



## Director-General's COVID-19 UPDATE

Deidre Mulkerin | Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

Dear foster and kinship carers

With Queensland now into Stage 1 of the easing of restrictions, I hope you all had an opportunity to venture outdoors over the weekend or take a break at your favourite coffee shop.

### Return to school

In line with advice from Queensland Health, [Education Queensland](#) has announced that students in Years 2 to 10 will join their schoolmates in Kindy, Prep, Year 1 and Years 11 and 12, and return to regular classroom learning from Monday 25 May. I'm sure many carers who experienced the challenges of children learning at home will let out a sigh of relief come Monday.

Students with health support needs will be supported by their teachers while they learn from home. The online resources on Education Queensland's [learning @home website](#) will continue to be available.

The health and wellbeing of students and school staff continue to be a priority. This means:

- all adults must maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres and not gather in groups in and around school grounds, car parks, school gates and outside classrooms
- parents and carers should use 'stop, drop and go' options rather than walking children into school grounds
- schools will work with their communities to modify student and traffic movements around their schools
- strict personal hygiene protocols, including the cleaning of high frequency touch points such as desks and door handles, will remain in place
- schools will continue to adapt to this changing situation and may use larger, alternative locations or classrooms within the school, designate new or different drop-off/pick-up points for parents and carers, take advantage of outdoor learning spaces and stagger lunch breaks, start/finish times and other activities to reduce movement around the school.

For more information, please contact your school.

### Support for young people up to 19 years old

We know how important it is to support a young person's transition to adulthood. However, many young people may not be ready to live life as independent adults, particularly if they're still in school or training.

If you're an approved carer, or a long-term or permanent guardian, and you continue to care for a young person who has turned 18, you can also continue to receive the fortnightly care allowance until the young person in your care turns 19 years old, regardless of their education status.



In response to COVID-19, these payments will be backdated to 29 March to align with the [Queensland Health directive](#).

Please visit the Queensland Government foster and kinship care web page for more information on changes to [carer allowances](#).

### **Family contact**

With the easing of restrictions, we are re-looking at how we support and facilitate family contact.

Decisions about face-to-face family contact will continue to be made on a case-by-case basis. However, unless there are health concerns for those who facilitate or participate in family contact arrangements, we continue to support face-to-face contact occurring as far as possible.

If face-to-face contact between children, siblings and parents is assessed as being safe, this contact should not be limited. This means it can include hugs and kisses as long as good hygiene practices have been followed before and after contact.

We know a period of readjustment may be required if face-to-face contact arrangements are made. Parents, children or young people and their carers may feel apprehensive at first, and additional support and understanding may be required. It's important we all work together to discuss and address any worries.

To keep you and members of your household safe, our workers will continue to adhere to social distancing measures and good hygiene practices, as advised by the health authorities.

If you haven't downloaded the COVIDSafe app as yet, please take a moment to consider doing this as an added safety measure. While we encourage use of the app, it is your personal choice whether you download it.

The most important message from our health authorities is, if you or any member of your household has any symptoms, no matter how mild, or if you're worried, go and get tested so we can manage any risks.

Thank you again for your commitment to looking after children and young people. Please also take time to look after yourself.

Warm regards

### **Deidre Mulkerin**

Director-General

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

