

TO: QTU MEMBERS

Students return to school-based learning

Today marks the return of all students to school-based learning following the successful transition of K-2 and years 11 and 12 over the past fortnight.

We understand that many teachers will be happy to see their students return and are looking forward to building on the remote learning experiences in their classrooms.

The work members have undertaken over the past eight weeks has been phenomenal. To switch from a face-to-face curriculum to remote learning that provided students with continuity in education and a continued sense of belonging and school identity is a feat that should not be underestimated.

Even though it may seem that things are returning to normal at work, it is still not business as usual. It is important that a focus on health and safety continues.

Health and safety in schools

Chief Health Officer (CHO) advice continues to be that the greatest risk of transmission of the virus in a school is between adults. Consequently, the department's guidelines and planning documents require that:

- physical distancing is maintained between adults at all times – staff rooms must provide 4 square metres of space per adult and at least 1.5 metres distance is required between work locations
- the number of adult visitors to school sites is minimised
- parents and community members do not congregate at school gates or on school premises (many schools have made arrangements to increase vehicular capacity in their stop, drop and go zones)
- hygiene measures, such as hand washing, cleaning high touch areas and use of hand sanitiser, continue
- all meetings of staff are conducted either online or by teleconference
- mass gatherings such as assemblies do not take place
- vulnerable workers continue to access flexible work arrangements or, where this is not viable, the relevant leave
- students and staff stay away from school or return home if they are sick (even if they have the mildest of symptoms) – teachers who have any symptoms related to COVID-19 can get access to priority testing from Queensland Health.

This has been a challenging time for everyone, but the planning and flexibility teachers and school leaders have demonstrated both in delivering modified learning and school operation should be commended. Keeping up the protocols above will ensure we can remain safe at work throughout the remainder of Term 2. More information about the protocols can be found on the [QTU website](http://www.qtu.asn.au). Should you have concern for your health and safety or believe that the appropriate measures are not being followed, please raise the issue in the first instance with your school's Union Rep

What happens if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at a school?

The department has put procedures in place in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case being present in a school. This will include:

- alerting Queensland Health to the case

- closing the school for a minimum of three days to enable a deep clean of the environment
- conducting detailed contact tracing and testing of people who have come into contact with the confirmed case
- implementing self-quarantining for all confirmed contacts.

Depending on the proximity of the school to local Queensland Health facilities, a mobile testing clinic may also be set up adjacent to the school.

Public Education Day

This year, Public Education Day is held on Thursday 28 May. This is a day on which we celebrate the great work done by state schools and those who work in them. It is a day on which we can recognise all of the hard work of members over the year, and especially the work undertaken during remote learning. There is so much to celebrate this year. As part of the celebration, members are encouraged to share their stories or examples of what they have done with us by emailing qtu@qtu.asn.au. Then on Thursday we will pepper social media with stories of the great work of state schools. Mark it in your calendar, Thursday 28 May, Public Education Day... a chance to send the message that state schools are great schools.

Public sector wage Freeze

Last week in Parliament, newly appointed Treasurer Cameron Dick made it clear that the government intends to pursue a freeze on public sector wage increases. Despite writing to the Premier over a week ago, the QTU has received no response. We continue to seek clarification of why the government thinks it appropriate to freeze the salaries of teachers and school leaders who have worked harder than ever in delivering remote learning and teaching students of essential workers. The Union will advise members as more information is known.

Authorised by:

Graham Moloney
General Secretary