



Parents call for support for non-government schools during Covid-19 crisis to safeguard children's education

Media Statement for immediate release (29 April 2020)

The Australian Parents Council is very concerned by reports that the Federal Government is putting financial pressure on non-government schools to resume face to face teaching by June 1.

The Federal Government should be supporting non-government schools during the COVID-19 crisis and do everything it can to maintain the stability of education provision in Australia for the sake of students. Bringing forward of budgeted payments makes good sense in times of economic hardship and APC supports the non-government system in delivering a workable solution to government.

The last thing that schools, students and parents need right now is further instability.

Despite the extra demands distance education is putting on parents, many are fearful about sending their children back to school for face to face teaching.

Parents are really worried about the risks to children and the whole school and wider community, especially with different advice coming from states and territories. So they are reading their own evidence and making up their own minds and can see the holes in the story that the Federal Government is presenting.

If the government wants to persuade parents it is safe to send kids back to the classroom, it needs to be a lot more transparent, provide detailed information and involve parents in the decision making process, not just tell parents what to do and use financial pressure to influence non-government schools.

The focus at the moment should be on supporting schools so they can support students.

Schools and families are already facing a lot of upheaval and uncertainty. Many families are already reportedly looking at pulling children out of fee-paying schools for financial reasons. This will impact the continuity of education and well-being of thousands of children, who will have to settle into new schools leaving many friends behind. It will also impact non-government schools, which currently educate about a third of all Australian students.

The Australian Parents Council would prefer to see the Federal Government working collaboratively with non-government school providers to address all the issues Covid-19 has thrown up, for the sake of all the students affected.

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