

Victoria's Back-to-School Plan



Education
and Training

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
 - primary school students and staff
 - secondary school students and staff
- five-times-weekly voluntary testing at home
 - 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



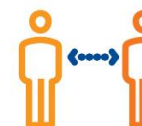
Vaccination

- 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

COVIDsafe practices and requirements in place at Bell PS

Rapid Antigen Testing (RATs)

- Free rapid antigen tests will be made available for students in Victorian schools for the first 4 weeks of Term 1.
- Rapid antigen testing will be voluntary, however is highly recommended to be undertaken at home, twice weekly on school days.
- An initial allocation of RATs have been delivered to school. Tests will be provided in packs of 5 individual tests. Parents/carers may collect one pack for each of their children from RAT stalls at various outside points of the school on Monday January 31 (before or after school) or Tuesday February 1 before school. More information will regarding this will be sent out on Friday.
- If a parent/carers is unable to collect tests in person by Tuesday morning, they will be sent home with your child on Tuesday February 1 unless you email the school at bell.ps@education.vic.gov.au to opt out of using school supplied tests.
- A second pack can be collected/sent home at the beginning of Week 3.

Positive COVID test result

- If your child receives a positive test result at any time, this must report this through the Department of Health system ([Rapid antigen tests | Coronavirus Victoria](#)) or via the coronavirus hotline at 1800 675 398.
- Parents/carers must also report a positive result to their school, either through the VicEd COVID [portal](#) or by phone or email bell.ps@education.vic.gov.au. This is so the school 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.
- Where a positive result is received, families should also follow the latest advice at <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/rapid-antigen-tests>.

Management of confirmed cases and household contacts at school

- Students who report a positive result must isolate for seven days and not attend school during that period.
- Where a student is 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) they must inform the school and isolate for seven days and not attend school during that period.
- The school community will be notified via Compass newsfeed (where applicable) when a student or staff member has (or multiple students or staff members) have returned a positive COVID-19 test result and had attended the school. The notification will include:
 - Dates of attendance
 - Affected group/cohort/year levels
 - Any relevant extracurricular activities
- Please note that a student or staff members name(s) will not be disclosed to the community.
- Students should refrain from returning to school if they remain symptomatic, unless it is known that their symptoms are caused by an underlying health condition or medication.

Student Attendance

- All students are expected to attend onsite unless they are formally registered as being home-schooled.
- Parent preference is not an approved reason for students to be absent due to COVID-19.
- Students who are required to isolate or quarantine should be supported in the same way as students with an extended absence due to illness or injury, with learning materials provided to support their continued learning. Schools are not expected to provide a full remote learning program in these circumstances.

Eating times

- Students in all year levels will eat outside when feasible e.g. weather permitting. Where required, additional time will be provided to enable students to move to and from classrooms and maintain an adequate amount of time to eat.
- Staff will ensure a designated 'Nut Free' area when eating outside.

Drop-offs & Pick ups

- The use of QR codes continues to be mandatory in schools. Parents/carers should only enter buildings/classrooms if essential and must check in using the QR code at that location.
- If entering a classroom or building is required, parents/carers must wear a face mask and maintain a physical distance of 1.5m.
- **Drop offs:** Parents/carers are encouraged to fully utilise the 8:50-9:00am time frame to drop their child/ren at school, thus creating a natural staggering to the start of the school day. Please use multiple entry and exit points.
- **Pick ups:** There will be a structured staggered end to the school day to prevent bottlenecks and maximise physical distancing around the school. **Students with surname beginning L-Z will finish at 3:30pm and surnames beginning with A-K at 3:30pm.**

Masks

- Face masks will be required for all school students in Grade 3-6 when indoors including at Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) programs, unless a lawful exception applies. Students must wear face masks even if vaccinated. Students are not required to wear masks outside.
- There are lawful reasons for not wearing a face mask, including for students who are unable to wear a face mask due to the nature of their disability, medical or a mental health condition. Parent/carers of a student/s who meet the criteria for an exception should provide their approval in writing for their child/ren to not wear a mask to the school.
- Face masks are strongly recommended for Prep to Year 2 students.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own face mask. Where required, the school will have an initial supply of disposable masks for masks that get damaged/soiled or require a replacement.

Ventilation, Air Purifiers and Outdoor Learning

- Classrooms will have windows and doors open to create natural airflow and cross ventilation.
- Please ensure your child has appropriate clothing for the forecast weather as doors and windows will need to remain open e.g. keep a jumper in the bag at all times
- In extreme weather conditions, heaters and air conditioners may be used in classrooms alongside natural ventilation.
- The school has received its allocation of air purification devices which are now installed in each classroom and Specialist rooms (Art, Italian, Music).
- Learning outside will happen at times throughout the day when a task lends itself to an outdoor space, however it is impractical to be outside all the time and be able to deliver effective explicit teaching.
- A shade sail grant application has been submitted and initial approval received. This will mean plans for additional shaded learning areas will be established during the term.

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Vaccinations

- Government regulations now require all school staff to receive three doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Please be aware that the vaccination status of individual staff members will not be disclosed to the community.
- All volunteers and visitors on school sites must also provide vaccination information when attending onsite (currently double vaccination status). The school remains responsible for tracking the vaccination status of visitors and volunteers, including parents/carers, who:
 - enter buildings
 - attend onsite for school events (inside or outside) e.g. school assembly, information nights, fetes.

The exception to the vaccination requirement applies only to school drop offs or pick ups where a parent/carer does not enter a building.

COVID Safe practices

- Regular handwashing, reducing the use of and/or sanitising shared equipment and continued education of our students regarding mask wearing and coughing/sneezing etiquette.

Despite the extensive COVIDsafe steps outlined above, we understand that there may still concerns within the community as students return to school. As much as possible, we want to reassure parents/carers that we are adhering to the DET and CHO instructions as best we can to ensure students and staff are as safe as possible.