

Good morning to our wonderful South Coogee Community,

Please see below information from the NSW Department of Education that I received this morning to update families on the current guidelines and Covid Safe measures in place in our schools for the remainder of this term.

COVID-smart measures to continue throughout Term 3

From Week 5, Monday 15 August, the following COVID-smart measures will remain in place in our schools:

- Strongly encouraging mask-wearing indoors for all students and staff.
- Rapid antigen testing (RAT) of students and staff who have COVID-19 symptoms or are identified as household/close contacts.
- Strongly recommending staff and students keep [up-to-date](#) with their vaccinations.
- Maximising natural ventilation.
- Requiring mask wearing for staff working with students who are at greater risk of serious illness should they contract COVID-19 in schools for specific purpose (SSPs), support units and some mainstream classrooms.
- Encouraging regular hand washing.
- Boosting enhanced day cleaning of schools.
- Assessing risk and applying appropriate safeguards across activities and events.
- Learning remotely where face-to-face learning is not possible.

In certain circumstances, NSW Health and the Department of Education may advise that additional COVID-smart measures be temporarily reintroduced at your school. Your principal will work with the Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing Case Management team and provide further details of any changes to COVID-smart measures at your school, when required. These temporary measures may include:

- Ceasing large indoor gatherings.
- Ceasing off-site and inter-school activities.
- Cancelling or postponing overnight activities and excursions, including school camps.
- Mandating mask wearing for adults and high school students.
- Limiting visitors to schools.
- Separating cohorts of students.
- Learning from home or remotely.

Household/close contacts

Students and staff who are identified as household/close contacts and have no symptoms can attend school if they follow certain guidelines agreed with NSW Health.

- **They should conduct a daily RAT and return a negative result each morning before attending school for 5 school days.**

Families must notify the school and/or early childhood education (ECE) service provider (including their outside of school hours care provider) if they are intending to return under this provision.

- Primary school students are recommended to wear a mask indoors (except when eating or exercising).
- No student or staff member identified as a household/close contact will be permitted to participate in overnight excursions, including school camps.

Testing

Staff and students cannot attend school if they are showing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If symptoms occur at any time, your child should not attend school and should undertake a rapid antigen test (RAT).

- If a student is unwell and has any [COVID-19 symptoms](#), even the mildest of symptoms, they should always test for COVID-19.
- If the test comes back **negative for COVID-19, the student should still not return to school** until either:
 - The student no longer has any symptoms, or

- A medical certificate is provided to the school confirming that symptoms are explained by another diagnosis (such as hay fever).
- It is important that students do not attend school if they are unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19. Rapid antigen tests can produce false negative results and symptoms of other illnesses can also be similar to COVID-19, including flu, the common cold and stomach bugs. Health advice is that students who are sick should always stay home to rest and recover and avoid putting other students and staff at risk of getting sick.

Positive Cases

- Record the positive RAT result through the [Service NSW website](#) or [Service NSW app](#) – please add details of your child's school or early childhood education centre when prompted.
- Notify the school of the positive RAT or PCR test result as soon as possible.
- Follow [NSW Health advice](#) to isolate for 7 days.

Registering your child's positive RAT with Service NSW is a requirement of the Public Health Order and helps NSW Health track COVID-19 in schools and address any public health issues early on if required. Negative results do not need to be reported to Service NSW or to the school.

Schools will inform their community when there is a positive case in the school and guide families on NSW Health advice, including monitoring for symptoms.

Visitors

- All visitors are strongly encouraged to wear a mask, particularly in indoor settings or when distancing is not possible, and when interacting directly with students.

Ventilation

Fresh air is the most effective form of ventilation to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Where there is no natural ventilation, schools will use mechanical ventilation to maximise fresh airflow in learning spaces. Using outdoor spaces will continue to be encouraged.

During the colder months, heating is being used in conjunction with windows and doors remaining slightly open to continue to allow natural ventilation. For more information, refer to [Ventilation](#).

Hygiene and Cleaning

Students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands regularly with soap and water.

Schools will use boosted day cleaning processes throughout Term 3. Target areas include high-touch areas, hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and areas where students and staff move through regularly.

Reducing the risk of illness this winter.

All students, staff and their families should follow NSW Health's advice to reduce the risk of not only COVID-19, but also other illnesses that may affect our schools this winter such as the flu. We can all protect our loved ones and our community by:

- Staying home if unwell or if displaying any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Keeping up to date with our vaccinations – including the flu vaccine, which is available from your local GP, pharmacy, or Aboriginal Medical Service now.
- Flu vaccines are free for all children aged 6 months to under 5 years, or for a small charge for those aged 5 years and older.
- Getting tested immediately for COVID-19 if you become symptomatic and isolating until you receive a negative result.
- Practicing good hand hygiene by washing regularly with soap and water.
- Taking a RAT before visiting vulnerable loved ones or going to large gatherings and events.

Thank you, Ms Fisher, Principal