## Some Useful Information from the School Chaplain

Dear Loganlea family, a warm hello from your Chaplain, Carlos Gomez. I wanted to personally write to you during these rapidly changing times, in order to share with you some helpful information and some of the services available in our broader community. Whether for yourself or for someone you know, I hope you find this useful.

Also if at any moment you need someone to chat with or find that you cannot get the help you need, please feel free to contact me directly via my email address carlosg@chappy.org.au.

I would also like to re-iterate the important advice which is continually being given by our nation’s leaders. To remain calm and look out for those around us, I know this is easier said than done, especially given what we have seen in the media and in our supermarkets in weeks past. However it is the only way we will be able to proactively deal with what lies ahead. Most often than not, panic and fear will cause us to act illogically and often without reason. I understand it can be frustrating to watch on as a small number of the population around us struggle to be considerate toward others. We must choose to lead our children with courage and demonstrate a high level of civil composure even when others choose not to. So, I encourage you to always do what is right by choosing kindness.

***“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries.***

***Without them humanity cannot survive.”***

***Dalai Lama***

**Local Services**

The following is a list of services I have identified and have proven experience with, please feel free to contact me directly at carlosg@chappy.org.au may you need assistance, as I have an established relationship with some of the service providers and at times can access support in a timely fashion. There are a number of websites dedicated to helping you find support services in our community. Two key websites are [Oneplace](https://www.oneplace.org.au/) Community Services Directory and the [Askizzy](https://askizzy.org.au/?state=qld) website provided by Food Bank Australia both are extremely useful.

**Counselling**

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| **Organisation**  | **Open Times and Contact Details** | **Services** |
| Lifeline Australia. | Phone: 131114Website: [www.lifeline.org.au](file:///C%3A/Users/cgome20/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/41F27UUT/www.lifeline.org.au) | Over the phone and online crisis support. |
| Kids Helpline. | Phone:1800551800Website: [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au) | 24/7 kids counselling help line. |
| Headspace. | Phone: 38044200Website: [www.headspace.org.au](file:///C%3A/Users/cgome20/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/41F27UUT/www.headspace.org.au) | Specialised support for persons aged between 12-25 years of age. |

**Emergency Relief**

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| **Organisation**  | **Open Times and Contact Details**  | **Services** |
| Centrelink, Services Australia. | Website: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au](file:///C%3A/Users/cgome20/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/41F27UUT/www.servicesaustralia.gov.au) | Information for government financial assistance. |
| ADRA, Logan Central. | Mon-Thurs 9:30am-3:30pmPhone: 32903011Address: 31 Station Rd, Woodridge, QLD, 4114.Email: admin@adralogan.org.au | Clothing, food parcels.  |
| Logan East Community Neighbourhood Association. | Mon, Tue, Wed 900am-11:00am.Phone: 38084529Address: Cnr Cinderella Drive & Vanessa Boulevard, Springwood, Qld, 4127.Website: [www.lecna.org.au](file:///C%3A/Users/cgome20/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/41F27UUT/www.lecna.org.au) | Food parcels. |

**Housing and Accommodation**

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| **Organisation**  | **Open Times and Contact Details** | **Services** |
| Homeless Hotline. | Phone: 1800 474 753 |  |
| Social Housing, Department of Housing. | Mon-Fri 8:30am-4:30pmPhone: 38063700Address: 11-13 Station Rd, Woodridge, QLD, 4114.Website: [www.qld.gov.au/housing](file:///C%3A/Users/cgome20/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/41F27UUT/www.qld.gov.au/housing) | Housing information |
| Immediate Supported Accommodation. | Mon-Thurs 9:00am-4:30pm.Fri 9:00am-2:30pm.Phone: 38081684177 Meakin Rd, Slacks Creek, QLD, 4127.Website: [www.keng.org.au](file:///C%3A/Users/cgome20/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/41F27UUT/www.keng.org.au) | Emergency relief, supported accommodation. |

Below you will find some useful information on how to speak to your child about Coronavirus (COVID-19).

