

Surfside Primary School Return to School COVIDSafe Plan 2022

All of the staff at Surfside are looking forward to the start of the new school year and we hope that all of our students are excited to reconnect with their teachers, class and friends. We are all well aware that we are going to be faced with some challenges over the coming weeks but we will continue to work together and support each other to allow all of our students to have the best possible outcome. As a school we will continue our focus on the following:

- Teaching and Learning program to support all learners through differentiation, support and extension.
- Mental health and wellbeing strategies and supports.

In order to have the smoothest transition back to school for the 2022 school year it is important we work hard to support the following strategies to keep our school community safe, healthy and engaged. A combination of strategies are implemented to minimise transmission risk. No single strategy completely reduces risk and not every measure will be possible in all of our school settings. Where some controls are not feasible, others will be enhanced. Strategies will also be adjusted and communicated over time in line with the changing risk of COVID transmission in the community.

Practise good hygiene

All staff, students and visitors to the school should practise good hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet. Staff will support young students where required.

- Hand sanitiser will be available at entry points to classrooms. Schools will provide age-appropriate education and reminders about hand hygiene. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser will be made accessible.
- Sharing of food is not permitted.
- Use non-contact greetings (not shaking hands).
- Encourage physical distancing where possible

Face masks

Please visit [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au) for the latest face mask requirements.

For all school settings:

- School staff will be required to always wear masks indoors when not actively teaching or communicating with students. Masks are not compulsory for teachers and staff outdoors.
- Students in Grade 3 and above must wear a face mask indoors at school and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) programs, unless a lawful exception applies. Students must wear face masks even if vaccinated. Students are not required to wear masks outside.
- Everyone over 8 years old must wear a face mask when travelling to and from school on public transport, taxis or ride share vehicles.
- Visitors to schools aged 8 and above must wear a face mask in all indoor spaces, unless a lawful exception applies.
- Students in Prep to Grade 2 are strongly recommended to wear a face mask indoors at school or an OSHC program.

A face mask must cover the nose and mouth. Face shields, scarves or bandanas do not meet these requirements.

There are [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. Parent/carers of a student/s who meet the criteria for an exception should provide their approval in writing for their child/ren to not wear a mask to the school.

There is no requirement for a letter for a medical exception for not wearing a face mask from a medical practitioner.

Rapid antigen testing

Free rapid antigen tests will be made available for all staff and students in Victorian schools for the first 4 weeks of Term 1 2022. Rapid antigen testing will be voluntary for all primary, secondary and specialist school students and staff.

Surfside will distribute testing kits to families and will be provided with a pack of 5 individual tests for each student. We are still awaiting delivery and will notify families regarding the opportunity for collection as soon as they arrive.

Tests will be provided in packs of 5 individual tests. Parents/carers can collect one pack for each child prior to the start of week one and one pack for each child at the start of week 3 will be provided and sent home in each child's bag.

Students and staff are required to do the tests at home and must report any positive test results to their school.

All students and staff who return a positive result from a rapid antigen test should also follow the latest advice at <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/rapid-antigen-tests>.

Information about how to do a test, including a how-to video translated into 33 languages, is [available online](#).

Updated approach to managing a confirmed case of COVID-19 in school

Where a student or staff member is identified as a positive case, individual education contact tracing will no longer take place. The revised process is set out below.

Actions: identification and notification

1. Parents/carers should complete the [RA Test portal](#) if a student tests positive to COVID-19 (via a PCR or rapid antigen test) and notify the school via phone or email.
2. Students who report a positive result must isolate for seven days and not attend school during that period.
3. Where a student is a household contact of a positive case (that is, they have spent more than four hours with someone who has COVID-19 inside a house, accommodation, or care facility) they must inform the school and isolate for seven days and not attend school during that period.
4. Surfside PS will notify the school community through a daily email (where applicable) when a student or staff member has (or multiple students or staff members) have returned a positive COVID-19 test result and had attended the school. The notification will include:
 - o Dates of attendance
 - o Affected group/cohort/year levels
 - o Any relevant extracurricular activities
1. Students are not to return to school if they remain symptomatic, unless it is known that their symptoms are caused by an underlying health condition or medication.

In the event of multiple positive cases at a school, the Department of Health (DH) will work with the relevant regional office to determine the most appropriate response and any additional actions that should be taken.

Staffing pressures and shortages

We are aware that at times we may be faced with staffing pressures through staff absences due to isolation requirements. Where possible we will utilise Casual Relief Staff to cover staff absences (this may not always be the same teacher or support staff member on an ongoing basis). The splitting of grades may be required if Casual Relief Staff or coverage is unavailable. If all avenues for coverage of classes are exhausted this may require a short move to remote learning for relevant classes or cohorts.

Student attendance

All students are expected to attend onsite unless they are identified as a close contact, diagnosed with COVID-19 or unwell. Parent preference is not an approved reason for students to be absent due to COVID-19.

Students who are required to isolate or quarantine will be supported through the provision of a learning matric for continued learning. Schools are not expected to provide a full remote learning program in these circumstances.

Visitors in schools

All visitors to school (parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, contractors, wellbeing staff, etc) are required to check in at the administration office. Visitors will be required to:

- Check in using the Service Victoria QR code
- Wear a face mask when indoors
- If required to volunteer (working in proximity of staff and students) provide evidence of at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine
- Adhere to COVIDSafe requirements of physical distancing, cough etiquette and good hand hygiene
- All parent/staff meetings will be undertaken via WebEx (online tool)
- If visitors are accessing the administration office for a short period of time they are only required to Check in via the QR code and wear a face mask

Non-classroom based activities

All non-essential classroom activities and the mixing of cohorts will be highly limited over the first 4 weeks of term 1. This includes assemblies, buddy program, excursions, inter school sport, etc. This is in place to minimise risk and re-assess towards the end of term 1. We are still planning ahead with our camp dates for term 1.

Mental health and wellbeing

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

For students

- 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.
- Please make contact with the school Mental Health & Wellbeing team if further connection or support is required – 5256 1411

Staff and student vaccinations

As part of the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out, all school staff and all students aged 5 and over are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Information about vaccines and eligibility can be found on the coronavirus.vic.gov.au website.

We thank all of our staff, students and school community for their continued support and flexibility and we are all looking forward to the 2022 school year. We know that challenges will occur but we also know that we will continue to utilise our school values of Respect, Honesty, Teamwork and Achievement to achieve our best possible outcome emotionally, socially and academically. We will provide an overview to best support drop off and pick up prior to day 1 as well as communicate any further updates.

Take care and stay safe,

Peter Walsh
Principal