

# OPERATIONS GUIDE

Victorian government schools

From and including **Friday 13 August 2021**



Education  
and Training

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# FOR ALL VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

## 1. Regional Victoria - return to face to face learning

Based on advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer, schools in regional Victoria have returned to face-to-face learning and teaching for all students from and including Tuesday 10 August.

- All students and school staff in regional Victoria are required to attend for duty at their school in accordance with normal arrangements from and including **Tuesday 10 August**.
- Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) programs in regional Victoria can resume full operations on **Tuesday 10 August**.
- **Students and staff who live in metropolitan Melbourne and are enrolled in or work in a school in regional Victoria will be able to attend on-site.**
- **Students and staff who live in regional Victoria and are enrolled in or work in a school in metropolitan Melbourne will continue with remote and flexible working arrangements in place in metropolitan Melbourne.**

## 2. Metropolitan Melbourne – continuation of remote and flexible learning

Based on advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer, schools in metropolitan Melbourne will continue with remote and flexible learning until **Thursday 19 August**, except for students in the following categories:

- *Children where both parents and or carers are considered [authorised workers](#) who cannot work from home, work for an authorised provider and where no other supervision arrangements can be made:*
  - Where there are two parents/carers, both must be authorised workers, working outside the home in order for their children to be eligible for on-site provision.
  - For single parents/ carers, the authorised worker must be working outside the home in order for their children to be eligible for on-site provision.
- *Children experiencing vulnerability, including:*
  - in out-of-home care
  - deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family or family violence service, and assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home
  - identified by a school or early childhood service as vulnerable, (including via referral from a government agency, or funded family or family violence service, homeless or youth justice service or mental health or other health service)
  - Where a parent/carer indicates that a student with a disability is vulnerable because they cannot learn from home, and/or informs the school the student is vulnerable due to family stress, the school must provide on-site supervision for that student. This may apply to students enrolled in specialist schools and students with a disability enrolled in mainstream schools.

Schools should make the updated [on-site attendance form](#) available to parents/carers who require on-site learning for their child/ren.

**Students and staff who live in metropolitan Melbourne and are enrolled in or work in a school in regional Victoria will be able to attend on-site.**

Students who live in regional Victoria and are enrolled in a school in metropolitan Melbourne will continue with remote and flexible learning arrangements in place in metropolitan Melbourne **except for students in the above categories.**

Staff who live in regional Victoria and work in a school in metropolitan Melbourne will continue with remote and flexible working arrangements in place in metropolitan Melbourne **unless they are required for on-site supervision.**

### 3. School boarding premises and Medium-Term Residential Programs (MTRP)

Students and staff who live in metropolitan Melbourne and are enrolled in or work in a school in regional Victoria will be able to attend on-site

- **Including students in metropolitan Melbourne enrolled at a boarding premise or MTRP located in regional Victoria.**

Students and staff who live in regional Victoria and are enrolled in or work in a school in metropolitan Melbourne will continue with remote and flexible working arrangements

- **Students residing in regional Victoria wishing to return to metropolitan Melbourne to undertake on-site learning within a boarding premises or MTRPs would not be allowed to travel for work or education reasons if they are able to carry out their learning remotely from their principal place of residence in regional Victoria.**
- **Vulnerable students or children of essential workers can return to metropolitan Melbourne to undertake on-site learning within a boarding premise or MTRP. These students would then be subject to metropolitan Melbourne Stay at Home restrictions.**

### 4. Other arrangements for Victorian border communities

Students and staff who live in and are enrolled in or work in a school in a cross-border community area and **attend a school in regional Victoria** will be able to attend on-site.

Students and staff who live in cross-border communities in bordering states and are enrolled in or work in a school **in metropolitan Melbourne** can continue to attend onsite **if they meet the eligibility criteria as per the above categories** (Page 4).

**See also \*NEW\* Cross-border permits guidance on Page 19**

From 11.59pm on Tuesday 27 July, the City of Wagga Wagga, Hay Shire Council, Lockhart Shire Council and Murrumbidgee Council are no longer included in the cross-border bubble.

### 5. Student attendance

Student attendance **in regional Victoria** should return to standard absence and attendance coding practices.

Student attendance **in metropolitan Melbourne**, both on-site and remote, **must** be recorded and should be uploaded to CASES21 daily.

For information on recording attendance during the period of remote learning please refer to the current Attendance Recording Advice, which includes the appropriate codes and recording practices for Remote Learning and Onsite Programs.

