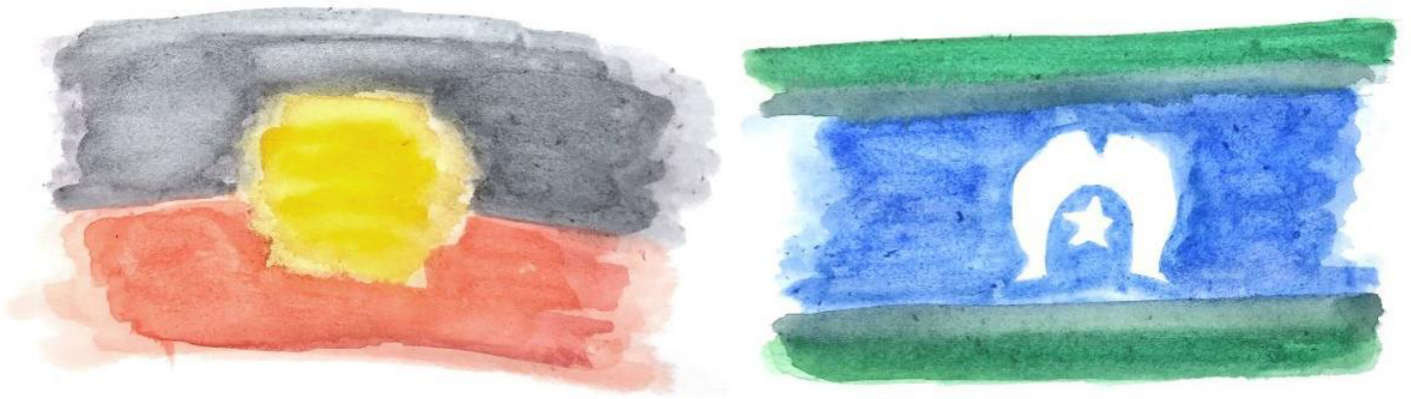




Carlton North

PRIMARY SCHOOL

COVIDSafe Guidelines for Staff and Families



We at CNPS would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we teach, learn, and play. We pay our deepest respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, for they will hold the memories, traditions and hopes of Aboriginal Australians.

This land is, was and will always be Aboriginal land.

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Please note that this information is based on advice within the DET Schools Operations Guide and this guide is subject to change at any time. The school will update this document accordingly and share with families as soon as possible.

1. Summary of key information

The Victorian Government has announced a staged return to onsite learning in Term 4, with all students planned to return onsite by **Friday 5 November (subject to final public health advice)**.

From the start of term until the return of all students onsite, schools will operate both onsite and remote and flexible learning.

Staged return to onsite learning: Metropolitan Melbourne and Restricted Areas (see table below for week-by-week summary)

All dates below are subject to public health advice.

Year levels	Tuesday 5 October	From Wednesday 6 October	From Monday 18 October	From Tuesday 26 October	From Friday 5 November
Prep			Monday – Wednesday	Monday – Wednesday	✓
Year 1-2			Thursday – Friday	Thursday – Friday	✓
Year 3-4				Tuesday – Wednesday	✓
Year 5-6				Thursday – Friday	✓
Year 7				✓	✓
Year 8-9				Tuesday – Wednesday	✓
Year 10				Thursday – Friday	✓
Year 11				✓	✓
Year 12 (VCE units 3/4 and final year VCAL and IB)	GAT only	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key: ✓ return to onsite five days

2. Summary of key operational requirements for schools

Key actions for schools	Metropolitan Melbourne and Restricted Areas	Regional Victoria
Face masks (see Face Masks in Schools)	YES – INDOORS AND OUTDOORS	YES – INDOORS AND OUTDOORS
Working across multiple sites	MINIMISE	MINIMISE
Minimise cohort mixing: Stagger breaks and arrival and departure times	YES	YES
COVIDSafe routine cleaning	YES	YES
Community use of school playground	YES For school use Community use can occur out of school hours only.	YES For school use Community use can occur out of school hours only.
Community use of school facilities	NO	YES Refer to pages 20 and 21 for additional requirements
Libraries (for borrowing and as a learning space)	NO	YES
Visitors to schools	ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY Visitors to school premises should be limited to essential school services and operations	ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY Visitors to school premises should be limited to essential school services and operations
Student placements	YES Only for final year pre-service teacher placements (see APAW list) (Placements for all students can continue to occur in the <i>remote learning</i> environment at discretion of school)	YES All student placements (permitted at discretion of school)
Health, wellbeing, inclusion visits	ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY	YES
School tours	NO	NO
Excursions	NO	NO
Swimming and all other pool use *Please refer to page 21 for separate advice on hydrotherapy pools	NO	YES
Incursions	NO	NO
School photos	NO	NO