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): How to talk to your child**

Children will have heard varying degrees of information about the Coronavirus from a broad range of sources, some credible and some not. Each child will respond differently to what they hear. It is important to have conversations with children about the virus to ensure the information they have is factual and to gauge how they are feeling. Below are some helpful tips, sourced from experts (kidshealth.org, who.int), on how to talk to your child.

1. **Arm yourself with factual information about the virus**

Before you speak to your child, the first thing you need to do, if you haven’t already, is make sure you have your facts clear about COVID-19 – symptoms of the virus, how it is transmitted, prevention, treatment and recovery, those who are most at risk of suffering more severe symptoms and some statistics about rates of infection and mortality rates. [See the attached information sheet from the Australian Government Department of Health]

1. **Find out what your child already knows**

Ask questions geared to your child's age level. For older kids, you might ask, "Are people in school talking about coronavirus? What are they saying?" For younger children, you could say, "Have you heard grownups talking about a new sickness that's going around?" This gives you a chance to learn how much children know and to find out if they're hearing the wrong information.Follow your child's lead. Some children may want to spend time talking. But if your children don't seem interested or don't ask a lot of questions, that's OK.

1. **Be honest – but don’t overshare or make promises**

Focus on helping your child feel safe, but be truthful. Children may have questions about germs and sickness and, in some case, even death. Don't offer more detail than your child is interested in. If your child asks about something and you don't know the answer, say so. Use the question as a chance to find out together. Check the World Health Organisation website for up-to-date, reliable information about the virus. That way, you have the facts and children don't see headlines about deaths and other scary information. When you talk about coronavirus and the news, speak calmly and reassuringly. Explain that most people who get sick feel like they have a cold or the flu. Give children space to share their fears. It's natural for children to worry. Let your child know that children don’t get as sick as adults.

The temptation may be to reassure your child they won’t get the virus and that no one they know will get sick. Unfortunately these things are out of your control. Steer away from making these types of promises, instead acknowledge your child’s fears and reassure them that legions of skilled professionals are working hard to keep everyone safe and healthy. Reassure your child that it's normal to feel stressed out at times. Everyone does. Let them know they can always come to you for answers or to talk about what scares them. Emphasize that stressful times pass and life gets back to normal.

1. **Help children feel in control**

Give your child specific things they can do to feel in control. Teach kids that getting lots of sleep and washing their hands well and often can help them stay strong and well. Explain that regular hand washing also helps stop viruses from spreading to others. Be a good role model and let your kids see you washing your hands often! Talk about all the things that are happening to keep people safe and healthy. Young children might be reassured to know that hospitals and doctors are prepared to treat people who get sick. Older children might be comforted to know that scientists are working to develop a vaccine. Young children and teens often worry more about family and friends than themselves. For example, if children hear that older people are more likely to be seriously ill, they might worry about their grandparents. Letting them call or Skype with older relatives can help them feel reassured about loved ones.

1. **Limit news exposure**

Watch the news with your kids so you can filter what they hear. Put news stories in context. If children ask, explain that death from the virus is still rare, despite what they might hear. Seeing images of people wearing masks in hospital wards and hearing coronavirus news reports all day long can increase distress in anyone, but especially in those predisposed to anxiety already. Experts say it’s a good idea to decrease your viewing time in common family areas of your home. If necessary, read news reports discretely on your phone away from your children. Be mindful of little ears playing nearby that overhear news reports you’re watching or hearing.

1. **Try to play and laugh**

Break out board games, Lego, puzzles, bake cookies, or take a family hike. Show your children that there’s an upside to all the cancellations. If a much-anticipated event or spring break is cancelled, try to reschedule it for a later date so that everyone has something to look forward to. This will help reinforce that this will pass.

1. **Continue the dialogue and check in with children regularly**

It shouldn’t be a one-off conversation that you have with your child. Keep the communication lines open and look for opportunities to explain new information and allay fears.

Kind Regards

Carlos Gomez