



Office of the  
**Minister for Education and  
Minister for Industrial Relations**

**3 JUN 2020**

Ms Nicole Millis  
Chief Executive Officer  
Rare Voices Australia  
Email: [admin@rarevoices.com.au](mailto:admin@rarevoices.com.au)

1 William Street Brisbane 4000  
PO Box 15033 City East  
Queensland 4002 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3719 7110  
Email: [education@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:education@ministerial.qld.gov.au)  
Email: [industrialrelations@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:industrialrelations@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

Dear Ms Millis

Thank you for your letter dated 4 May 2020 to the Honourable Grace Grace MP, Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, regarding the COVID-19 school attendance policy for students with a rare disease. I have been asked to respond to you on the Minister's behalf.

With the situation regarding COVID-19 continuing to evolve, this is certainly a most challenging time for schools, students and their families. The Department of Education acknowledges that students who are living with a rare disease may be at increased risk during this time, and appreciates the advocacy of Rare Voices Australia for flexibility in school attendance requirements.

I am pleased to advise that in Queensland, state school students who are unable to attend school due to being in an identified at-risk category for COVID-19 (for example, having a compromised immune system or rare/chronic illness) will be able to continue their learning at home. Queensland state schools will consider it acceptable for parents with these concerns to keep their children at home, and families should feel free to communicate openly with their school about this. In such circumstances, students who are learning at home will not be marked as absent and failure to attend processes will not be initiated.

Of course, students who are unwell are not expected to continue their studies until they are well enough to do so, at which time they would be supported by their school to enable their learning to progress.

Please be assured that our schools are taking measures to make them safe places for students through, for example, observing regular hand washing, use of hand sanitiser, hygiene protocols, and increased cleaning of high-touch surfaces.

If you require further information or clarification, please contact Ms Margaret Gurney, Acting Assistant Director-General, State Schools – Operations, on (07) 3513 5836 or by email at [margaret.gurney@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:margaret.gurney@qed.qld.gov.au).

Thank you for your advocacy for the health and wellbeing of students living with a rare disease and their families.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sharon Durham".

**SHARON DURHAM**  
Chief of Staff  
Office of the Hon Grace Grace MP  
Minister for Education and  
Minister for Industrial Relations