

2 April 2020

Kirkbrae Update - COVID-19

During the past two weeks we have all observed, and have been affected, by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic in Australia and overseas. Many changes have occurred in our local community and at Kirkbrae as we respond to health and practical requirements.

We are fortunate that no residents or staff have caught the COVID19 virus although I am sure that many people know someone who has the virus or has had to self-isolate due to contact with someone else. I'm sure that sensible compliance with the health directions has meant that the virus has not entered the Kirkbrae community.

A few residents and staff have been isolated because they identified that they may have had contact with someone who showed the COVID19 symptoms. Their understanding of the need to be isolated, to stay away from other people at Kirkbrae, and to see their GP to get tested is a positive sign that the information being distributed by the government and by Kirkbrae is being heard in a meaningful way.

Thank you for being accountable to each other as you continue being aware of yours and others health needs, and your involvement in this community.

Kirkbrae encourages all residents, visitors and staff to have their flu vaccination as soon as possible. This is available now through your GP or pharmacy and is a wise precaution. Kirkbrae staff are receiving their vaccinations during the week after Easter.

The Kirkbrae web site www.Kirkbrae.org.au has been updated and has a *COVID-19 Updates* shortcut at the top of the Home page. Please refer to this to get the latest information from Kirkbrae. We will continue to contact the nominated family contact person for individual resident discussions.

If you have questions or feedback you can send an email to Communications@Kirkbrae.org.au and we will respond as soon as we can. This has been established to provide additional access to Kirkbrae during the COVID19 pandemic and during the flu season.

If you are the Next of Kin, the nominated contact person in your family for a resident, or an official representative for a resident, please ensure that we have your current contact details. If you have an email address and mobile phone number and you are willing to provide these to Kirkbrae for communications during this pandemic, we would greatly appreciate you sending those details to us, as it will mean that we can provide you with information updates in a more timely manner.

Aged Care

No Visitors will be permitted to enter the Kirkbrae residential aged care facility buildings (Acacia House, Banksia House, Jacaranda House and Waratah House – or any of their gardens, dining areas or other spaces). This precaution will continue until further notice.

We understand that there will be a few exceptions which will require visitors to come to the Kirkbrae aged care facility. This can only occur with the prior approval of a Care Supervisor or Facility Manager who will explain the conditions under which this can occur. Please contact them before coming to Kirkbrae by calling 9724 5200.

From 1 May NO visitors to the Kirkbrae aged care facility will be able to enter the buildings without having provided proof that they have received the flu vaccination this year. This is a Commonwealth Government directive because of the serious impact that COVID-19 and the flu can have on older people, and those who care for them. A separate information sheet will be sent to all Visitors in the next few days.

Staff have received additional training on how to recognise the symptoms of COVID-19, additional refresher training on infection control procedures for individual virus cases and for outbreaks and are being kept up to date on their own requirements to work in a safe environment.

The Commonwealth Government has stated that it is mandatory for all staff in aged care to be vaccinated against the flu and that they cannot work in aged care after 1 May without this.

Small group activities and exercise sessions are being held to keep residents mobile and engaged. These are done in keeping with social distancing requirements without residents moving from one House to another.

Administration

Restricted access to the Administration building has been implemented to help protect the staff working there. During business hours please call Reception on 9724 5200 instead of coming to the building. Unscheduled visitors will be able to speak with Reception via an intercom system.

Some staff are working from home to minimise their contact with other people and are resourcing those at Kirkbrae to continue to provide quality care and support for all residents and staff.

Retirement Village

Village residents are not allowed to enter the aged care buildings. No Kirkbrae activities are to take place in the Community Hall and Community Hub buildings.

Many residents are taking advantage of having a meal delivered from Kirkbrae's kitchen. Others are having groceries delivered by family or by supermarkets. Some residents are having their pharmacy items delivered to them. If you want to understand more about these arrangements, please call the Retirement Living Manager.

Residents who think that they may have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID19, or who themselves may have symptoms, should contact their GP immediately. Please also let the Retirement Living Manager know so that we can arrange for extra support if required.

Reverend Matthew James is holding some small group chapel services where social distancing can be achieved. One-on-one visiting by the Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy team will continue.

Thank you to all of our Kirkbrae staff who are continuing to provide care and support services for our residents during this difficult period. Thank you to the Visitors who are being very understanding about the restrictions at Kirkbrae.

I will provide further updates as Kirkbrae's response to this situation changes.



Mark Sketcher
Chief Executive Officer
Kirkbrae Presbyterian Homes