

COVIDSAFE MEASURES FOR SCHOOLS

Information for parents, guardians and carers

WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS

- If your child is unwell, even with mild COVID-19 symptoms, you must keep your child at home until their symptoms resolve and get your child tested with a PCR test (nose and throat swab) or complete a Rapid Antigen Test (**RAT**).
- If symptoms continue, your child should stay home and take another RAT or PCR test in 24 hours. If that test is also negative, your child may return to school if another diagnosis is confirmed (such as an underlying health condition or medication).

VACCINATIONS

- All students and their families are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated.
- Children aged 5 to 11 can now get vaccinated. Parents, guardians and carers are encouraged to book their child in for a vaccination at the first available opportunity.

TESTING

- RATs will be provided to all staff and students at **no charge**. Schools will inform parents, guardians and carers on how these kits can be collected from the school.
- For the first four (4) weeks, students and staff should take a RAT **twice-weekly** on the morning before attending school. Test kits will continue to be supplied by schools during this time.
- Students who are 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) must isolate for seven (7) days and not attend school during that period. Parents, guardians and carers must inform the school if their child is a household contact.

COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES

- If your child has no symptoms and there is a positive COVID-19 case in their class, year level or other grouping, your child can continue to attend school in line with Victorian Department of Health advice.
- Staff and students who receive a positive RAT result must register it on the COVID-19 Positive Rapid Antigen Test Self-Reporting Form available on the Coronavirus Victoria website <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/report> as soon as possible.
- Staff and students who receive a positive RAT or PCR test result must tell their school as soon as possible, and follow Victorian Department of Health advice.

- Students who test positive to COVID-19 must isolate for seven (7) days and not attend school during that period.
- Schools will regularly communicate to parents, guardians and carers about the presence and impact of COVID-19 in their school community. Parents, guardians and carers should expect to be provided with details of any impacted grade, year level or other grouping.

VENTILATION

- The Victorian Government has provided air purifiers for all schools for use from the commencement of Term 1, 2022.
- Fresh air is the most effective form of ventilation to minimise the risk of transmission.
- Schools are required to increase fresh air flow into indoor spaces (including shared spaces, staff areas and thoroughfares) whenever possible.
- Using outdoor spaces will continue to be encouraged, where practicable.

FACE MASKS

- For all school settings, school staff and students in Grades 3 and above are required to wear a face mask indoors, including Outside School Hours Care (**OSHC**) programs, unless a lawful exception applies.
- Staff and students must wear face masks even if vaccinated.
- Parents, guardians and carers are required to supply their child(ren) with an appropriate face mask that covers the nose and mouth. Appropriate face masks include single use face masks (commonly called surgical masks). Face shields, scarves or bandanas do not meet the requirements of an acceptable face mask.
- All visitors must wear a face mask in all indoor spaces when attending a school, unless a lawful exception applies.

ACTIVITIES

- COVID-19 will continue to be considered in all activity risk assessments. Guidance will be provided to schools on applying appropriate safeguards across a range of activities, including school camps and excursions.
- Parents, guardians and carers will be made aware of the risk of exposure and will need to provide their permission for their child's participation in extra-curricular, out of school hours or off-site activities.

STUDENT COHORTING

- Schools will continue using cohort arrangements and consider staggered drop-off and pick-ups, break times, playground and canteen access.
- Depending on the school, cohort size and timetables, cohorts may be based on classes, years or stages.

VISITORS

- Visitors on school sites should be kept to a minimum to support essential school activities or student needs.
- Visitors will be required to comply with vaccination requirements, density limits, face mask requirements and practise respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene.
- The use of Service Victoria QR codes for electronic record-keeping continues to be mandatory in all schools. All visitors working on school sites or entering school buildings are required to check in using the Service Victoria QR Code on arrival.

KEEPING SCHOOLS OPEN

- Parents, guardians and carers are asked to respect the rules at their child's school to help keep the community safe.
- Schools will do everything they can to maintain continuity of face-to-face learning including the increased use of casual staff.
- Schools will need to make localised staffing decisions to ensure appropriate supervision can be maintained.
- Schools will not be able to guarantee particular staff for any cohort and students may not have their regular teacher for a class.

LEARNING FROM HOME

- We will continue to monitor the situation and where face-to-face learning is not possible, learning from home options will be supported for short periods.
- Students who are required to isolate or quarantine will be provided with learning materials to support their continued learning. Schools are not expected to provide a full remote learning program in these circumstances.