

Protecting against mosquito-borne diseases:

Some areas in regional northern Victoria are experiencing a longer mosquito season this year due to recent flooding. While the overall risk is currently low, some mosquitoes may be carrying diseases that make people sick.

The best protection against mosquito-borne illness is to avoid mosquito bites. The free Japanese encephalitis vaccine is also available for more Victorians.

Free Japanese encephalitis vaccines

Japanese encephalitis virus is spread to humans through bites from infected mosquitoes. It can cause a rare but potentially serious infection of the brain.

The [free Japanese encephalitis vaccine](#) is available for:

- people aged 2 months or older who live or work in eligible high-risk local government areas in Victoria
- until Friday 31 July 2026, people who plan to visit high-risk areas in Victoria or interstate for outdoor recreation such as hiking, camping, caravanning or boating.

For more information:

- refer to the Department of Health's [Japanese encephalitis webpage](#) for a list of high-risk areas
- speak to your GP or immunisation provider to check if your family is eligible for a free vaccine ahead of any planned travel during the coming months.

How to help prevent mosquito bites:

To help protect against mosquito bites, families can:

- cover up as much as possible with long, loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing
- apply insect repellent that contains picaridin or DEET on exposed skin when outdoors

limit outdoor activity if lots of mosquitoes are active

Staff Outside of Work hours

Parents/carers and students are reminded that regular work hours for staff are 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. Staff are not available to respond to e-mails outside of regular work hours.

You are at liberty to send an e-mail at your convenience but please be aware that it will not be responded to immediately. However, your e-mail will be responded to within 48 hours from the first workday that it is received.

Thank you for your understanding.

Should you require immediate assistance with a matter of concern, please contact these external services:

Telephone or Webchat support for young people 1800 55 1800
<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

Parents/Carers support 13 22 89
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/serviceprofiles/parentline-service>

Mobile phone Policy

The school Mobile Phone Policy remains in place and requires students to switch off their phone from the sound of the first warning bell for the day and store their phones away securely until they leave the school at the end of the day. Students are not to access their phones at any time throughout the day including breaks. The same expectations apply for the use of headphone and Air pods. Unless requested by a teacher to support learning, these must also be stored securely for the school day. A process for addressing a breach of the policy is in place and all students are well aware of their role in this process.

Parents/carers must not expect to communicate with their children during the day via their mobile phone. Should there be the need to get in touch with your child during the day for an emergency, please contact the general office otherwise please confine any communication for the times when student can access their phones. A small number of students have Mobile Phone or Headphone exemptions; these are generally for medical reasons supported by relevant documentation.

Our Mobile Phone policy is up for review, and we will certainly communicate with you any changes, if any that may be made to the policy.

Privacy

Our school collects and uses student and parent personal information for standard school functions or where permitted by law, as stated in the [Schools' privacy policy](#) and the [Schools' privacy collection notice](#).

Our Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy <https://www.elthamhs.vic.edu.au/policies-child-safety/> describes how we collect and use photographs, video and recordings of students. The policy also explains when parent consent is required and how it can be provided and withdrawn.

We ask parents to also review the guidance we provide through the Digital Technologies policy and the Acceptable Use Agreement (both found at <https://www.elthamhs.vic.edu.au/policies-child-safety/>) on how we use Learning technologies safely at the school and what parents can do to further protect their child's information. If after reviewing the guidance, you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school.

For more information about privacy, refer to: [Schools' privacy policy: information for parents](#). This information is also available in eleven community languages:

- Amharic
- Arabic
- Chinese
- Dari
- Gujarati
- Mandarin
- Somali
- Sudanese
- Turkish
- Urdu
- Vietnamese

Please take time to remind yourself of our school's privacy collection notice, available in the "Policies" section of the school website <https://www.elthamhs.vic.edu.au/policies-child-safety/>

Student Accident Insurance

Parents/guardians are reminded that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development does not provide personal accident insurance for students. Likewise, the school does not have a whole-school policy for personal accident insurance for students. Parents and guardians are responsible for paying the cost of medical treatment for injured students, including transport costs. Reasonably low-cost accident insurance policies are available from some commercial insurers. These cover a range of medical expenses not covered by Medicare or private health insurance. Parents/guardians may wish to purchase such a policy for individual students.