See: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/policy>

## 6. On-site supervision

On-site supervision must continue to be available **in metropolitan Melbourne**, but only for students in the categories listed above, for the purpose of providing continuity of teaching, learning and support.

When on-site supervision is provided, hand sanitiser will be available at the entry points to classrooms and education will be provided on hand hygiene. Physical distancing will be implemented in classrooms to the extent feasible and unwell students will be excluded from attending.

The learning program delivered on-site will be the same as the learning program delivered to students undertaking remote learning. Students attending on-site will be supervised by staff on-site but follow the teaching and learning program provided by their classroom teacher.

Students attending on-site must be supervised at all times by staff with either current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration or a Working with Children Check. Education Support staff can provide direct support to and supervision of students, provided they have access to support from a VIT registered teacher.

## 7. Remote and flexible learning programs

Learning programs **in metropolitan Melbourne must** be in place that ensure a learning program consistent with the guidelines below is delivered during this period to enable continued student learning growth. It is imperative that information about the planned and structured program is communicated to parents/carers.

The following are the daily minimum guidelines schools are expected to meet:

- For students in **Prep to Grade 2**, schools will provide learning programs that include the following as a minimum:
  - literacy activities that take a total of about 45-60 minutes
  - numeracy activities of about 30-45 minutes
  - additional learning areas, play-based learning and physical activity of about 30-45 minutes.
- For students in **Grades 3 to 6 and Years 7 to 10**, schools will provide learning programs that include the following, as a minimum:
  - Literacy: 45-60 minutes
  - Numeracy: 30-45 minutes
  - Physical activities: 30 minutes
  - Additional curriculum areas: 90 minutes
- For students in the **senior secondary years**, teachers will provide learning resources and tasks that enable students to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes defined in the relevant VCE study designs and VCAL strands.

Schools must continue to deliver the **Tutor Learning Initiative** using remote learning and should provide further extension learning activities as appropriate for individual students.

Schools should continue to make as much use as possible of the remote delivery and wider resources available through the High Ability Program, and of the remote learning programs provided by Tech Schools, KIOSC and Science and Mathematics Specialist Centres.

Where appropriate, for students with disabilities and students in specialist schools who may be ungraded, teachers will be guided by age-equivalent daily minimum guidelines, with consideration of the student's stage of learning and individual education plan.

### **Learning from Remote Learning: An evidence base**

This guidance is framed around the nine principles for excellence in teaching and learning that are part of the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model. It is designed to help schools ensure that recommended pedagogies are evidence-based and aligned to whole-school improvement approaches. Schools should refer to this [guidance](#) when developing their remote and flexible learning programs.

#### **Home provision**

The parent or carer is responsible for students' general safety at home or elsewhere. Students and parents/families should be given clear information about how and when they will receive learning materials and feedback. Schools should create and communicate a schedule or calendar that shows what is expected of students in relation to the completion of learning tasks.

**Please contact your SEIL or other area staff if you would like support or assistance.**

## **8. Students who may be medically vulnerable**

**As per the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer, COVIDSafe measures have been put in place ensure that schools are as safe as possible for all children including those with medical vulnerabilities, however independent medical advice should always be taken on an individual basis.**

An individual assessment is always recommended and decisions regarding school attendance should be informed by the nature of a child or young person's condition, its severity and intensity of required treatment. In most cases, the presence of common conditions of childhood, such as asthma, epilepsy or Type 1 diabetes, should not preclude a student from attending face-to-face learning.

In keeping with expert public health advice, some students may be at higher risk for severe outcomes or complications of COVID-19, for example those with chronic medical conditions. Any student with a chronic medical condition should seek advice from their medical practitioner about attending school on-site at different stages in the COVID-19 pandemic. Given most of these conditions are rare in children, it should be an uncommon event for a child to be determined by a medical practitioner to be unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical reason raising concerns about COVID-19, outside of an acute illness.

Assessments should be reviewed alongside notable changes to COVID-19 transmission in Victoria.

Schools must ensure students with medical needs have an up-to-date [Student Health Support Plan](#) and accompanying condition-specific health management plan (such as an [Asthma Action Plan](#)), based on medical advice from the student's medical or health practitioner, and consultation with the student and parents and carers.

Please see the [Health Care Needs](#) policy for further information on the student health support planning process. For additional information to support decision-making, see:

- [Asthma Australia](#)
- [Royal Children's Hospital – advice for respiratory patients](#)
- [JDRF – Coronavirus and children with T1 diabetes.](#)

## 9. Staff arrangements

It continues to be the principal's responsibility to make the school-based decisions required to deliver Government education objectives in accordance with the *Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017*.

