

Media Statement

April 8, 2022



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

RESPONSE TO HISTORIC COVID CASE NUMBERS

Catholic Education WA has clarified its COVID communications protocols, after the State Government today announced that 1100 historic positive cases in schools did not appear to have been reported to WA Health.

Catholic Education WA Executive Director Debra Sayce said WA Health contacted CEWA on Tuesday to explore a discrepancy between the number of positive rapid antigen test (RAT) reports made to schools and those recorded on the government's online register.

While it was reassuring that parents were being vigilant about letting schools know if their children had tested positive, it appeared that some parents had not reported positive RAT results to the government website.

"At all times, Catholic schools have followed WA Health directives and communicated to parents that they are required to report a positive COVID result on the online WA Health RAT Register," Dr Sayce said.

"In addition to the compulsory reporting, parents in Catholic schools have been asked to notify their child's school through a self-reporting app developed as the state transitioned to a very high caseload setting.

"All positive cases reported to Catholic schools have been provided with directions in relation to isolation requirements, close contacts and return to school procedures in accordance with WA Health guidelines."

Commenting on CEWA's self-reporting portal, Dr Sayce said it had made it significantly easier for parents to let their school know if their child tested positive.

"As advice and directions about COVID reporting has changed rapidly, the self-reporting app has streamlined processes and allowed schools to respond far more rapidly to a confirmed case," she said.

"Having live updates on new cases as they were reported by parents has also ensured the Minister for Education and the Department of Health are able to receive regular updates from Catholic schools.

"We continue to remind parents to report positive RAT results via the WA Health RAT Register and ask that they continue to use the CEWA self-reporting app to let their school principal know, even during school holidays."

"This term has been a challenging time for our schools who have worked tirelessly to ensure the health and safety of staff and students, not only in navigating life during a pandemic, but also the added workload of supporting State Government with its response.

"We are incredibly proud of our schools' efforts in meeting these additional challenges as well as continuing to provide quality teaching and learning in such an ever-changing environment."

Dr Sayce expressed her gratitude to the State Government for supplying masks and RAT kits to schools, also confirming that CEWA had invested more than \$8 million in COVID-19 related measures since the start of the pandemic. This includes independently funding air purifiers and carbon dioxide monitors for every CEWA school, ventilation audits and remediation works; as well as rigorous cleaning and hygiene measures.

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