Camps and overnight stays	NO	NO
Assemblies (whole school and year level), formals, graduations	NO	NO
Kinder transition program	TBC	TBC
Statewide transition day	TBC	TBC
All interschool activities (such as debating)	NO	NO
Singing, brass and woodwind classes and groups	NO	YES Following recommended health advice
Professional development and staff meetings (face to face)	NO Should be conducted online or deferred	NO Should be conducted online or deferred

3. Operational advice for schools

Student Attendance

All students are expected to attend onsite as their year levels return to onsite learning, unless they are formally registered as being home-schooled. Parent preference is not an approved absence reason. Schools should work closely with families that may be concerned about the return to on site learning with the support of regional staff.

QR Codes and visitors to schools

The use of Service Victoria QR codes for electronic record keeping is now mandatory in all schools to enable the effective contact tracing of any COVID-19 cases.

	Who needs to check in?	Who doesn't need to check in?
All visitors on school site (including contractors, external Department staff and building and maintenance staff)	P	
All parents who enter school buildings when on school site	P	
Staff		P
Students		P
Parents who come onto school grounds for drop off or pick up, but do not enter buildings.		P

We are asking all parents/carers to not enter buildings for pick-up and drop-off. Where required and approved by a CNPS staff member, parents and carers entering a school building must check in using the QR codes located at each entrance of the buildings and show evidence that they are fully vaccinated using the Service Victoria app. A CNPS staff member must cite the check-in indicating vaccination status.

Further information about QR code set-up can be found at [Register to use the Victorian Government QR Code Service](#)

Visitors to schools

Visitors to school grounds should be limited to essential school services and operations.

Principals are best placed to make decisions regarding what visitors are essential to the operation of their school, noting the following:

- Within metropolitan Melbourne and other Restricted Areas, schools should review the [Authorised provider and authorised worker list](#) when making decisions regarding the suitability of any staff or workers coming onsite (other than those directly involved in the care and supervision of students).
- Allied health professionals can provide urgent or essential services onsite at all schools where telehealth services are not clinically appropriate, within the context of current advice available at [HWIW service provision in Victorian government schools](#).
- Students may attend onsite to participate in essential assessments (where telehealth is not clinically appropriate) that are required to inform enrolment, learning, and support decisions. This includes future students beginning school in 2022. A parent/guardian may attend onsite with their child where essential (e.g. for a young child with a disability).

Essential visitors to school grounds must comply with density limits, face mask requirements, QR code check-ins and practice respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene.

The density limit of one person per four square metres should be applied to any spaces and activities being attended by parents/carers and other visitors. The density limit applies to all persons in the space, including students.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds are open for school use and are available for community use [after school hours only](#), in line with community settings.

Use of school facilities by community and sports groups

Use of school facilities by community and sports groups is not permitted in metropolitan Melbourne and other Restricted Areas.

Outdoor markets are permitted to operate on school grounds across Victoria outside school hours with continued adherence to strict guidelines and controls in place, including:

- Mandatory electronic check-in of all attendees
- Prominent signage displaying Victorian Government QR code system at all points of sale
- Face masks are required in indoor and outdoor settings unless an exception applies
- Density quotient, that takes into account stalls, roaming space, and stallholders and organisers in attendance
- Cleaning and disinfection requirements before and after market operations, this includes high touch point areas e.g. poles and bathroom facilities, where applicable
- Adherence to COVIDSafe Plans including providing hand hygiene stations, physical distancing measures.
- Markets operate for selling of produce and take away only, no consumption onsite

In addition, the following additional controls are in place to further mitigate risk of transmission:

- Stallholders should be kept to the minimum required to operate
- At least 1.5m between stalls

- All school buildings, toilets, and playgrounds are closed to the public
- Cordon off the market area

More information is on the APAW list here: [Authorised provider and authorised worker list | Coronavirus Victoria](#)

Interschool activities, school sport and use of pools

All interschool activities should be deferred or held remotely.

Swimming pools

Swimming and all other pool use in metropolitan Melbourne and other Restricted Areas cannot occur at this time. Hydrotherapy pools can be accessed for the purpose of the provision of hydrotherapy services subject to the requirements of the Directions. Group hydrotherapy services are not permitted.

Physical education and intraschool sport

Physical activity and intraschool sport for those learning onsite is permitted across Victoria when at school.

Camps and excursions

Camps, excursions, and incursions for Victorian schools cannot take place at this time.

School events, gatherings and assemblies

School events, gatherings, assemblies, and non-essential meetings should be deferred or held remotely.

