



## COVID TERM 1 2022 FAQs

### TERM 1 SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Schools have received a Department of Education Operations Guide for term 1. The focus for schools is to return to onsite learning in line with the Victorian Back to School Plan's 3 Vs – Vaccination, Ventilation and Vital COVID Safety Steps, including masks, RAT testing, hand hygiene and physical distancing. Within these requirements we will endeavour to return to as normal operations as possible in order to provide students with effective learning and wellbeing supports, as well as the many other activities available for them at BHS. Underpinning all aspects of school operations are COVID risk awareness, assessment and management processes.

## Victoria's Back-to-School Plan



### What's new:



#### Free rapid antigen testing

- more than 14 million rapid antigen tests to be delivered to schools and early childhood education and care settings
- twice-weekly voluntary testing at home
  - o primary school students and staff
  - o secondary school students and staff
- five-times-weekly voluntary testing at home
  - o specialist school students and staff



#### Enhanced support to keep schools open and safe

- extra staff ready to step in where essential school staff are unable to work
- updated procedures and notifications to families when there are COVID-19 cases
- extra planning and support for school leadership



#### Keeping schools open and as safe as possible

- remote learning only considered as a localised, short-term, last-resort option

### Continued COVIDSafe measures: the 3Vs



#### Vaccination

- staff required to be vaccinated or medically exempt
- more than 90% of children age 12 and over are now vaccinated
- roll-out of vaccinations for children aged 5 to 11 through state vaccination hubs, pop-up school vaccination sites and in-reach grants



#### Ventilation

- delivery of 51,000 air purifiers to schools before day one of Term 1



#### Vital COVIDSafe steps

- physical distancing
- face masks
- regular hand hygiene
- testing



## COVID TERM 1 2022 FAQs

### **Are we having school photos ?**

We will be proceeding with student school photos on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February. Group photos will be taken outside with students removing masks when the photographer is ready to take the shot. Individual photos will be taken inside our theatre with masks able to be taken off just prior to the photo being taken. Parents are able to order photos via Compass now.

### **Are we holding the Swimming and Athletics sports ?**

As these are held outside we are planning on proceeding with these events. At this stage there will be no parents permitted as spectators.

### **Can we run extra-curricular activities, including in school activities, excursions and camps ?**

Yes but we need to make sure that they are run in a COVID safe manner, and if changes can be made to them to make them safer (including restructuring them) then we will. A COVID risk assessment will need to be completed for each activity that takes students outside of school.

For camps and excursions, we need to consider levels of COVID-related absences and staffing pressures that may be associated with the conduct of the activity which may impact on which activities can run. Prior to a student attending a camp or overnight stay, parents/carers must be informed about the COVIDSafe measures that will be in place during the camp or activity and must provide permission for their child to attend. In addition, parents/carers must be informed that if a confirmed or probable case was present at the camp while infectious, that children may be identified as household-like contacts and be required to quarantine for 7 days. This will depend on the sleeping, living and dining arrangements in place at particular campsites. Rapid antigen testing should be conducted by students at camps consistent with the twice-a-week schedule. Secondary school students should test at home on the morning of the camp and then, if the camp is longer than three days, only once on the morning of day four.

### **Is year 7 camp going ahead ?**

At this stage we are planning on year 7 camp proceeding but we will need to monitor the situation as the term progresses.

### **Is the canteen operating as normal ?**

The canteen will operate normally however **for term 1 we will close the amenities building to students to sit in during recess/lunchtime**. If we have wet weather days we will open it up but whilst we have some good weather we need to encourage students and staff to be outside as much as possible.



## COVID TERM 1 2022 FAQs

### **Do year levels have particular areas of the school they need to stick to ?**

We are not requiring year levels to adhere to specific areas of the school. Students need to move across the school for a variety of different activities through the day and to access specialist resources/facilities that bring them into contact throughout the school so maintaining a strict separation is not feasible. Students tend to stick to areas near their lockers at break times which does provide for some separation naturally.

