

# CECV COVID-19 advice

Term 1 2023, from 7 February 2023

## COVIDSafe measures for schools

COVIDSafe measures have changed but all Victorian Catholic schools are required to continue to implement important practices to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Schools must continue to take the important steps of ensuring air purifiers are in use, external ventilation is maximised, good personal hygiene is encouraged and face masks continue to be made available for staff, students and visitors who wish to wear them.

## COVIDSafe Plan

The revised [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. Principals should ensure that staff, including new staff, are aware of their school's COVIDSafe plan.

## Vaccinations

Staff and students are strongly recommended to ensure they keep up-to-date with all recommended and available COVID-19 vaccinations as vaccinations are the best way to protect individuals, families and school communities from the severe effects of COVID-19 and reduce the spread of the virus.

Vaccination is no longer mandatory for staff or visitors in any Victorian school, including specialist schools.

## Rapid antigen testing

It is recommended that rapid antigen tests (RATs) are used by students and staff:

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 infection, no matter how mild
- If you are a household or close contact of someone who has COVID-19
- If you are a social contact of someone who has COVID-19.

The Department of Health recommends that all Victorians should report their positive RAT result to the Department of Health [online](#), or by calling 1800 675 398.

Staff are recommended to report a positive COVID-19 test result to their school on the day they receive a positive test result.

Students (or their parents) should also report a positive result to their school.

Rapid Antigen Test are available for all Victorians from Council sites. People can get 2 free packs (10 tests) for themselves and 2 free packs (10 tests) for each of their household members.

People with disability and their carers can get up to 4 free packs (20 tests) in line with existing RAT distribution for people with disability.

Further information can be obtained at [Council Rapid Antigen Test Program](#).

## Face masks

Current advice from the Victorian government is available at [Face masks](#).

Staff and students who wish to wear a face mask should be supported to do so, and schools should continue to make face masks available for staff, students and visitors.

The Department of Health recommends that masks should be worn by a person who is a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 when leaving home.

Additionally, the Department of Health recommends that masks should be worn by a person who has COVID-19 for at least 7 days after a positive test when they need to leave home.

## Infection prevention and control

All staff, students and visitors to schools 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 should direct or supervise young students where required.

## Management of suspected cases of COVID-19 in schools

A 'suspected' case means a person who displays any [COVID-19 symptoms](#) who has not yet tested positive for COVID-19.

The staff member, student or visitor who is symptomatic should be recommended to undergo testing for COVID-19. Parents of students who are symptomatic should be asked to collect their child from school and to keep them home until they are no longer symptomatic.

## Management of confirmed cases at school

### Managing a confirmed case of COVID-19 in schools

The Department of Health recommends that a person who tests positive to COVID-19 report that result to their employer, school and household.

Where a student or staff member is identified as a positive case, the following steps should be taken:

### Principal actions: identification and notification

1. Parents/carers should inform the school by phone or written notification if a student tests positive to COVID-19 (via a PCR or rapid antigen test).
2. Students who report a positive result are recommended to isolate for a minimum of 5 days and not attend school until their symptoms have resolved. Students who isolate as a result of a positive COVID-19 test should be supported in the same way as students with an extended absence due to illness or injury, with learning materials provided to support their continued learning.



3. Staff who report a positive result are recommended to isolate for a minimum of 5 days and not attend school during that period. Staff who test positive are able to access five days paid infectious diseases leave when COVID-19 has been contracted at school, without a medical certificate (though evidence, such as a RAT, may be required), in addition to personal leave. Staff who are unfit to return to work and who have accessed 5 days paid infectious diseases leave can access personal leave for the duration of the time they are unfit for work, with a medical certificate.
4. There is no longer a requirement for principals to inform the school community of a positive case associated with the school.

Schools must treat health information, including positive COVID-19 test results, in accordance with the school Privacy Policy. COVID-19 diagnoses are not to be shared or discussed unless the individual (or their parent/carer) provides consent, or unless schools are legally obliged or authorised to do so.

### **Students who may be medically at-risk**

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 individualised medical advice from the student's medical or health practitioner, and in consultation with the student and parents and carers.

For additional information to support decision-making, refer to:

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