

Raise Update on COVID-19 (Coronavirus) as at 26 March 2020



Our commitment to you

In response to our new national landscape, we would like to reassure everyone in the Raise village that the safety of the **young people in our programs, our volunteer mentors and our staff** remains our top priority. We continue to be guided by the notifications and restrictions advised by the Department of Education, the [Department of Health](#) and the schools and community organisations that we work with. Over the past week, we have had in-depth discussions with all of these stakeholders regarding our duty of care to the young people of Australia.

Now, more than ever, young Australians need trusted adult mentors to guide them through these challenging times.

Our aim in this update is to provide you with clear and timely messaging about the actions we are currently taking in response to COVID-19.

What's happening in the Raise Village?

As of today, Raise has activated the following contingency plans.

Our Staff

Raise remains in an excellent position to continue to work remotely during this period of social distancing and self-isolation. We've had whole organisation online meetings on a weekly basis to ensure continuity across all activity as well as internal and external online communications throughout.

Our Programs

Our young people and young mums need us more than ever and so with that in mind, we have developed a contingency plan to ensure our mentoring programs continue this year. We are developing an online option with our Youth Safety Framework at the forefront of any solution roll-out.

Our best practice face to face mentoring model remains our first preference for program delivery but we recognise the need for young people to feel heard, valued and supported, in this situation more than ever. Where **face to face programs are not possible**, Jitters and mentoring sessions will be held online until such time that mentoring sessions can return to face to face.

As of this week:

- All school principals and contacts in our programs have received a letter from Raise stating that we are staying open to support our young people.

- **Regarding Ismo and Youth Frontiers: At this stage, we plan to commence Jitters then mentoring sessions for all programs in all states starting the week of 25th May.** Mentor and mentee orientations will fall in the week prior, as required.
- Starting our programs **mid-way through Term 2** may mean they will extend into **mid-way into Term 4** to ensure we maintain 20 weeks of best practice mentoring. We will be working with all our mentors to assess the viability of this.
- **Bump:** our team are pulling together on the strategy for Bump, considering all options (including the possibly of over the phone mentoring) to continue the program. More to come.
- Where **face to face programs are possible** (due to the risk of viral transmission being mitigated), at this stage, Jitters and mentoring sessions will be held face to face the week commencing 25 May.
- Where **face to face programs are not possible**, Jitters and mentoring sessions will be held online until such time that mentoring sessions can move face to face. Our preference remains face to face mentoring but we recognise the need for young people to feel heard, valued and supported, in this situation more than ever.
- We have set up a working committee for our **online mentoring solution**, to implement the **technology solution** and also **adapt the program's curriculum and content** to run online, if necessary.

Mentor Recruitment and Training

- Our first **virtual mentor training** took place on 20 March and was very successful.
- Virtual mentor training sessions will continue for SA, VIC and NSW mentor applicants over the next two weeks.
- **2020 Mentor Recruitment will close on Friday 3 April.**

Our Events and Fundraising

- Due to the need to postpone a significant fundraising dinner scheduled for April, we have an urgent fundraising need to enable Raise to reach all of the young people waiting for their mentor right now. To assist with this, we are:
 - Preparing to launch a **Digital Fundraising Campaign** to help drive donations at this difficult time
 - Working very closely with **our principal partners** seeking additional support where available
 - Working closely with our generous donors **seeking urgent significant gifts** to support Raise programs this year
 - Our **Sparkle Ball** is scheduled for **Friday 11 September** and at this stage we are full steam ahead with planning this event. We hope you will be able to join us and will share details in coming weeks.

Lastly, in accordance with the latest Department of Health advice, we:

- encourage all Raise staff and volunteers to practice good hygiene (such as frequent hand washing, coughing or sneezing into your elbow, and avoiding shaking hands).
- encourage all Raise staff and volunteers to monitor for symptoms such as fever, coughing, shortness of breath or tiredness and:
 - If you are unwell or concerned that you may have been exposed to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), you should self-isolate;
 - If you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), you must self-isolate for 14 days from the date of your last contact with the confirmed case;
 - If you have recently returned from an overseas trip, you must self-isolate for 14 days from the day of your departure from that country; and
 - If the above self-isolation applies to you, you must advise the Raise Learning and Development Team at training@raise.org.au (in the case of mentor training) or your Raise Program Counsellor (in the case of mentoring sessions) as soon as practically possible.

For the first time ever, we expect to have 1,300 volunteers trained, onboarded and ready to mentor young vulnerable Australians, which is incredible. We are doing everything possible in this challenging environment to ensure our programs go ahead. Thanks for your continued patience and support.

Please take care of yourselves and each other. We are all in this together.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please email us at mentor@raise.org.au.