Outside School Hours (OSHC) Program

Outside School Hours Care programs can operate for students eligible for onsite supervision across Victoria in line with the return to school plan. Students from multiple schools can attend an OSHC if mixing between students from different schools is minimised where practicable and students are only enrolled in one provider.

4. Keeping COVIDSafe at School

Understanding COVID-19

As COVID-19 is a new virus, new scientific research is regularly emerging. Currently, the World Health Organization suggests that COVID-19 can be transmitted by contact with droplets or airborne aerosols from an infected person, and contaminated surfaces. Airborne aerosols are tiny particles that float in the air. This understanding may change as more research emerges and more is learned about COVID-19.

Droplet transmission

A person can be infected with coronavirus (COVID-19) by touching respiratory droplets such as saliva or tears from an infected person. These are spread through coughing, sneezing, kissing, talking, or singing.

These droplets can enter your mouth, nose, or eyes and cause infection. This can happen by having close face-to-face contact, being within 1.5 metres of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19), or by touching a contaminated surface before touching your face.

Airborne transmission

Saliva or tears from an infected person can stay in the air after they cough, sneeze, talk or even sing. This means that coronavirus (COVID-19) can be spread through these tiny infectious particles suspended in the air.

Sometimes, the virus can remain in the air for some time in settings such as indoor spaces with poor ventilation.

Contaminated surfaces transmission

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can spread when secretions or droplets from an infected person land on surfaces. The virus can live on surfaces for hours or days, depending on the temperature, humidity, type of surface, and how much of the virus is present.

If you touch an infected surface, you could become infected by then touching your nose, mouth, or eyes. You could also spread the virus from one surface to another and infect other people.

For more information on the science behind COVID-19 see [Facts about coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

A combination of strategies is required to minimise transmission risk. No single strategy completely reduces risk and not every measure will be possible in all educational settings. Where some controls are not feasible, others should be enhanced. Strategies should also be adjusted over time in line with the changing risk of transmission in the community.

COVIDSafe Plan

The [Safety Management Plan for COVID-19 \(COVIDSafe Plan\)](#) applies to all schools, outlines the key health and safety risks, and links to the latest guidance.

In conjunction with this Operations Guide, it sets out the approach for managing safety risks in schools in accordance with the minimum requirements for COVIDSafe Plans.

The COVIDSafe Plan has been updated to align with the changes to the advice set out in this Operations Guide.

The Department's [OHS Advisory Service or local Regional OHS Support Officers](#) can assist in tailoring the plan to individual school needs and in linking schools with health and wellbeing supports to promote mental health and wellbeing for staff, and safe work practices remotely and at school sites.

Principals must consult with their local Health and Safety Representative(s) and Health and Safety Committee(s) (if applicable) to implement the health and safety guidance to the extent reasonably practicable and escalate unresolved issues via eduSafe. The Department is proactively monitoring eduSafe to provide support.

Principals can also promote the [COVID-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support for Schools](#) page.

[Local Regional OHS Support Officers](#) can be contacted for assistance with local consultation if required.

A [draft agenda](#) has been developed for Health and Safety Committee (HSC) meetings to assist in facilitating consultation and identifying and managing risks.

Students who may be medically vulnerable

As per the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer, COVIDSafe measures have been put in place to ensure that schools are as safe as possible for all children including those with medical vulnerabilities, however independent medical advice should always be taken on an individual basis.

An individual assessment is always recommended and decisions regarding school attendance should be informed by the nature of a child or young person's condition, its severity, and intensity of required treatment. In most cases, the presence of common conditions of childhood, such as asthma, epilepsy, or Type 1 diabetes, should not preclude a student from attending face-to-face learning.

In keeping with expert public health advice, some students may be at higher risk for severe outcomes or complications of COVID-19, for example, those with chronic medical conditions. Any student with a chronic medical condition should seek advice from their medical practitioner about attending school onsite at different stages in the

COVID-19 pandemic. Given most of these conditions are rare in children, it should be an uncommon event for a child to be determined by a medical practitioner to be unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical reason raising concerns about COVID-19, outside of an acute illness.

Assessments should be reviewed alongside notable changes to COVID-19 transmission in Victoria and where eligible students have received a COVID-19 vaccination.

Schools must ensure students with medical needs have an up-to-date [Student Health Support Plan](#) and accompanying condition-specific health management plan (such as an [Asthma Action Plan](#)), based on medical advice from the student's medical or health practitioner, and consultation with the student and parents and carers.

