

23 February, 2022

Dear parents and caregivers,

A big thank you for your continued efforts in supporting our schools and students during the pandemic, and especially for consistently prioritising safety and learning.

The Premier and Minister for Education recently announced changes to school settings for the remainder of Term 1. These amendments were developed in close consultation with NSW Health and other key stakeholders to ensure that we continue to keep our schools open and operational for learning, while keeping in sync with the changing context of the pandemic.

The following changes are due to come into effect:

- We will continue the use of rapid antigen tests (RATs) for twice-weekly testing of students and staff until Friday 25 February.
- **From Monday 28 February**, we will move to *symptomatic* testing. This means that allocated tests are to be used at the discretion of staff members and parents in the event that they or their child/ren are symptomatic, or if there are cases in your school. The school will provide every student and staff member with 8 tests each. Further communication will be issued regarding the distribution of these tests to families once the tests have been delivered to schools.
- After the allocated individual supply is used, should they wish to undertake a Covid test, students and staff can access PCR tests or buy their own rapid antigen tests.
- A reminder that your child/ren may receive either nasal swab or saliva RAT kits, or a combination of both. The kits include instructions for using the tests, and instructions are also available for download from the NSW Health website. Please check the test results carefully and dispose of the tests as indicated on the information sheet contained in the kit. The test's user guide also contains a contact number for the suppliers if you need additional support.
- To give more accurate results, people using saliva testing kits must not eat or drink for 30 minutes before taking the saliva RAT.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- **Masks**
 - Surgical masks are **required** indoors for all students, school staff, volunteers and visitors including parents and carers **until leaving the school on Friday 25 February 2022**.
 - From Monday 28 February 2022 **masks will no longer be mandatory** for school staff or for students in Year 7 and above. However, those who wish to continue to use them will be supported to do so.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- **Masks**

- Surgical masks are **required** indoors for all school staff, volunteers and visitors including parents and carers **until leaving the school on Friday 4 March 2022**.
- **From Monday 7 March 2022**, masks will no longer be mandatory for staff. However, those who wish to continue to use them will be supported to do so.

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

- Our schools will continue to ensure that our core COVID-smart layers are in place, including vaccinations; maximising natural ventilation in learning spaces; continued good hand hygiene practices; and enhanced cleaning.
- **From Monday 28 February, visitors** are allowed back on school sites. All visitors are asked to follow the school's usual sign-in and sign-out process.
- Schools will consider activities such as assemblies, parent-teacher meetings and other gatherings to determine if these can proceed in a COVID-safe manner. Parents/carers will be advised of the arrangements for these activities.
- **From 28 February**, students will no longer be required to be kept in year groups or other cohorts. This will also apply to staff.
- Principals are required to continue to use the core, layered COVID-smart measures to minimise risk when planning activities and events.

VACCINATION

We strongly encourage our students and their families to consider vaccination when eligible. To book an appointment near you, please consult the NSW Health website.

If you would like more information regarding the current COVID guidelines, please email covid@arm.catholic.edu.au. If you wish to make a complaint regarding the school's application of guidelines, please email complaints@arm.catholic.edu.au.

Thank you again for your continued support during this school term.

Sincerely,



Chris Smyth
Director of Schools