### **Will students have assemblies ?**

Assemblies of individual year levels can take place. Students need to wear masks at assemblies (inside or out). Any visitors/guest speakers must sign in via the QR code/office and demonstrate double vaccination status.

### **Do students need to QR in ?**

Students do not need to QR code in when they arrive at school. All other visitors (including parents) must enter the school via the General Office where their details will be collected, the QR code used and vaccination status checked.

### **Do parents need to be vaccinated to enter the school ?**

If parents are entering school buildings (apart from attending the General Office to pick up a child from sick bay/general enquiries) they will need to be vaccinated. This includes things such as parent teacher interviews/meetings; concerts and school events, volunteering etc.

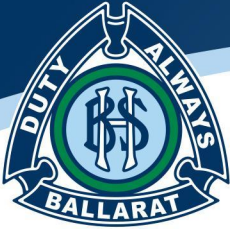
With our current Capital Works projects the General Office has moved to the Transparent Learning Centre (TLC) – the building on the corner of Sturt and Gillies. Entry to the office is via the ramp on the Gillies Street end of the building – with the General Office located to your left when you enter the building.

### **Is community use of school facilities permitted ?**

Yes. Community sporting organisations have COVID requirements they need to meet and as long as they are not using facilities during school hours, they do not need to meet any additional DET requirements.

### **Will there be issues with buses ?**

Masks are required on all buses so please reinforce with students that if they are going on excursions they must have their masks to wear on buses and also on country bus services. There is the potential of a shortage of bus drivers and if that happens, the bus companies will prioritise the before/after school country bus runs so this may have an impact on excursions.



## COVID TERM 1 2022 FAQs

### **Is Head of the Lake still on ?**

Yes the Head of the Lake on Sunday February 27th is still occurring and this year we are the host school. However there will be strict COVID protocols similar to last year and there will be no spit crews.

### **What are the requirements for wearing masks ?**

Students and staff are required to bring and wear masks indoors (unless medically exempted) - unless eating and/or drinking. Please reinforce this requirement with your child. Parents are required to provide written confirmation of medical exemption to your child's Team Leader. Team Leaders will be following up with parents if students routinely forget to bring a mask. Students should see their Team Leaders about any issues related to masks. Staff will wear masks indoors but can remove them when actively teaching students if they choose.

### **What about hand sanitiser ?**

Hand sanitiser will continue to be available in all spaces. Please reinforce with students that they need to be using the hand sanitiser in their classrooms/ spaces and also washing their hands with soap in the toilets.

### **Are there still special cleaning arrangements in place ?**

DET has reverted to normal cleaning processes after two years of pandemic cleaning but our cleaners will continue to pay particular attention to high risk areas.

## VACCINATION

### **Are all staff required to be vaccinated ?**

All staff in schools are required to be vaccinated unless medically exempted. While in 2021 double vaccination was required, in 2022 all staff are required to also receive their booster to work in schools. This process is managed centrally by the Department of Education which has provided certain date deadlines that need to be met by staff.

### **Are students required to be vaccinated ?**

Vaccination is not mandatory for students, but vaccinations are strongly encouraged as the best way to protect individuals, families and school communities from further outbreaks and the spread of COVID-19.



## COVID TERM 1 2022 FAQs

### VENTILATION

#### What about the air purifiers ?

We have received our allocation of 71 air purifiers and they have been distributed across the school. There are not enough for all spaces to receive one so we have prioritised spaces with low ventilation and specialist areas with higher risk (ie music) in line with DET priority requirements.

The air purifiers are turned on at the start of the day and left on throughout the day. The purifiers are portable so can be moved to accommodate events where a large group of people are involved (i.e assemblies)

The air purifiers contain high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. HEPA filters can help filter airborne viruses including COVID-19, bacteria, and particulate matter from bushfire or hazard reduction burn smoke. They do not completely eliminate COVID-19 transmission, but combined with other interventions in schools – including vaccination, physical distancing, good hygiene, masks and cleaning, they aim to create a safer school environment.