Where teachers and support staff are not required on-site, they must work from home.

Where possible, school leadership should be represented on-site. Principals will need to ensure that there are sufficient staff on-site to run the school's teaching and learning programs. Principals should consult their staff to identify those willing and able to work on-site. All specialist school staff are required to be available to work on-site, except those medically vulnerable. They should ensure staff are consulted on, and have input into, the ways work may be organised and allocated.

Staff work hours at home should be consistent with the attendance arrangements already in place at each school and determined in accordance with the school's local consultative arrangements. Schools should communicate these hours of work to parents/carers and indicate that teachers and support staff are not required and will not necessarily be available to students or families/ carers outside these hours. Staff working from home, including teachers and education support staff, will not visit or work in students' homes. Working alone or in isolation from others presents hazards of which employees should be made aware, including impacts on mental wellbeing. Principals and school staff are encouraged to develop a program of regular contact with staff who are working from home.

If it is necessary to identify which staff are to work on-site either for a specified day or days or as part of a roster to meet the above requirements, the school should follow procedures determined at the school using the school's consultative procedures or in the absence of local arrangements the following process should be used:

- a) The principal will notify all staff they are seeking volunteers to be available to work onsite for a specified day or days or as part of a roster.
- b) If there are insufficient volunteers, Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs) should be engaged. If insufficient CRTs are available, the principal should approach their Senior Education Improvement Leader (SEIL) to establish if any staff from other schools in the network are available.
- c) Where it has been identified through (a) and (b) above, that there are insufficient staff to meet the needs of the school, the principal will provide an opportunity for the employees to provide reasons why they should not be considered for work on-site for a specified day or days or as part of a roster.
- d) The principal will take into account the overall work needs of the school and the submissions from individual employees in accordance with (c) above in determining which staff will be required to work on-site for a specified day or days or as part of a roster.
- e) The principal will make every effort to ensure that an employee is not identified to work on-site where there are compelling personal compassionate grounds pertaining to that employee.

School staff working on-site to support a school's supervision program are able to have their children attend their usual school for those days they are working on-site and where no other supervision arrangements can be made.

## 10. Casual Relief Teacher (CRT) employment in metropolitan Melbourne

The role of Department schools as a supportive employer is continues to be critical.

The Victorian Public Sector is a major Employer in Victoria, making up 9 per cent of total Victorian employment. Government aims to protect as many public sector jobs as possible, by ensuring that



all Employees may be effectively utilised, and the primary position of Public Sector Employers should be to facilitate the continued performance of work by Employees.

On this basis, schools should continue to engage casuals (including CRTs) throughout this period, including maintaining contractual arrangements that have been made. CRTs can be very valuable in supporting onsite supervision for children of authorised workers and vulnerable children. CRTs can also play an invaluable role in supporting remote learning through working with small groups, preparing remote learning materials and following up attendance issues.

Schools are encouraged to consider the financial impact on those who have engagements cancelled through no fault of their own. In this context, where arrangements have been entered into to engage casual staff during the lockdown period, both directly, or through CRT agencies, it is the expectation of the Department that those engagements will continue as arranged.

## 11. Staff vaccinations

Currently, Victorian school employees who are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine at state-run vaccination centres include:

- people who are 40 years and older
- people who are pregnant
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- employees who now meet Phase 1b eligibility criteria, including:
  - Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) registered nurses and allied health workers in clinical and non-clinical roles in schools and ECEC services
  - all teaching, support, and administration employees in specialist schools directly working with students (within 1.5 metres of students for more than 15 minutes)
  - any teaching and support employees in schools and ECEC staff working directly with students (within 1.5 metres of students and children for more than 15 minutes) living with a specified underlying medical condition or significant disability requiring frequent assistance with activities of daily living.

A significant disability in the context of vaccination of 'carers' in government schools would include:

- staff directly working with students receiving either National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) supports.

Employees listed above are being prioritised for vaccination because they work with vulnerable children and students living with medical conditions and significant disability who need to be protected from COVID-19 infection.

To help principals share this information with their employees, [a template email and letter of eligibility](#) and [Department of Health invitation to receive a vaccination](#) are available.

## AstraZeneca vaccine for staff aged 18 to 39 years

Staff aged 18-39 years who provide informed consent can also get the AstraZeneca vaccine at [selected Victorian vaccination centres](#).

Informed consent involves signing a document showing you are aware of the risks of receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine, including the risk of [thrombosis thrombocytopenia syndrome \(TTS\)](#).

