

## MEMBER ADVISORY

Monday, 29 March 2021 | **COVID-19 Member Advisory #14**

### **Urgent: Greater Brisbane Area lockdown impact for schools.**

### **School employers must approach lockdown with compassion and fairness.**

IEU members from across the Greater Brisbane Area will have urgent questions in relation to the lockdown announced today by the Queensland Government in regard to the impact for schools and staff.

Remember, our union is here to provide all members with immediate advice and support.

The [Queensland Government's COVID-19 alert page](#) is being continually updated in accordance with Queensland Health's directions.

#### **Schools closed to all students other than those of essential workers**

Similar to school arrangements in Term 2 last year, the government directive for school operations this week requires schools to remain open for the children of essential workers.

Given the short time frame for the arrangements to apply from Tuesday, 30 March 2021, there will be a high degree of uncertainty with regard to the number of students from essential worker families attending school this week.

Our union also understands some secondary schools intend to continue with scheduled year 12 exams.

We therefore expect many schools will require near full staff attendance on Tuesday, 30 March 2021 while student numbers and safe supervision arrangements are being assessed.

Once an initial supervision plan has been developed, employers should confirm staff rosters for the remainder of the Term that puts limits on staff attendance to minimum requirements only.

Any employees with medical vulnerabilities should be given priority release from school attendance.

## MEMBER ADVISORY

### Some schools announce online learning for remainder of term

A number of school employers have announced a move to online learning activities for their students commencing tomorrow (Tuesday, 30 March 2021).

Employers implementing remote teaching must ensure safe workplaces that comply with physical distancing and other protection measures. School staff who are required to continue to attend their workplace must be protected by a [comprehensive set of safety measures](#).

Consistent with previous expert medical advice, any medically vulnerable employees should be given the option to work from home in those schools undertaking remote learning.

### Term-time staff should not suffer financial disadvantage

School officers and services staff employed on a term-time basis should continue to be paid this week, regardless of the level of operation in their particular school.

Term-time employees already suffer a significant cut in yearly income due to their term-time status. There should be no further loss in pay should their school close all operations this week in response to the government's announcement.

### Do employees attending school this week have to wear a mask?

Queensland Health has made mandatory the wearing of masks in public locations.

While the wearing of masks is not mandatory in schools where physical distancing is occurring, any request by a member to wear a mask should be supported in their workplace.

[Our union is here](#) to support any member who is denied the opportunity to take reasonable safety precautions.

### Employer compassion needed for staff complying with COVID-19 tests

The scope and frequency of COVID-19 tests will clearly escalate this week. Employers will require staff to stay at home if they have COVID-19 symptoms or if they are awaiting their COVID-19 test results.

Members should not suffer any financial loss as a result of their community responsibility and compliance with expert health advice.

**Disclaimer:** This document is issued for general guidance only and does not constitute professional advice. Do not rely solely on this document. All financial IEUA-QNT members can contact our union for advice about their personal circumstances. We cannot accept responsibility for the consequences should any person act in reliance on this document without obtaining appropriate advice from our union.

## MEMBER ADVISORY

Employers should apply a common sense and compassionate approach in these circumstances and confirm the provision of special paid pandemic leave.

Our union confirmed the provision of special paid pandemic leave with the majority of school employers last year - members should [contact our union for urgent support](#) if paid leave has been denied at their school.

### Members from regional QLD who may also need to isolate

The government directive also requires anyone who has visited Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Logan, Redlands or Ipswich since Saturday, 20 March to [follow the same lockdown arrangements now applying in Brisbane](#).

For members in such a situation where they are unable to attend work this week, we would expect that their employer action the terms of their relevant paid pandemic leave policy. Again, members should [contact our union for urgent support](#) should the provision of such leave be denied.

### Union support and action is here to enforce safe workplaces

Remember, our member resources are available at our [COVID-19 Resource Hub](#).

The lockdown measures announced for the Greater Brisbane Area today are clearly an emerging and developing situation. Our union will provide further updates and advice as they become available.

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