



24 September 2020

Department of Education Latest COVID Update

Advice for Families

Dear Parents and Caregivers

We're working closely with the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), NSW Health and other agencies to ensure our schools continue to operate in the safest ways possible during the COVID-19 environment.

Schools are operating full time while actively following health advice.

Schools continue to be safe, and operations are in line with Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and NSW Health advice. All students should be learning on campus unless they are unwell or have a medical certificate to support their absence.

The activities that are permitted at school will be conducted in a way that is safe and appropriate in the current environment. Those that remain on hold will be reviewed during the term and will recommence when appropriate based on health and other relevant advice.

Latest COVID-19 case locations in NSW

Check the Latest COVID-19 case locations in NSW and follow the recommended actions if you have been in a location where there have been confirmed cases of COVID-19. We encourage members of the community to monitor this site. Please follow the relevant health advice if you have been at any of the locations at the specified dates and times.

The locations along with the times and dates of when the cases were identified can be found on the NSW COVID-19 website.

School attendance

Students should be at school unless:

- they have a medical certificate which states that they are unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical condition and the expected timeframe
- they are currently unwell.

In accordance with advice from NSW Health, parents and carers are reminded **not** to send children to school if they are unwell, even if they have the mildest flu-like symptoms.

NSW Health have requested that schools encourage anyone who is unwell or has even mild flu-like symptoms, to arrange to be tested through their local medical practitioner or one of the COVID-19 clinics. Students and staff with flu-like symptoms need to be tested and provide a copy of a negative COVID-19 test result and be symptom free before being permitted to return to school.

Students who do not undertake a COVID-19 test result will not be permitted to return to school for a 10 day period. Additionally they must be symptom-free for at least 3 days before returning to school.

Students who have seasonal allergic rhinitis or another condition that presents similarly to flu-like symptoms are still required to get tested for COVID-19 and return a negative test result. Where their symptoms continue beyond 10 days, students should provide documentation from their GP confirming their symptoms are typical for their condition. If the student develops new or changed symptoms, they should get tested for COVID-19. Find more information about COVID-19 symptoms.

COVID-19 testing for students with complex health or disability may be challenging. In these situations, schools will ask the parent or carer to have their child assessed by their medical practitioner. Where a medical practitioner determines that a COVID-19 test is not required, documentation must be provided to the school to confirm that the student does not have symptoms that warrant a COVID-19 test. The certificate must also indicate that the student is able to return to school.

Schools are not required to conduct widespread temperature screening or mandate the wearing of a mask.

All schools will be vigilant when implementing infection control, physical distancing and personal hygiene protocols to protect the health and safety of students and staff. Schools will promote the need to follow good hygiene practices such as:

- regularly washing hands
- avoiding sharing drinks or food
- coughing or sneezing into your elbow, or a tissue which should be discarded immediately
- filling water bottles from bubblers rather than using the bubbler directly.

All students and staff who reside in or have visited Victoria must have a permit to enter NSW and are required to comply with health restrictions relevant to their permit which may include the need to complete the 14 day self-isolation period commencing the last day they were in Victoria.

School activities and school site usage

What's changed

The following activities can now proceed for Term 4:

- Saturday School for Community Languages will return to face-to-face learning.
- Interschool activities where this is a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place
- Singing and chanting with strict restrictions
- Playing wind instruments with strict restrictions
- School formals, dances and graduations with a COVID-19 Safety Plan
- Excursions and day camps with strict restrictions
- Kindergarten orientation
- Year 7 transition to high school.

Continue reading for further information.

NSW Health has published updated advice for schools as we commence Term 4.

The following principles underpin these measures:

- Where possible, students will stay within their relevant cohort group (i.e. class, year group, or stage) for all learning activities within their school in order to limit close contacts to the relevant student cohort.
- Interschool activities can now occur where there is a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.
- Only providers that are essential to the delivery of curriculum can continue to provide services and programs until further notice.
- Parents and carers and other non-essential visitors are not allowed on the school site.
- Singing and other chanting activities can take place as a solo or in a small group as long as participants are 5 metres away from other people and 1.5 metres away from one another. Groups of up to 5 people can include students from different year groups.
- Musical instruments activities can proceed provided students playing non-reeded woodwind instruments are 3 metres apart and all other performers playing musical instruments are 1.5 metres apart.
- Singing and band rehearsals and performances should take place outside or in well ventilated indoor spaces.
- School formals, dances, graduation or other social events are permitted provided they meet strict COVID-19 Safety Plan requirements.