Please see the [Health Care Needs](#) policy for further information on the student health support planning process. For additional information to support decision-making, see:

- [Asthma Australia](#)
- [Royal Children's Hospital – advice for respiratory patients](#)
- [JDRF – Coronavirus and children with T1 diabetes.](#)

Staff who may be medically vulnerable to COVID-19

Advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer is that, as with other members of the community, teachers and other school staff may be at greater risk of more serious illness if they contract COVID-19 if they are:

- aged 70 years and older
- aged 65 years and older and with chronic medical conditions.
- of any age and have a compromised immune system
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and are aged over 50 years and with one or more chronic medical conditions.

Employees in the above categories should seek advice from their medical practitioner in relation to their onsite attendance. Where the employee is unable to work onsite, they should provide a medical certificate if they are seeking to work remotely for this purpose or to access personal leave. These arrangements should be reviewed regularly during the Term.

For employees in the above categories where the employee's medical practitioner's advice is that they remain unable to work onsite, continued provision of remote work will be available where:

- the employee provides a medical certificate setting out the recommendation from their medical practitioner, and;
- the principal forms a view that it is reasonable, practicable, and appropriate for the employee to work remotely.

Where remote work is not available the employee can access leave available to them or return to duty once the medical advice is that it is safe for them to do so.

Staff who are living with or caring for elderly or chronically ill relatives should seek advice from the medical practitioner of the person for whom they are caring to determine if they can attend onsite or should work remotely. They should provide a medical certificate if they are seeking to access personal leave. The Medical Advisory Service is a specialised support service for principals to help them fulfil their responsibilities in relation to employee health.

Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of principals, teachers, school staff, and students is a priority.

For students

- Wellbeing check-ins - In addition to recording student attendance, schools must have in place processes and procedures to ensure that student wellbeing check-ins take place each day, on a group and/or individual basis.
- The Mental Health Toolkit has advice and resources to support student mental health and wellbeing. This includes advice on positive mental health promotion, curriculum support, how to identify and access support as well as parent and student-specific pages.
- In addition, the Quick Guide to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources highlights the most relevant evidence-based resources for teachers, parents, and students.

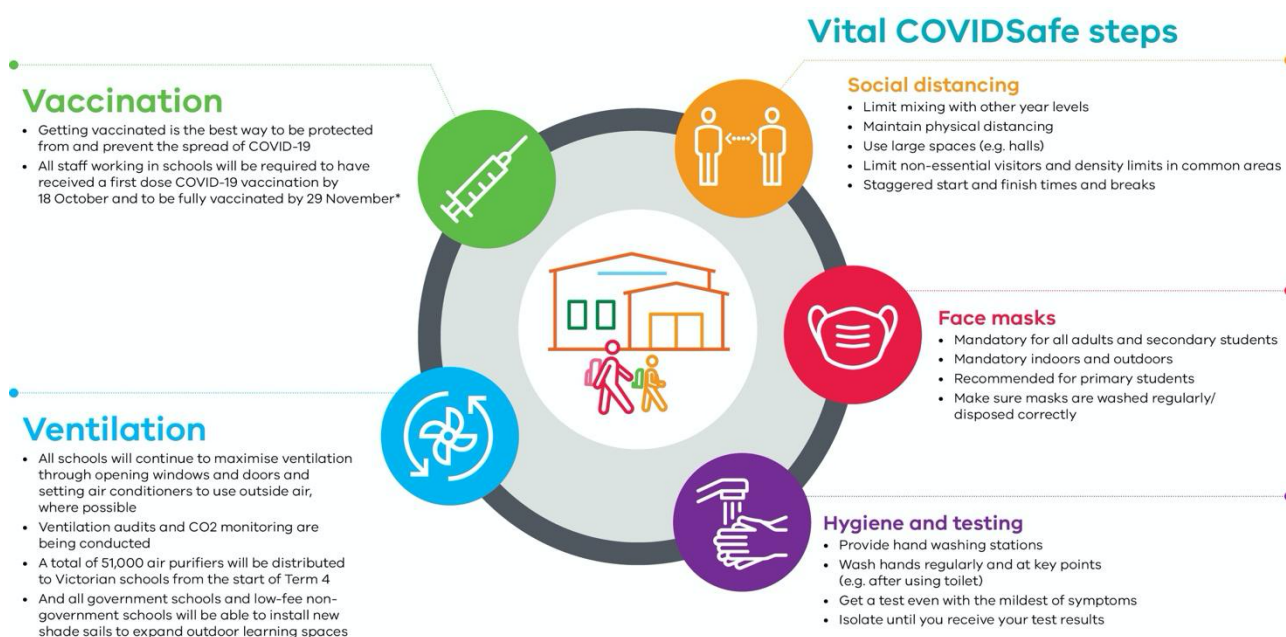
For staff

The Department has a range of services available to support staff mental health and wellbeing. This includes services and resources to address individual needs, as well as tools and supports to help guide staff through this time. More information and the full list of supports and services can be found on the [COVID-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support for Schools](#) page, and the [Safety Management Plan for COVID-19 \(COVIDSafe Plan\)](#) includes guidance on [which supports might be appropriate to respond to particular circumstances or risks](#).

