

COVID-smart measures for schools

Information for parents, carers and students



We know that being together in the classroom is the best thing for our students' learning, growth and welfare. This term we will continue to implement several measures to allow us to prioritise both the wellbeing of our students and a consistent and productive learning environment.



Stay home if unwell

- If your child is unwell, you must keep them at home. If they are displaying even mild COVID-19 symptoms, they should take a COVID test (PCR or RAT) and isolate.
- Your child should only return to school once they have returned a negative test and they are symptom free.



Vaccinations

- Vaccinations for COVID-19 and flu are the best way of protecting yourself, your family and the community. Vaccination is a safe and effective way to give your immune system a helping hand against viral illnesses.
- All eligible staff and students are strongly encouraged to keep up to date with their vaccinations to protect their health.



Close contacts

- Students identified as close contacts can attend school providing the school is informed, they return a negative COVID-19 test result and wear a mask, except when eating/drinking or exercising (if in Year 7 and above) for 5 consecutive school days, and they do not attend high risk settings.
- Students in schools for specific purposes and support units cannot attend school as a close contact and will be supported to learn remotely during their self-isolation.



Rapid antigen testing

- Rapid antigen tests (RATs) should be used if your child is displaying even mild COVID-19 symptoms, or daily if they are attending school as a close contact.
- If your child tests positive for COVID-19, they must not attend school until their isolation period finishes and they are symptom free. Positive rapid antigen test results must be registered with Service NSW.
- If your child tests negative but is still showing symptoms they should not attend school until symptom free.
- Staff and students will be provided with 1 multipack of 5 RAT kits by their school in early Term 3.
- Schools will maintain a reserve stock of rapid antigen tests onsite for surveillance testing purposes in the event of an outbreak.



Hygiene and cleaning

- Students are encouraged to regularly wash their hands with soap and water, and to use personal protective equipment as required.
- Boosted day cleaning of schools will focus on high-touch areas and other hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and movement areas.



Ventilation

- Fresh air is the most effective form of ventilation to minimise the risk of transmission.
- During the colder months, heating will be used in conjunction with ventilation methods to balance thermal comfort.
- All learning spaces in public schools have been checked to ensure appropriate levels of ventilation and air purifiers have been provided where needed.
- Using outdoor spaces will continue to be encouraged where possible.



Masks

- Mask-wearing is strongly encouraged where possible for all staff and students, particularly in indoor spaces and other instances where ventilation and distancing is not possible.
- Mask-wearing is strongly encouraged for visitors, particularly when they are interacting directly with students, and is required when interacting with students who are at greater risk of serious illness should they contract COVID-19.
- Masks are required when indoors for students attending school as a close contact in Year 7 and above and are strongly encouraged for younger students.
- Mask-wearing is strongly encouraged for all students for the 3 days following their recovery from COVID-19.



Visitors

- Visitors can attend school sites regardless of their vaccination status.
- Visitors who are engaging directly with students in certain higher-risk settings for school operations and curriculum delivery and allied health partners for the wellbeing of students, may be required to wear masks.
- Visitors who attend school as a close contact are required to inform the school and follow certain guidelines, including wearing a mask when indoors.



Activities

- Health and safety risk assessments will be integrated into planning activities, including excursions and overnight camps.
- Parents and carers will be made aware of the risk of exposure and will need to give permission for certain activities.



Responding to local situations

- Schools will work with the department's Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing case management team to respond appropriately to local situations, including outbreaks of viral illness.
- In some cases, schools may temporarily introduce additional measures as a 'circuit breaker', including requiring mask-wearing, postponing or limiting non-essential activities and directing cohorts to learn remotely.



Learning remotely

- The department continues to develop digital learning resources to support students who need to learn remotely.

For more info, visit education.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/advice-for-families

Telephone interpreter service

If you need further information please call your school principal. If you need an interpreter to assist you with your enquiry please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. Tell the operator the phone number you want to call, and the operator will get an interpreter on the line to assist you with the conversation. You will not be charged for this service.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring school operations continue while prioritising the safety and wellbeing of students and school staff.