

UPDATE # 8 - This information was last updated and is current as at Thursday 2nd April 2020.

COVID-19 LEARNING AT HOME & SCHOOL UPDATES

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Firstly, I want to thank all families for their support. As I indicated in a previous communication we feel like we are building the plane as we are flying it - to try and get everything ready for term 2 - when we do not even know completely how that will look yet; but all staff and parents have been so understanding and supportive.

Thank you to those families that were able to keep their children at home this week and to those families that were unable to do so we totally understand and support your choices.

I now need to inform everyone that tomorrow, Friday 3rd April, is the official last day of school this term. Next week we will only be supervising students as per the Director General of Education's statement and as such supervision will be provided for:

- *Students of parents who are working and cannot work from home or are considered essential services*
- *Students of elderly caregivers*
- *Students whom are vulnerable*

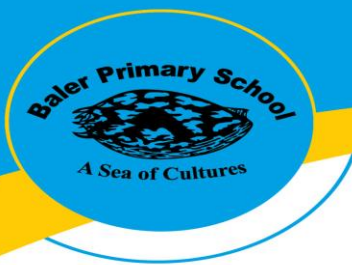
Term 2

Whilst we have had no official communication from the Department of Education yet as to what will be happening in Term 2 my understanding is that we will be moving into a Distance Education scenario. This will look different for all schools and needs to cater to our local context. We will have some families working on line, some families working from print based materials and some families accessing a combination of this. You should have received a survey via email that will help us to determine the best scenario for each family. No guidelines as yet have been received as to whether some students will be able to attend school - as they have this week. The Minister for Education and Training reiterated that continuity of education for as long as possible is best, but families are encouraged to keep their children at home (this was a general statement and not in particular reference to Term 2).

Work Packs

*Teachers are busily collating work packs, instructions and items from your child's booklist for students to use at home next term. In order to maintain social distancing each family will be requested to collect these packages from the undercover area and lawn area **as per the rostered table on the next page.***

- *We request only one family member enters the school grounds*
- *Work Packs will be in the undercover area and the grassed areas on tables*
- *Hand sanitiser will be on the tables*



- *Work packs will be laid out in classroom groups in alphabetical order*
- *If you need to ask someone else to collect a work pack for your child, please email / notify the classroom teacher or school in regards to this.*

SURNAME BEGINNING	<i>We request families stick to their allocated time to enable successful social distancing to be practiced</i>	
A - L	Wed 8 th April 8:30am – 11:30am	Thurs 9 th April 8:30 – 10:30am
M -Z	Wed 8 th April 11:30am – 2:30pm	<i>(This time slot is ONLY for those families that CANNOT pick up on Wednesday as we need to see how many packs are not collected and contact these families – school is closed on Friday 10th April for Good Friday)</i>

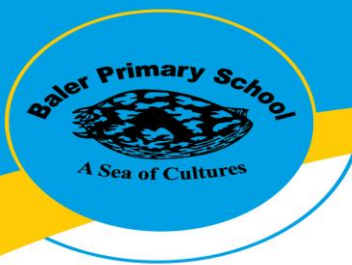
- *Families with children of different surnames can chose the time slot that suits them best.*

Distance Learning At Home

As a school we are putting a number of strategies in place to support students and parents in this brand new learning environment that we will be entering next term. As stated previously we have yet had no direction in regards to whether students of working families who are unable to work from home will or will not be on site.

Some of the support strategies we have put in place include:

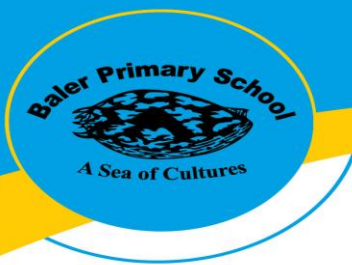
- To support student well-being and ‘check-in’ every single student will be allocated a key contact. This could be a teacher or another staff member. This person’s role will be to make daily contact with the student via either telephone or Zoom Video call. Besides being a friendly cheery voice it is also an opportunity for students and parents to ask any questions – if your contact person cannot answer your questions, whether it is about school work or something else, then they will find out for you. Families will be notified who their contact person is – this will be in the work packs you will pick up next week.
- Our school [website \(www.balerps.wa.edu.au\)](http://www.balerps.wa.edu.au) now has two brand new buttons on the front page. One gives general information and updates about the pandemic and the other provides links to learning resources **our school will be using** – these will be updated frequently as needed.



- The Department of Education is also continually adding learning content and activities to their [Learning at Home website](#) – this can also be accessed from our school website and is an extra resource.
- Staff have been undertaking professional development in the following online platforms and will introduce your child to them in Week 1 next term – information about these will be in the packages you will pick up next week.
 - **Zoom** – a video conferencing tool that will enable the whole class at once or individual students to see and talk to their teacher. Students will need access to a laptop or desktop computer (*with webcam & microphone*) - as Zoom does not work as easily from a tablet. We will support those without access via phone calls and print based materials. An invitation link to the online video class will be sent to the parent's registered email address – all the student will need to do is click the link to join.
 - **Seesaw** – Some students / families are already familiar with this – this is where content, communication and teacher connection can take place. Daily lesson outlines will be placed on Seesaw when students are not taking part in a Zoom lesson.
 - **Print Based Materials** – these will be provided for students who do not have access to technology and also to support the online lessons where needed.
- Teachers know '**parents are not teachers**' and as such the work sent home will start off small until students, parents and teachers feel comfortable with their new roles. The majority of activities will be in 'child language' to assist students to work as independently as possible – we realise that some parents are working at home and may not be available to supervise every activity. We also realise that your own work – your paid employment – has to come first!
- The focus of distance education will be on literacy, numeracy and well-being. Other learning areas will be integrated where possible and backed up with suggestion of other play based activities children can undertake at home.
- For those students able to access the internet all year levels will be allocated a time slot each day to be in a Zoom video conference session with their teachers. Different year levels will have different timeslots so that there should not be a clash of computer access if families only have one device. These time slots will be advised later.

Education Support Students or Students Identified as Special Needs

A letter has been sent to all families regarding Education Support students in mainstream settings. This was to communicate the importance of keeping students home during this time due to increased risk of acquiring and transmitting the COVID-19 virus. Further educational supports will be provided.



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.

*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**. This information is also on our school website.*

New Directions to protect remote Aboriginal communities from COVID-19

In response to the State's pandemic response plan, access in and out of remote Aboriginal communities will be restricted. It also enforces the self-isolation measures that many communities are already observing. Under the Directions, any person outside the boundary of a remote Aboriginal community must not enter the boundaries of the community. A person within a remote Aboriginal community must also remain within the boundaries of that community. Healthy WA have published a website containing information and resources for Aboriginal people: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-travel-and-transport-advice>.

School Playgrounds and Play Equipment

The WA Government announced that as of 11:59pm on 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.

In closing I want to acknowledge how overwhelming this information can be and re-iterate that you know your children and your family situation so please take the time to enjoy the holidays with your children. Next term we will start very small and will be here to support you. We do not want you to be the teacher but you can be a very valuable support structure in your child's learning. WE also acknowledge that not everything is going to go smoothly but together we can work through this and solve most problems. As a school community we will come out the other side stronger and with a new found respect and empathy for each other as partners in education.

All I ask is that you contact your child's contact person, the classroom teacher or even myself personally and we will help sort through the challenges we are all facing. Take time to 'smell the roses' or as we are in Hedland maybe I should say the 'desert roses'. ☺ Stay safe everyone!

*Kind Regards,
Karen Burgess
Principal*