Specific examples include:

- **for principal class employees (including assistant principals):** [Proactive Wellbeing Supervision service](#), the [Early Intervention Program](#) for more intensive support, and all other [Principal Health and Wellbeing services](#)
- **for all staff:** personalised over-the-phone and video counselling through the [Employee Assistance Program](#); [and tailored support to develop a wellbeing plan through the my Wellbeing service](#)
- **for all staff and all people managers:** through the [Staying Safe and Well Webinars](#).

Three Vs: Ventilation, Vaccination and Vital COVIDSafe Steps



Staff and student vaccinations

As part of the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out, all school staff and all students aged 12 and over are now eligible to receive a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine. Information about vaccines and eligibility can be found on the coronavirus.vic.gov.au website.

Required vaccinations for school staff

The Victorian Chief Health Officer has determined that COVID-19 vaccination will be mandatory for staff who work in schools. This includes principals, teachers, administration, and education support staff, including casual relief teachers (CRTs), pre-service teachers, and Out of School Hours Care staff.

All staff who work in schools will be required to have a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 18 October 2021 or be able to produce evidence of a vaccination booking within the following seven days.

All staff are required to be fully vaccinated by 29 November 2021 unless a medical exemption applies. They will be required to show evidence of their vaccination status.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself, your colleagues, and students and keep the whole school community safe. Getting vaccinated will help slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent future outbreaks in our schools.

Further details in relation to processes for checking vaccination status, and in relation to other adults attending onsite will be provided soon. Vaccination is not mandatory for students, however in alignment with health advice, vaccinations are strongly encouraged as the best way to protect individuals, families, and school communities from further outbreaks and the spread of COVID-19.

Ventilation

Schools are required to increase fresh air flow into indoor spaces (including shared spaces, staff areas and thoroughfares) whenever possible. Staff and students should maximise the use of outdoor learning areas or environments wherever possible, including as an alternative to staff areas.

Natural ventilation

- Keep all windows, doors, and vents open as much of the day as possible and when unoccupied, if practicable.
- Keep these openings clear of any obstruction to air flow.
- Door jambs should be used to keep doors open.
- Aim to open windows and vents that are higher or towards the ceiling during poor or windy weather.
- Exhaust fans are to be used as much as possible.
- Take measures to maintain thermal, noise, and other comfort, such as flexible uniform and seating arrangements.

Mechanical ventilation

- Air recirculation should be eliminated or minimised by setting air conditioning units to use external air rather than recycling, where possible. Not all mechanical systems can operate using outside air (for example, most split systems).
- Demand-controlled ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on occupancy or temperature should be disabled.
- Air conditioning filters should be maintained according to maintenance plans, checked, and cleaned with appropriate PPE.
- Turn on mechanical ventilation during school hours including when rooms are unoccupied, and if possible ideally two hours before and after the use of a space. Where available, timers can be used to manage operations.

Use of fans

- Fans are only to be used with other natural and mechanical methods in place.
- Fans should not be used if a person with respiratory symptoms is in the room.
- If used, ceiling fans can be operated in the winter setting (where the air is drawn upwards) and at the lowest speed.
- Other fans, such as pedestal fans, should not be directed to blow air from one person directly past another and should be set to the lowest speed.

Bathrooms, kitchens, and thoroughfares (hallways, corridors)

- All available mechanical and natural ventilation options in bathrooms and kitchens should be operated for as much of the day as possible.
- Maximise natural and/or mechanical ventilation in thoroughfares and minimise gathering in these spaces.
- The use of enclosed spaces with little or no ventilation should be minimised, and limit numbers in the space.

Poor outdoor air quality

- Monitor the VicEmergency App for risk warnings and advice on thunderstorm asthma, smoke, and other events reducing outside air quality.

- Action to protect students during periods of poor outdoor air quality (such as smoke, thunderstorm asthma events) takes priority.
- Take steps to close windows and doors, set air conditioners to re-circulate air, and enhance other COVID safe behaviours and controls, including cohorting, reduced class density, and staggering classes, face masks until risk is reduced as advised by public health or emergency services (through the VicEmergency App).
- Minimise using spaces that can't be ventilated with fresh outdoor air.
- Schools are encouraged to avoid or reduce the use of spaces that can't be ventilated with fresh outdoor air, including spaces with windows that don't open or open to environments with poor air quality or other pollutants. [Rotate the use of spaces that can be well ventilated if required.](#)

Maximise the use of outdoor learning areas or environments

- Schools are encouraged to maximise the use of outdoor learning areas and environments.
- Prefer the use of an outdoor space over an indoor space as much as practicable.

