

## Raise Update on COVID-19 (Coronavirus) as at 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020



### Our commitment to you

In response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, 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.

**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?

#### Our Staff

Raise remains in an excellent position to continue to work remotely during this time of social distancing and self-isolation, and working from home is our preference. Where there is a legitimate requirement, some members of our team may work from the Raise Sydney office, with a maximum of 5 people at a time and health and safety measures in place.

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 this period.

Raise is receiving the Federal Government's Job Keeper support and 48 Raise staff are eligible for the Job Keeper allowance. As such, Raise has maintained its pre-COVID-19 workforce.

#### Our Programs

Recognising that our young people and young mums need us more than ever, we have adapted our mentoring program, with our Youth Safety Framework and best practice mentoring benchmarks at the forefront of program design and roll-out. At each stage, we have consulted with our schools; the Federal Department of Health; the NSW Department of Communities, the State Education Departments; other non-for-profits working in the youth wellbeing space and our Corporate Partners to determine the best models for mentoring that will allow us to continue to support our mentees' social and emotional wellbeing during these uncertain times.

All our school partners have been contacted to determine their program preference and, given the range of restrictions and health guidelines regarding COVID-19 across the different states, Raise will run the following three mentoring programs in 2020:

1. **In-School Mentoring (Ismo and Youth Frontiers)** – our usual weekly, face-to-face mentoring program starting either mid-late Term 2, for 20 weeks or Term 3 for 18 weeks as preferred by the school.
2. **Online Mentoring** – weekly online mentoring facilitated by our qualified Program Counsellors where mentees and mentors will work in small groups using the break-out room feature of Zoom as our videoconferencing platform. Programs will revert to face-to-face when schools, staff, mentees and mentors are comfortable doing so and the program will run for 20 weeks.
3. **Youth Initiated Mentoring (“YIM”) with the Program Counsellor Only** – weekly online or face-to-face sessions where our qualified Program Counsellors facilitate the Raise Youth Initiated Mentoring curriculum with selected students for a maximum of 20 weeks. Mentors will be invited to join the program part-way through when volunteers are permitted onto school grounds.

The following table outlines the number of programs expected for each option. Of the 98 programs planned prior to COVID-19, we currently expect 94 programs to proceed in 2020. Only 4 schools have postponed Raise mentoring until 2021.

	Online	F2F	YIM	F2F T3	2021	TBC	TOTAL
VIC	1	0	0	19	1	0	21
SA	1	3	0	0	0	0	4
WA	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
QLD	0	0	0	10	0	0	10
NSW	19	1	1	24	2	9*	56
BUMP	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>98</b>

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, now more than ever. The above adjustments will allow as many mentoring programs as possible to commence from the week of 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020 with all remaining programs expected to commence at the start of Term 3 (when face-to-face mentoring may be possible).

As of this week:

- All school principals and contacts in our programs have confirmed their program preference and all Bump programs will be starting online.
- All mentors have been advised of their school’s program preference by their Program Counsellor and have been asked to confirm their willingness to mentor online and/or into Term 4.

- **For programs starting in Term 2 online, Jitters then mentoring sessions will commence week of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020.** Mentor and mentee orientations will fall in the week of the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020, as required.
- **For programs starting in Term 3, mentor/mentee orientations and Jitters will commence in late Term 2 (late June/early July)** such that mentoring sessions can begin in week 1 of Term 3 (mid to late July). Program Counsellors will advise mentors of these dates and of any changes between now and then.
- Starting programs **mid-way through Term 2 or in Term 3** means they will **extend into Term 4** to ensure we maintain as close to 20 weeks of best practice mentoring as possible. Where our programs will be less than 20 weeks, special extended mentoring sessions have been planned to ensure each young person still receives 20 hours of mentoring.

### Mentor Recruitment and Training

- 2020 Mentor Recruitment closed on Friday 3 April with 1,321 qualified and enrolled mentors ready to mentor across 98 programs in 2020 (prior to COVID-19 withdrawals).

### Our Events and Fundraising

- Raise needs to recoup lost funds due to the impact of the Coronavirus to ensure our 1300 young people receive mentoring support this year. Our approach has been to launch several special initiatives:
  - **Digital Fundraising Campaign** to help drive donations via our website. Every dollar will be matched by our generous partners at Zurich Australia and the Z Zurich Foundation up to \$100k.
  - Seeking **emergency funding support from our principal partners** where available
  - Appealing for **urgent major gifts from some of Raise's individual supporters** to help fund Raise programs this year.
  - Hosting our annual Patron's Lunch as an online webinar with special guest speaker David Gonski AC, which encouraged many existing supporters to donate early, and many new donors to support us.
- Our **Sparkle Ball** is scheduled for **September** and at this stage we are looking into virtual options for this event. We will have more to share with you on this in the coming weeks and months.

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

- 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 seek testing as soon as possible
  - 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;

- Advise Raise Program Counsellor or staff member as soon as practically possible if you are diagnosed with the Coronavirus.

### **Thank You**

In spite of the challenging environment, we are very proud that, for the first time ever, we have **1,321** volunteers trained, onboarded and ready to mentor young vulnerable Australians. We are doing everything possible at this time to ensure we can help as many of those 1,300 young people in 2020 as we can. Thank you to our Village for your continued patience and generous support, we sincerely appreciate you staying with us while we work hard to continue on with courage.

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 [hello@raise.org.au](mailto:hello@raise.org.au).**