

Friday 24 July, 2020

Dear families and visitors,

### **Important Notice for all Families and Visitors**

As we continue to see an increase in COVID-19 case locations across NSW, BaptistCare continues to closely monitor all Public Health orders for NSW and ACT. Our absolute priority remains the ongoing safety and wellbeing of every resident and employee.

BaptistCare is responding to this developing situation on a daily basis and we are continuing to implement preventative actions to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 in our homes.

We recently sought your feedback on whether you would support the implementation of a **surgical masks policy** for all visitors to an aged care home. Our survey results indicated that 96 % of families and visitors have replied 'YES' in support of this policy for all visitors. We thank you all for your timely feedback regarding this important preventative action.

**With COVID-19 cases rising in locations around New South Wales, and following the overwhelming positive response of families who are in support of this change, BaptistCare will be implementing the use of surgical masks for all visitors to an aged care home from tomorrow, Saturday 25 July. A surgical mask will be provided to you after you complete the screening process.**

BaptistCare will review this policy again in two weeks' time on Thursday 6 August.

We ask all families and visitors to review the following requirements and requests:

1. **We strongly request that you limit your visits to our homes wherever possible**, and we encourage you to use alternate options including phone or video calls, or the Safe Visitor Spaces. These can be arranged via the Connections Coordinator at each home. The more visitors coming through our homes, the higher the risk we have that COVID-19 could be brought into a home.
2. **We request that residents do not leave the home for social activities at this time.** If you are planning to take your loved out of the home, we ask that you discuss this with the Care Team Manager or Residential Manager. We would prefer that residents only leave the home for urgent medical appointments, again to reduce any risk to residents and employees.

3. **If you do need to visit, effective from Saturday 25 July, ALL VISITORS are required to wear a surgical mask** when visiting a BaptistCare aged care home. We understand you may be concerned about how you may be recognised or communicate with your loved one through a mask. In this instance, we are requesting you book a Safe Visitor Space visit, which will allow you to remove your mask while maintaining a safe physical distance from your loved one.
4. **Please continue to review the list of COVID-19 case locations daily**, to ensure you have not been to a listed location: [www.baptistcare.org.au/COVID-hotspots](http://www.baptistcare.org.au/COVID-hotspots). This currently includes a range of Local Government Areas (suburbs within these areas), the State of Victoria, and case locations listed by NSW Health.
5. We are further **excluding visitors who have a close contact** (face-to-face contact for more than 15 minutes or shared a closed space for more than 2 hours) **with someone who has visited any of the above locations**.
6. **Please be aware of the instructions at your local BaptistCare home**, to ensure you are following all COVID-Safe directions and processes.

Please be aware that we are currently reviewing our policy regarding our employees wearing surgical masks, which is dependent on advice from Public Health, the Department of Health, and the local situation where the home is located.

We are also continuing to review our visiting guidelines and we will communicate any changes to you as quickly as possible, as we understand how important this is to you. This may mean that notifications and advice are sent with short notice, and may also involve some differences from home to home, based on the local situation. The next planned review of our policy will take place Thursday 6 August.

We thank you again for your ongoing support as we respond to this situation, which is changing daily. We want to ensure we are doing everything we can to protect you and your loved ones during this time.

Keep safe and well.



**Ross Low**  
Chief Executive Officer