



Chief Practitioner's COVID-19 UPDATE

Dr Meegan Crawford | Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

4 August 2021

Dear parents and foster and kinship carers

As this is my first message to you, I would like to introduce myself. I am the Chief Practitioner of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs. Part of my role is to develop procedures that help our child safety officers work with parents and carers to help keep children safe.

Overnight, I provided advice to child safety service centres (CSSCs) across the state about how to manage family contacts and meetings during lockdown. As I believe it is very important everyone has the same information, I wish to share this advice with you as well.

The health, safety and wellbeing of children, young people, parents, carers and child safety staff, along with the government's intent to keep Queenslanders safe and avoid a longer lockdown, have all been considered when developing the following advice. It is a tough time for all Queenslanders and these restrictions are the toughest to date. We know that some children and young people and their families have fallen ill, and it is important to make all attempts to minimise this for children, young people, families and carers.

I acknowledge the worries, concerns and disappointments you may have around the current restrictions.

Please note that the below is general advice, and not specific to your child or children and the contact you have with them, or the child or children you care for. To understand how the advice relates to your situation, please contact your child safety officer or CSSC to discuss further.

Family contact decisions during current South East Queensland lockdown

At this time, there is a focus by government on limited movement to reduce the spread of the virus and avoid a lengthy lockdown. It is hoped that very short-term sacrifices will mean a return to normality as soon as possible.

It is important for children to stay connected to their family for so many reasons. For the period of lockdown, family contact arrangements will occur via phone or using online options such as FaceTime or Skype, rather than face-to-face arrangements. If online options are not possible, family contact will be postponed until after the lockdown, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Where contact happens using phone or online alternatives, our staff will consider whether more frequent contact is an option.





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Where contact requires supervision, this will be made clear with both parents and carers. If you are unsure about an arrangement, please clarify this with your child safety officer.

Where technology is to be used to support meaningful connection while the lockdown is in place, and you have worries about whether you will have enough data, whether that be for you, your child or as the carer for the child, please speak to your child safety officer about how they can assist.

Scheduled meetings, access to CSSCs and court attendance during lockdown in South East Queensland

Any meeting planned with the department will probably become an online meeting. If this is not possible, the meeting may have to be postponed. In making these decisions, we will consider the health, safety and wellbeing of the family, child, carers and others attending. In deciding what is the best way to meet, we will talk with you and others who were to be involved in the meeting.

Court attendance arrangements have changed. For any advice about current court proceedings, please speak to your legal representative.

It is the department's intention to keep CSSCs open and staff available during the lockdown, so please contact the CSSC directly if you have any questions.

I hope this information answers some of the questions and addresses some of the worries you might have. I encourage you to reach out to your child safety officer, or support worker, for further support and guidance if required.

I will be back in touch should there be any changes to this advice.

Kind regards

Dr Meegan Crawford

Chief Practitioner

Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

