



COVID-19 UPDATE 4
PARENT AND CARERS COMMUNICATION

UPDATED JANUARY 31

Dear parents and carers ,

This letter will outline further information regarding back to school arrangements. It is in a question and answer format. This information is to help you understand the processes and procedures that will be in place to keep everyone safe when the children return to school. As directives change I will keep you updated.

As of today St Fidelis have **NOT** received our delivery of the Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs).

I anticipate we should have a delivery for all students and staff on Monday 31 January or early next week. Once we have them I will let you know how and when they will be distributed.

Will children receive Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT)?

- Free Rapid Antigen tests will be available at school for families and staff to conduct at-home for the first four weeks of Term 1 2022.
- Tests will be provided in packs of five individual tests.
- A second pack of 5 tests will be provided for each St Fidelis child at the start of Week Three.
- Each child will be given a box of RATS in a sealed clip bag to take home. The school will notify parents via skoolbag when the RATS are coming home.

Who is responsible for administering the test?

- Parents are required to administer a test before school (in the mornings) twice a week from weeks one to four of Term 1.
- Parents must do tests at home and must report any positive test result to their school by phone or email to the Principal. **THERE IS NO NEED TO REPORT A NEGATIVE RESULT TO THE SCHOOL**

Will RATS be nasal or oral swabs or a combination?

- At this stage, the school has been provided with nasal RATS and the school will notify parents if the government provides alternative tests.

Is surveillance testing optional

- Yes. If parents choose to conduct additional RATs at home then the school will only require notification if the child tests positive.

What do I do if my child tests positive ?

- Keep your child home. Monitor close contacts for symptoms and get tested if symptoms develop.

Who do I notify if my child tests positive?

- If a child receives a positive test result at any time, parents must report this through the Department of Health system (Rapid Antigen tests Coronavirus Victoria) or via the coronavirus hotline at 1800 675 398.

- Parents must also report a positive result to the school immediately by emailing the principal at mwatson@somoreland.catholic.edu.au
- The school will record the child's absence while in 7-day isolation and let the rest of the school community know there has been a positive case onsite and that they should monitor for symptoms. Privacy is always paramount.

What do I do if a sibling of my child tests positive?

- Monitor for symptoms, get tested if symptoms develop and keep your child at home until they return a negative result. If the child returns a negative result then they may attend school. (This may alter next week we are waiting on further directives)

What happens if my child's teachers test positive?

- The teacher will be required to isolate for seven days, the parents of the children in this class will be notified that there has been a positive case onsite and that they should monitor for symptoms.

What happens if a child tests positive in my child's class? E.g just one case...

- The parents of all the children in the class will be notified that there has been a positive case and they should monitor for symptoms.

What happens if the majority of the children in the class become positive?

- Onsite learning will continue for all children regardless of the number of positive cases of children or staff within each year level.

What are the scenarios if multiple staff members become positive? If several teachers are required to stay home due to COVID, how will this teaching shortfall be covered?

- The school will have multiple scenarios and contingencies in place in the event that multiple staff have to isolate for seven days. The school will be reluctant to engage external casual relief staff due to the risks

associated with external visitors attending on-site and the severe shortage and current unavailability of casual relief teachers.

- The first step will be to use internal staff replacements with leading teachers, specialist teachers and education support staff supervising children in their class.
- The second step will be to combine classes amongst the same year level.
- The school aims to continue the learning for all the children and due to the collaborative nature of the learning and teaching approach at St Fidelis we are confident that the learning will continue seamlessly for the children.

Will my child be able to access learning during their isolation period? What happens if my child has to isolate because they are in close contact -any opportunities for learning?

- The children will have access to their Google Classroom page where the teacher will be able to upload learning relevant to what is happening in the classroom at that time. Your child will have access to a learning grid with Numeracy, Literacy, Inquiry and Religious Education activities. Teachers will spend time teaching the children how to login in and out of their Google Classroom. In the event families do not own a device we will email the learning. The school will not provide a combination of online and onsite learning.

If a child is a close contact with a family member they live with do they need to isolate for 7 days?

Yes, If a student is a household contact or house-like contact they must:

- Notify the school that they are a household or household-like contact following the Checklist for COVID contacts. <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist.cases>
- Students must quarantine for 7 days (inclusive of weekends) and must not attend school during this period.

Will it make a difference to either isolation or quarantine requirements if my child is fully vaccinated / partially vaccinated /not vaccinated ?

- At this stage, there are no clear directives other than that all children regardless of vaccination status will need to be isolated for seven days if they test positive.

Are there Air Purifiers located through the school?

- Yes we have received 10 air purifiers from the Victorian Government and the school has purchased an additional five purifiers, they will be used in high risk areas and placed across the learning spaces.

Will there be air monitoring in the learning environments?

- No. We will not be conducting air monitoring but will have air purifiers in high risk rooms and placed across the learning spaces. All windows and doors will be kept open and teachers will conduct outdoor learning in designated outdoor learning spaces whenever possible.

Will the children learn outdoors?

- Yes there are multiple outdoor areas that the teachers can take their children for part of the day for some outdoor learning.

Will the children remain in their class cohorts?

- Yes. Children will remain in their cohorts as much as practically possible. The cohorts will also have designated play areas outside to minimise mixing of students across year levels.

Can food be shared amongst the children for birthday celebrations?

- No. Under no circumstances are children permitted to share food with each other.

Are professional cleaners used in the school?

- Yes. The school has a commercial contract with professional cleaners who have increased their daily cleaning out of school hours. The company cleans all school areas on a daily basis. Teachers also have disinfectant wipes and wipe down all tables and high touch surfaces each day.

What are the routines for hand hygiene and cleaning in the learning environments?

- Children will be encouraged to sanitise their hands before they enter the school buildings at the beginning of the day, before eating and at the conclusion of recess and lunch breaks. Extra hand sanitiser units have been installed over the holidays in all learning areas and entry points.

Do children in Year 3-6 need to wear a mask?

- Yes. This is a government directive. Children may be exempt from wearing a mask if their parents provide a medical certificate from a qualified medical practitioner. Teachers will be encouraged to use outdoor learning spaces during part of the day to avoid children having to wear masks during learning time. Masks are not required to be worn by children when outdoors.

Do children in Foundation -Year 2 need to wear a mask?

- No, this is optional but encouraged to wear the mask.

Do staff need to wear a mask?

- Yes at all times when indoors unless a medical exemption applies.

Do parents/carers need to wear a mask?

- Yes, when on the school grounds. All adults are encouraged to wear masks at pick up times even if they are not on the school grounds to minimize the risk of transmission amongst the school community.

Will there be staggered pick up times and locations?

- Yes. To minimise the risk of transmission amongst the school community we will continue with the same arrangements as at the end of last year for pick up only.
- Mackillop (BLUE) and Daly (RED) will be dismissed from the Hawthorn Yard, SLA and Saunders street gates areas at 3:20pm
- Mannix (GREEN) AND Lee (GOLD) will be dismissed from Hawthorn yard, SLA, and Saunders Street gate at 3:30pm.

When the Foundation students are dismissed at 1:00pm which gate do we enter?

- Foundation 2022 parents will use the Saunders Street gate.
- Once the student finishes at 3:20 or 3:30 if the Foundation student has a sibling already at St Fidelis the family can decide which gate to meet their children.

Will the teachers have received their booster by 25th of February?

- All staff at St Fidelis are double vaccinated. Following the government directive, all staff will be encouraged to receive their third booster by 25th February or have made an appointment to receive their third dose.

Kind Regards

Manuela Watson