



## **ASEPA Board Coronavirus (COVID-19) Statement**

The Australian Special Education Principals Association (ASEPA) Board recently met and as part of business discussed the impact COVID-19 is having, and will have, on staff, students and the families of students with disabilities in schools around Australia.

The cohort of students, some who attend specialist schools around Australia, comprise of some of Australia's most vulnerable citizens. The health and wellbeing of this cohort, and their families, is of paramount importance.

The current evidence indicates that this COVID-19 pandemic has the greatest impact on the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions. Many of the students in our schools meet the medical criteria.

We have been advised that hygiene, social distancing and personal care can mitigate the risk of contracting COVID-19, however there is a portion of students for whom personal care is performed by others, and their ability to self-regulate is still developing. Students with identified communication impairments may be compromised through inability to inform others of any symptoms and social distancing is a skill that may not be understood, thus compromising wellbeing. These students will find following the advice provided by Department of Health and Department of Education challenging.

We urge all policymakers and people who make decisions about schools to keep this population of students in mind and ensure that all plans support schools to cater for the full range of students that participate in education in Australia.

ASEPA is committed to ensuring awareness is raised and that plans are inclusive of all learners in Australian schools.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Forbes', is positioned above the typed name.

Fiona Forbes  
Board Chair  
ASEPA  
March 18<sup>th</sup> 2020.

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ASEPA Board Chair  
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