Activities and site usage that can take place

- Students can use the school library.
- Students can engage in sporting activities.
- School sporting events and activities held within the school site during school hours must not involve spectators including parents and carers. The only exception is when there is an explicit request from the school to support the delivery of curriculum.
- School sporting events and activities held outside of the school site during hours will need to follow the COVID-19 Safety Plan of the venue or organiser.
- Canteens and uniform shops can open at the principal's discretion.
- School assemblies must be limited to 15 minutes with no external visitors.
- Students may attend other schools for essential curriculum-related reasons or placements (e.g. auditions or placement tests).
- Incursions or external providers can provide activities that support delivery of curriculum (e.g. music tutors, sport skills development programs, science demonstrations, drama tutors, Healthy Harold).
- Essential activities such as NSW Health partnerships including mobile dental vans and vaccinations can proceed.
- Excursions and day field trips within NSW (e.g. DoE Environmental Education Centres and sport and recreation facilities, trips to the local river to collect water samples) can occur from Term 4.
- Overnight activities can occur from Term 4 in accordance with strict COVID safe requirements.
- Kindergarten orientation in Term 4
- Year 7 transition to high school in Term 4 after 12 November.
- School photos can continue.
- Department of Community and Justice services and programs can continue.
- School or community run playgroups
- Community use agreements involving adult attendance must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.
- SRE/SEE lessons can occur within restrictions.
- P&C meetings and events must be on-line only.
- Parent/teacher meetings will be online unless involving serious matters that require face to face discussion.

Year 6 formals and graduations

Primary schools can plan for Year 6 formals or farewells and graduations provided they occur in a COVID-safe way.

End of Year celebrations

Further information will be provided in Term 4 about end of year school celebrations.

Activities on hold

The following events will continue to be reconsidered in Term 4. For now, these events must remain on hold.

- Interstate excursions
- International excursions (cancelled until further notice)
- Face-to-face professional learning for staff
- Parent and carer attendance at assemblies and other school events
- School-based activities that involve large gathering of adults. These include parent/community gatherings such as parent functions, working bees, fundraisers, school barbecues, large parent information evenings and large on-site cultural events.

Activities that are cancelled

Certain large arts and sports events are cancelled or delayed because they require feeder activities and have long lead time organisational arrangements. Please speak to your schools if you would like to know more.

Opportunity Class test update

Opportunity class testings for 2021 has been rescheduled to 18 November 2020. Refer to the OC updates page for the latest information.

Physical distancing

Physical distancing of students in schools is not required under the AHPPC guidelines.

All teachers, support staff and parents must maintain physical distance from each other (1.5 metres).

Parents should ensure school pick up and drop off arrangements enable them to physically distance from one another and from staff.

Your school will continue to receive additional cleaning in line with the AHPPC guidelines and advice from NSW Health. Target areas include high-touch areas and other hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and movement areas. There will also be additional cleaning of toilets and bubblers and topping up of supplies like soap.

Your school has received supplies of soap, hand sanitiser, toilet paper, paper towels, disinfectant wipes and personal protective equipment. The school is able to order more as needed.

Essential hygiene supplies

To support NSW schools during COVID-19 and help keep them safe, we've secured and dispatched a range of products including soap, hand sanitiser, toilet paper, disinfectant wipes and personal protective equipment.

Standard packs of hygiene products continue to be dispatched to schools. The packs include liquid soap, hand sanitiser, paper towels, surface spray, disinfectant wipes. Quantities are calculated on the number of habitable spaces at each school. Schools can continue to request supplies through the School Supplies email address.

Reporting and assessment

Further information on reporting and assessment for semester 2 will be updated soon.

Responding to COVID-19 cases

There is a clear plan in place for schools to respond to any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our schools. We are working closely with NSW Health and will communicate with parents if a situation arises. Read more about our Response protocols for COVID-19 cases.

We appreciate you taking the time to read and adhere to this information provided by the Department of Education for the safety of your children, staff and the broader community.

Yours in Education



Mrs Kathy Browne
Principal