Air purifiers

The Department is delivering air purifier units (model Samsung AX7500) to schools. Air purifiers are advised to be prioritised for higher risk areas. These areas include where there are high levels of mixing of staff and reduced mask use when eating, higher levels of exertion and increased aerosol projection, and areas of lower ventilation and possible exposure to illness. For example, sick bays, staff rooms, canteens, school receptions, and student centres, gymnasiums, and music rooms.

Vital COVIDSafe Steps

Maintain physical distancing

A variety of strategies to support physical distancing among all students and staff should be pursued, where possible. Staff must practice physical distancing 1.5m between themselves and other staff members or adults to the extent that is reasonably practicable. Staff should physically distance themselves from students where appropriate and feasible.

Staff should reduce as far as possible the use of common areas such as staff rooms. Staff should eat and drink outside wherever possible and practicable.

Students should practice physical distancing where possible. Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not always be practical in the school environment and may be particularly challenging in the younger years of primary school. In these contexts, a combination of health and safety measures should be utilised to reduce risk.

Strategies that will be implemented to support physical distancing include:

- rostering access to shared spaces, limiting time in these spaces, and promote breaks outdoors.
- the careful management of movement of adults through all common areas, including school reception and staff rooms, and timing of staff arrival and departure.
- where multiple staff are required in a classroom, reminding staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as practical.
- signage and rostering so that access to shared physical spaces and food preparation areas can be managed in line with density limits and to reduce congregation in entry and exits.
- reminding students, staff, and visitors including through signage, of the importance of physical distancing where possible.
- actions to reduce the congregation of adults around the school and reduce congestion.

Use large spaces (e.g. halls)

Space out staff workstations as much as possible and limit the number of staff in offices according to the density quotient. This might mean relocating staff to other spaces (such as the library or unused classrooms).

Where possible we will adapt indoor activities outdoors, for example holding classes outside. The staffroom will be closed except for access to tea/coffee/food-making facilities. An additional tea making facility including microwave and kettle will be set up in an office space in the red building

Where possible, staff will rest, eat and meet in outdoor areas only.

For activities occurring outdoors, CNPS will follow the Outdoor Activities guidance in the [Occupational Health and Safety Management System](#) and support staff and students to use a combination of sun protection measures when UV levels are 3 or above.

Limit non-essential visitors and apply density limits in common areas

Density limits do not apply in classrooms and other spaces for the purposes of student use, including corridors and other shared areas.

Density limits of one person per four square metres apply to staff areas such as the staffroom and areas accessed by the public, such as reception areas.

For public areas, signage must be displayed to indicate the maximum number of members of the public that may be present in the space at a single time.

Staggered start and finish times and breaks

At CNPS staggered drop off and pick up times will be implemented as outlined below:

- Foundation and Year 1/2 students: start time 9:00am / finish time 3:30pm
- Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 students: start time 8:50am / finish time 3:20pm

Multiple entry and exit points will be used to prevent concentrations of students and minimise parents onsite.

Face masks

Please see coronavirus.vic.gov.au for the latest face mask requirements.

For all school settings, the Victorian Chief Health Officer:

- Directs school staff and school students Years 3 to 6 must always wear a face mask indoors and outdoors at school, including when attending an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program, unless a lawful exception applies.
- Directs school staff and school students Years 3 to 6 must always wear a face mask when travelling to and from school on public transport, taxis, or ride share vehicles.
- Directs school staff to wear a face mask while teaching wherever practicable, except where removal of a face mask is necessary for effective communication.
- Strongly recommends children Foundation to Year 2 wear face masks when at school, attending an OSHC program, or when travelling to and from school on public transport, taxis, or rideshare vehicles.

There are a [number of lawful reasons for not wearing a face mask](#), including for staff and students who are unable to wear a face mask due to the nature of their disability, medical, or a mental health condition.

A face mask must cover the nose and mouth. Face shields, scarves, or bandanas do not meet these requirements. Refusal to wear a mask is a breach of the Victorian Chief Health Officer Directions.

Staff and students unable to wear face masks

- Enhance other strategies to limit transmission aimed at the whole school or class, including reduced class density, outdoor learning, and ventilation.

- Staff members unable to wear face masks due to a valid exception should avoid providing supervision or care to students with COVID-19 symptoms.

