to groceries or supplies within their region
- returning to a place of residence
- where necessary to attend school or an educational institution
- caring for family members
- approved compassionate grounds.

The Department will provide confirmation of employment at particular schools. If staff are travelling for reasons under the exemptions, they are advised to travel with evidence that can be shown on request to WA Police at boundary crossings.

#### [Kimberley Travel](#)

As of 3 April 2020, new boundaries have been put into place to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the region. Read the [media release](#) for more information.

The State Government urges all Western Australians to remain calm, and take the time to ensure they understand the new restrictions and the exemptions.

General details, including the exemptions that apply and the regional boundaries, are available on <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-travel-and-transport-advice>.

## **Border controls - international and interstate travel**

All travel in and out of Western Australia has been banned as of 1.30pm on Tuesday 24 March 2020.

In addition, effective from 11.59pm on Sunday April 5, people will no longer be able to enter Western Australia without an exemption. Read the [media release](#) for more information.

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## **VET/TAFE**

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### **Changes to operation at WA TAFE Colleges**

On 28 March the Minister announced there will be a temporary pause in the face-to-face delivery of most courses at WA TAFE colleges from Monday 30 March until Thursday 9 April. The Department will work with Training and Workforce Development to assess the implications for school-aged students engaging in VET courses regarding changes to how these are delivered from Term 2. Read the Minister's media statement [here](#).

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## **Workforce matters**

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Important information from the Public Sector Labour Relations Branch regarding staff leave was published via Ed-e-Mail 24 March 2020. Principals and managers must refer to the [circulars](#) when considering and approving leave (below).

Further Department of Education resources have been developed to support Principals and Line Managers in relation to COVID-19 related leave situations and in the event that a staff member is required to work from home subject to business needs. A Workforce Ready Reckoner has been added to the bank of resources for principals and line managers to use in determining appropriate actions relating to staff leave.

### **Alternative working arrangements in schools**

Further information regarding Alternative Working Arrangements (AWA) have been developed to guide Principals and Line Managers in relation to Alternative Working Arrangements (Term 1, Week 9 & 10), Rosters, Cleaning and Casual relief staff. Any Principal requesting to access Alternative Working Arrangements for themselves must seek endorsement from the Deputy Director General - Schools.

They can be found [here](#).

### **Streamlining selection processes**

Principals now have a number of staffing options available when filling vacancies related to COVID-19. The document [Staffing Processes and Practices](#) outlines actions which support principals to manage a range of staffing related issues and to quickly source and appoint staff. The advice also provides information regarding your options in relation to the existing recruitment processes.

The Department of Education is open for business. Fixed term appointment pools for cleaners and education assistants are now advertised on JobsWA (see links below) to streamline school recruitment processes.

- [Cleaners](#)
- [Education Assistants](#)

Principals now have access to applicants in the new recruitment pools for Cleaners and Education Assistants.

A user guide on how you can search for an applicant matching your requirements (for example, FTE and days) is available [here](#).

Staff Recruitment and Employment Services will endeavour to keep applicant availability information as current as possible. To assist with this, when sending offers of employment, you are asked to cc [COVID19Staffing@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:COVID19Staffing@education.wa.edu.au).

For assistance with these pools please contact:

- Luke Chapple (08) 9264 8359
- Chelsea Clarkson (08) 9264 8425
- Jaime Marquis (08) 9264 8723
- Pare Boyle (08) 9264 8719
- [COVID19Staffing@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:COVID19Staffing@education.wa.edu.au)

## Teachers Registration

The Teacher Registration Board has announced two functional changes as a response to COVID-19.

1. Registration expiry dates of all registered teachers are to be extended by six months. Implementation of this resolution is being undertaken immediately but it is likely you will not see a change in your registration expiry date for a few weeks
2. For those registered teachers who are yet to pay their annual fee, the date to pay that fee has been extended to 31 May 2020. Registered teachers are strongly encouraged to pay only by electronic means (please avoid paying by cheque or cash).

## Pre-service teachers and school psychologists undertaking practicums

Public school settings provide pre-service teachers and school psychologists with access to quality mentors and a rich diversity of students that best prepare them for a career in teaching. Completion of a successful practicum is a graduation requirement across all universities and essential to developing a continued supply of teachers and school psychologists for our schools.

Universities have advised us that they have implemented a process to ensure pre-service teachers comply with the most current advice on COVID-19 restrictions. With this in mind, principals are asked to continue to provide pre-service teachers and school psychologists with practicum placement opportunities. This is in line with the [advice regarding mass gatherings to support principal decision-making](#).

The Department of Education, Catholic Education Western Australia, and the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia will continue to respond as a collaborative team to advice from the WA Department of Health and provide updated advice to schools and staff as appropriate.



Department of  
Education