The use of air purifiers will be supported by making the most of ventilation in spaces around the school through opening windows/doors; using air conditioners and moving activities outside where suitable.

### RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING, POSITIVE CASES & ISOLATING

The most important thing that parents, students and staff can do to limit the spread of COVID is to ensure that students/staff do not come to school when they are unwell or exhibiting symptoms – and that they get tested ASAP when symptomatic.

All students and staff will be provided with two packs of RATs over the first 4 weeks of term (2 X 5 test packs) and it is recommended that we all test twice weekly as a precautionary measure. **The results of these tests do not need to be reported unless they are positive.**

While the days for taking the test are not mandated we suggest Monday and Thursday as a good option to provide spread across the full week.

If staff or students receive a positive test result at any time, they must report this through the Department of Health system ([Rapid antigen tests | Coronavirus Victoria](#)) or via the coronavirus hotline at 1800 675 398.





## COVID TERM 1 2022 FAQs

Parents must also report a positive result to the school by calling your child's Team Leader to let them know. This is so we can support them, record that they will be absent 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.

### **What will happen if students are exhibiting symptoms in class ?**

If we have students exhibiting symptoms in class teachers will send them to Robyn Creelman in sick bay. Robyn will determine whether they need to go home – which is the most likely outcome.

### **What does the school need to do when parents inform them of a positive student case ?**

The school is required to notify the Department of Education of any positive case in students or staff. We also need to notify the school community (staff, students, parents) of the positive case (but not the name of the person). We can notify the whole school or just a/some specific groups – that will depend on the details of the specific case. We need to communicate in line with the DET Privacy policy.

### **What do we do if we're notified of a positive case in my child's class**

If you are notified your child has come into contact with a positive case at school we recommend using a RAT test to complete an immediate test. If they test negative and have no symptoms they can continue to attend school – completing their twice weekly RAT tests as normal. If they test negative but have symptoms please have them complete a PCR test to ensure they are not positive – and not return to school until that negative test result has been confirmed.

### **What happens if my child is designated a household contact due to a family exposure ?**

If your child is designated a household contact students must quarantine for 7 days (inclusive of weekends) and must not attend school during this period. They should be tested immediately and at the end of their isolation and can only return to school if they return a negative result. Please contact your child's Team Leader to confirm their status as a close contact so that learning and wellbeing support can be provided.



## COVID TERM 1 2022 FAQs

### **What happens if my child is a household contact, has tested negative but then another family member tests positive – does the 7 days start again ?**

Student/staff household contacts should quarantine for 7 days from the date of the first positive test of the first household case. Household contacts are not subject to rolling quarantine periods. If the first case remains in the household, or if subsequent cases are identified within the household, the quarantine end date for the close contact student is unchanged. Staff/ students can safely return to school and do not require negative test documentation but must have tested negative.

### **When does my child start RAT testing if they've had COVID ?**

Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19, have completed their 7-day isolation period and are subsequently asymptomatic do not need to undertake surveillance testing for 30 days.

### **How long do students/staff need to isolate ?**

Both positive cases and household contacts (that is, those who have spent more than four hours with someone who has COVID-19 inside a house, accommodation, or care facility) are required to isolate for 7 days (which will incorporate 5 school days)

### **What learning work will be provided if students are isolating but feeling ok?**

Teachers will provide work via Google Classroom/Compass/Email for students who are isolating but able to continue their learning. Students should email their teachers to confirm what work needs to be completed.

### **How do these isolation periods work with the senior school attendance policy ?**

Evidence will need to be provided for senior students (Years 10 – 12) who are absent due to their own positive COVID diagnosis or because they are a household contact.

Students need to provide either evidence of a PCR test or, if they have tested positive on a rapid antigen test, evidence that they have logged their result on Victoria's Rapid Antigen Test self-reporting system. Evidence may take the form of official SMS messages or emails. Student absences would then be approved for the required 7 days.

For household contacts evidence should be provided of the positive test for the family member. If this is not possible, Team Leaders will phone parents/guardians to establish that the student is in fact a close household contact and then the absence will be approved.