Encouraging and motivating mask use in schools

- Model correct and positive mask-wearing. Face mask compliance amongst staff, parents, carers, and visitors is vital for encouraging students to wear face masks. Communicate to staff and visitors their responsibility and obligation to affirm a safe and positive environment for students when on school premises.
- Reinforce key messages about the importance of face masks, why they are important and how they contribute to reducing risk of COVID-19 transmission. Use posters, photos, videos, creative projects, social media, and other activities to [promote and model mask-wearing by other](#) staff, students, and community members.
- Motivate and praise students who wear face masks correctly. Ask staff and students why they don't want to wear masks. Think about sensory or discomfort issues as a reason for refusal, and consider adjustments to help improve fit or comfort, such as providing a surgical mask where available.
- Engage, confirm with, and support students and their families with lawful exceptions for mask-wearing, including those with disability, medical, or a mental health condition.

More information

- Schools must display information and signage at school entrances and in communal areas such as staff rooms encouraging staff and students to wear masks wherever they are required, including where physical distancing of 1.5m cannot be maintained. Posters are available in the [communications support pack](#).
- School staff should refer to the Department [guidance for the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) in education](#) to determine when additional PPE is required and for information on the correct and safe use of PPE.

Hygiene and testing

Practice good hygiene

All staff, students, and visitors to schools should undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing, or using the toilet. Staff should direct or supervise young students where required.

Hand sanitiser should be made available at entry points to classrooms. Age-appropriate education and reminders about hand hygiene should be provided. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser that contains at least 60 percent alcohol should be made accessible.

Sharing of food is not permitted.

Use non-contact greetings (not shaking hands, hugging, or kissing).

Ensure the highest hygiene practices amongst food handlers where these services are operating, as per the Department's [Safe Food Handling Guidance](#).

Safety information and training

Any Department staff working onsite in schools who did not complete the eLearn module School Infection Prevention and Control During COVID-19 in Term 4, 2020, **must complete the module as soon as possible**. Staff may complete the training again as a refresher, at any time.

The module is available on LearnED via [eduPay login](#) and will take about 20 minutes to complete. A parallel module is now also [available on FUSE](#) for preservice teachers, casual relief teachers, and other staff working in schools who do not have eduPay access.

Principals should review completion records through LearnED and manage non-completion through existing performance development plan (PDP) conversations. Should managers or principals need help to monitor staff progress and completion rates, a short [LearnED LMS for Managers](#) module, including a number of detailed [Quick Reference Guides](#), is available.

Keep surfaces clean

COVIDSafe routine cleaning arrangements will continue for all Victorian government schools in Term 4. This involves daily end-of-school-day cleaning, with a particular focus on cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces, and the inclusion of some elements that were not cleaned every day prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Schools should consider the necessity of using shared equipment at this time. Such items may include shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, and musical instruments. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use. Risk can be further minimised with users wiping down items where appropriate, for example using a two-in-one disinfectant/detergent wipe.

Consider adjusting how staff and students interact within the built environment to reduce contact with certain surfaces. For example, a simple measure such as keeping a door open will reduce the need for multiple people to touch the door handle. Consider use of plexiglass as a physical barrier at school reception and canteen where practical and feasible

Stay home when unwell and get tested

The most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, is to ensure that any unwell staff and students remain at home and get tested, even with the mildest of symptoms. Everyone should consider their health before they start work or attend school and ensure that they are free from coronavirus symptoms and have not had contact in the past 14 days with a person confirmed to have coronavirus or a person suspected to have coronavirus.

For further information for schools and to distribute to families see: [Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Management of an unwell student or staff member at school

It is important that any student (or staff member) who becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms while at school gets tested and returns home.

The symptoms to watch out for are:

- fever
- chills or sweats
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- runny nose
- loss or change in sense of smell or taste

Some people may also experience headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea.

Schools should refer to the following guidance (updated June 2021), which sets out actions required to safely isolate individuals prior to being collected and returning home:

- [Personal protective equipment guide for education settings](#)
- [Management of students displaying COVID-19 symptoms in education settings](#)

This guidance should also be followed in a situation where a student (or staff member where appropriate) is made aware while at school that they are required to get tested, isolate, and/or quarantine following public health advice.

Staff or students experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should be advised to get tested and stay home until they receive a test result. See [Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Health care plans, where relevant, should be updated to provide additional advice on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of COVID-19.

Staff and students are not required to present a medical certificate stating they are fit to return to an education setting after a period of illness, however staff and students should not return until symptoms resolve. If they have been tested for COVID-19, they must also wait for a negative test result. Staff continue to be required to present a medical certificate in accordance with personal leave policy for periods of absence on personal leave.

