



Government
of South Australia

Hon John Gardner MP
Member for Morialta

Dear Principal

At this time of unprecedented challenge for our state, we are writing to you, on this the last day before student free days begin, to thank you for your steadfast leadership and commitment to the education of South Australia's children and young people. The education of our young people allows successful futures to be born.

Schools are an important part of each community. We recognise the critical role that you and your staff are playing, supporting families to navigate uncertainty and stay connected with their school. We are grateful for the calm and professional way in which you are doing this. Our education staff across South Australia are leaders for our students and their families and our state is grateful to you all.

We want to reassure you that as we work together as a community to tackle the challenges of COVID-19, the South Australian government is basing our approach very strongly on the health advice of our Chief Public Health Officer, Associate Professor Nicola Spurrier, and the national committee on which Nicola and her counterparts sit – the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

We can confirm that the AHPPC advice regarding social distancing at schools (including their playgrounds) has not changed. Schools are essential services and the work you do every day is critical for the wellbeing and life chances of your students.

Keeping our school sites open while the health advice continues to recommend doing so is particularly important for children who cannot be safely supervised at home – including some of our most vulnerable children, and children whose parents are doing jobs that can't be done at home. It is essential that learning continues whether the student is at home or at school and we thank you for the extraordinary collaboration, creativity, ingenuity and strong moral purpose which has been evident from our educators to ensure that this happens.

Our principals have been at the forefront of much of this effort, and we have been impressed by the leadership that has been displayed by principals across our state.

By now you would have seen some of the extra resources that the government has established to support your work, and particularly to enable the continued learning of those children whose families are supporting their learning at home. This includes the new Webex resources which we are now providing for all public schools, and the Our Learning SA website, containing a wide range of regularly updated quality-assured resources: www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa.

If you haven't yet had a chance to engage with them, we trust that the student free days next week will give you and your staff a great opportunity to see how these resources will help you give continuity of learning for all of your students.

We would also encourage you to familiarise yourself with the announcement yesterday by Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan, in relation to childcare, OSHC and vacation care. The implications of yesterday's announcement – effectively supporting services to continue for families that need it across Australia, at no cost – may well be of interest to many of your families and your staff.

Minister for Education

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Details of the announcement can be found at <https://ministers.dese.gov.au/morrison/early-childhood-education-and-care-relief-package>.

In welcome news, the national partnership on universal access funding for preschools has also been extended for a further year, until the end of 2021.

We wish you every success in the upcoming student free days as you take on the challenge of preparing for term two.

Thanks once more to you and all your dedicated team for the work that you are doing. Our message to all South Australians thanking our education staff is available for your interest at <https://youtu.be/etxb10ncm3k>. Keep safe and well, and please take some time to have a break during the holiday period.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Marshall'.

Hon Steven Marshall MP
Premier of South Australia

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Gardner'.

Hon John Gardner MP
Minister for Education

3 April 2020

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