Student Exchange Organisations approved by the VRQA and therefore DET

The following is a 2025 update of the Student Exchange organisations approved by the VRQA to provide student exchange programs in Victoria. The list may change each year, so it is important that you check the current list rather than relying on old information.

Name of organisation	Website
AFX Student Exchange Australia	www.afxstudentexchange.com
AIX Australian International Exchange	www.aix-experience.au
Association of German Teachers of Victoria	www.agtv.vic.edu.au
Australian Institute of International Understanding	www.aiiu.com.au
Rotary Youth Exchange Victoria	www.ryea.org.au
Scholarships for Australian German Student Exchange	www.sagse.org.au
Southern Cross Cultural Exchange	www.scce.com.au
Student Exchange Australia New Zealand Ltd	www.studentexchange.org.au
Students of the World Ltd	www.studentsoftheworld.com.au
World Education Program Australia Ltd	www.wep.org.au
Youth For Understanding International Student exchange	www.yfu.com.au

Each year we are asked about student exchange programs that provide a reciprocal benefit. It is important that if you wish to engage in reciprocal exchange that you utilise the services of one of the organisations on this list. The school will not be able to enrol overseas exchange students coming through organisations not on this list because they would not be approved by the Department of Education and Training.

If you need further information, please do not hesitate to call Kate Scalzo on 9430 5111 or e-mail Kate.Scalzo@education.vic.gov.au

Camps, Sport and Excursions Fund (CSEF)

Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund helps ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. Please refer to the flyer [here](#) for eligibility requirements and further information on how to access the fund.

School Drop off and Pick Up Times

I remind all parents and guardians, and inform new parents and carers to the school, that student safety is always the primary consideration including both drop off time and pick up times.

Whilst traffic seems to flow smoothly through the circular driveway of the school at the start of the day, there seems to be greater congestion at pick up time in the afternoon.

The circular driveway is to be used purely for drop off and pick up.

There is very little parking available within the school grounds between the following time (8:00 – 10:00am and 2:00 – 4:00pm). “*No Standing Anytime*” signs are located within the school, and it is important that parents/guardians adhere to these. Furthermore, double parking is illegal in the street and within the school grounds, it causes further congestion, which in turn impinges on student safety.

We will be enforcing the use of the circular driveway purely for drop off and pick up of students.

As you move into the circular driveway, if your child is not at the front of the school you will need to exit the driveway and re-enter. You may need to do this more than once. Alternatively, it is advisable that you organise with your child another location for pick up.

As always, we will continue to expect everyone to abide by road and safety laws and procedures as they move through the driveway. The same applies at the Ely Street end of the school. Staff parking on the street is now minimal and this means that there is space for drop off and pick up. Please do not park in residents’ driveways. No parents are to drive into the school driveway or park in it or across it. This is the only avenue that students have to get to and from the school buses and we must be vigilant for their safety.

Subsequently, it is imperative that everyone behaves in a lawful and safe way out in Withers Way, Susan Street, Bell Street and Ely Street. We have informed the traffic division of the Shire of Nillumbik of the school’s strategy, and it is possible that the Ranger’s office may act against people who disregard road and safety laws out in the streets. Likewise, the police will patrol the area at these peak times, and they will not hesitate to reprimand and fine if necessary.

I trust that you will understand the need for this direction, and I ask you for your continued support to ensure the safety of our kids.

If you do use the drop off and pick up zone on Withers Way, can you please direct your children to cross the road at the school crossing both on arrival and on their departure from school. We certainly do not want students crossing the road in front of oncoming cars and placing themselves at risk.

Thank you for your support with this matter.