Required actions for suspected cases of COVID-19 in staff in schools

Everyone should consider their health before they start work or attend school and ensure that they are free from coronavirus symptoms and have not had contact in the past 14 days with a person confirmed to have coronavirus or a person suspected to have coronavirus. Staff members must stay home when unwell or if they may have been exposed to coronavirus in the past 14 days

'Suspected case' means a person who is displaying one or more symptoms of COVID-19.

Some people may also experience headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea.

As soon as practicable after becoming aware of a suspected case in a staff member, and that the staff member has attended on a school site whilst symptomatic, or 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms, the principal must take the following four actions:

1. **Advise the staff member to self-isolate**, by travelling home immediately. If immediate travel home is not possible, the staff member must be directed to self-isolate at school, in a separate room where possible, while wearing a face mask and remaining at least 1.5 metres from any other person, until they can travel home.
2. **Advise the staff member to be tested for COVID-19 as soon as practicable**, and to self-isolate while awaiting the result of that test.
3. **Manage the risk posed by the suspected case**, including by ensuring high-touch areas frequently used by the staff member have been cleaned since they were last onsite, including areas used by the staff member e.g. their workspace AND any high-touch surfaces likely to have been frequented by the staff member. Please contact the VSBA School Cleaning unit if required on cleaning@education.vic.gov.au
4. **Inform all staff onsite** (including the Health and Safety Representative) to be vigilant about the onset of symptoms. If they become unwell, they must notify their principal, get tested, and self-isolate. A [draft email](#) and [further information on consulting with your staff](#) is available.

Managing a confirmed case of COVID-19

The Department has comprehensive procedures in place with the Department of Health to manage suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in schools.

- Contact the Department by calling 1800 126 126 to report an IRIS incident alert if a student or staff member tests positive to COVID-19. Schools do not need to take further action, until directed to do so; Regional staff will contact you to advise next steps including any communication support
- The Department will notify WorkSafe on behalf of the affected school in the event of a confirmed case of a staff member.

WorkSafe may be in contact with the affected school to ensure the school is following the health and safety guidance outlined in this document and has implemented their COVID-19 Safety Management Plan. Please contact the OHS Advisory Service (1300 074 715) for support in managing occupational health and safety matters.

Monitoring of close contacts in schools

To minimise further community transmission of COVID-19, the Department of Health has introduced a new system for the identification, notification, and monitoring of close contacts (primary and secondary).

In line with this, schools will now be advised if a student or staff member at their school has been identified by the Department of Health as a close contact of a person with COVID-19.

Close contacts are contacted directly by the Department of Health regarding requirements for quarantine and testing; the student or staff member should not attend school until they are advised by the Department of Health that their quarantine has concluded. Students or staff members should bring a copy of the clearance message (text, email or letter) they receive from the Department of Health indicating that their quarantine period has ended when they return to school.

Schools will be asked to confirm that the student or staff member identified as a close contact is not attending school during this time. If the student or staff member is attending school, they must be sent home immediately and notify their Area Executive Director. The school is not required to close due to a close contact attending unless advised otherwise by the Department.

When notified that a student or staff member has been in close contact with a positive case of COVID-19 and/or has visited a public exposure site, call the Department on 1800 126 126 to report an IRIS incident alert. Schools do not need to take further action until directed to do so.

Infectious cleaning

In most cases where a school site closes due to a positive case, some or all of the school site will undergo a deep clean, also known as an infectious clean. The Department of Education and Training arranged and paid for this clean for all Victorian Government schools, both metropolitan and regional.

Once advised of the need for cleaning to occur, the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) will contact the principal as soon as possible to make arrangements. The cleaning is conducted in accordance with the [Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines](#), approved by the Department of Health.

As part of the Guideline, paper, soft toys, shared stationary (any porous items considered high touch that cannot be laundered) are not thrown away. If needed, to allow cleaning of high-touch surfaces, these items are placed in storage bags and quarantined onsite in a lockable secure area for 14 days. For surfaces that would not normally be frequently touched, such as posters on the wall, it will be left in situ.

Schools should close spaces that are not needed and only use the administrative and teaching spaces required to implement any physical distancing requirements and maintain effective learning conditions.

To support the delivery of an infectious clean, if required, it is recommended that school staff working onsite:

- keep their desks neat and tidy
- file important documents before they leave each day
- take personal belongings home each day (such as jackets, shoes, hats, gloves, and face masks)
- do not leave food or food containers out in the open (such as tea bags, biscuits, and fruit)
- store away unused shared and loose items (such as toys, musical instruments, and sporting equipment)
- keep personal cutlery in a sealed container, not left out on a workstation.

See the [Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines](#) for advice on cleaning and disinfection when a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified in a Victorian Government School.