The AstraZeneca vaccine will still be available to 18 to 39-year-olds at participating GPs, respiratory clinics and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations as well.

**Schools are requested to exercise flexibility to enable staff to access vaccination appointments.**

For more information regarding vaccination refer to the [Victorian Government COVID-19 vaccine website](#) and [Information for education staff receiving a COVID-19 vaccine](#) or contact the Department of Health Coronavirus hotline: 1800 675 398

## 12. Staff who may be medically vulnerable

Advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer is that, as with other members of the community, teachers and other school staff may be at greater risk of more serious illness if they contract COVID-19 if they are:

- aged 70 years and older
- aged 65 years and older and with chronic medical conditions.
- of any age and have a compromised immune system
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and are aged over 50 years and with one or more chronic medical conditions.

Staff who are medically vulnerable should seek advice from their medical practitioner in relation to their on-site attendance. Where the employee is unable to work either on site or remotely, they can access personal leave by providing a medical certificate.

Similarly, staff who are living with or caring for elderly or chronically ill relatives should seek advice from the medical practitioner of the person for whom they are caring to determine if they can attend on site or should work remotely. They should provide a medical certificate if they are seeking to access personal leave. The Medical Advisory Service is a specialised support service for principals to help them fulfil their responsibilities in relation to employee health.

## 13. Access to devices and internet connections

Where necessary, students should be provided with access to digital devices to enable access to learning programs being provided by the school. Schools must follow e-safety policies and procedures.

The Department has reactivated all internet services that were provided and used by students during the previous remote learning period. If you have questions about internet services, or have an urgent need to access additional digital devices, please contact the team at [learning.from.home.technology@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:learning.from.home.technology@education.vic.gov.au)

## 14. Child safety in remote online learning environments

Parents and carers are responsible for students' general safety at home or elsewhere.

Principals and school staff must:

- identify risks that are reasonably foreseeable for students who are learning at home
- take reasonable steps that are in the school's control to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students
- for more information, see fact sheet: [Child Safety, Reportable Conduct and Duty of Care in Remote Online Learning Environments](#), which provides advice to all staff about how to support child safety in remote learning environments
- if school staff become aware of an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, they must follow all normal procedures for responding to and reporting child abuse, including the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#).

## 15. Other school and curriculum settings

### VCE/VCAL/VET provision in TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers and other training organisations

Students **in regional Victoria** can participate in their VCE or VCAL classes, including VET studies, where these are held TAFEs, RTOs or other schools **within regional Victoria**. The following health and safety measures should be put in place to minimise risk associated with learning outside the school environment:

- Mixing of students from different educational facilities and schools should be minimised whenever practical.
- Physical distancing should be maintained whenever possible, particularly for classes that involve attendance by students from multiple institutions.

Students who are enrolled in a **metropolitan Melbourne** school and attend VET/VCAL classes at a regionally based TAFE or other training organisation **must** continue to learn from home **unless they are on the [Authorised Providers and Authorised Workers list](#)**.

Students who are enrolled in a **metropolitan Melbourne** TAFE, non-school senior secondary providers or other training organisation **must** continue to learn from home **unless they are on the [Authorised Providers and Authorised Workers list](#)**.

### Tech Schools, KIOSC and Science and Mathematics Specialist Centres

Tech Schools, KIOSC and Science and Mathematics Specialist Centres can resume on-site learning **in regional Victoria**.

- Access should be limited to a single school at a time.
- No mixing of students from different educational institutions should occur.
- Mixing of cohorts within a school should be minimised.

Tech schools **in metropolitan Melbourne** must continue to provide remote and flexible learning.

### Community Language Schools and Victorian School of Languages

Can resume on-site operations **in regional Victoria**. The additional following health and safety measures should be put in place to minimise risk associated with learning outside the school environment:

- Mixing of students from different educational facilities and schools should be minimised whenever practical.
- Physical distancing should be maintained whenever possible, particularly for classes that involve attendance by students from multiple institutions.

Community Language Schools and the Victorian School of Languages **in metropolitan Melbourne** must continue to provide remote and flexible learning.

## Structured workplace learning (SWL) and work experience

SWL and work experience placements can recommence **in regional Victoria**.

However, the Department of Health has recommended that SWL and work experience placements in high risk<sup>1</sup> settings (i.e. healthcare, aged care, meat works etc) be deferred until further notice. Students would need to be included in the density limits for the workplace and comply with any restrictions applicable to that workplace as well as the COVIDSafe Plan in place.

All SWL and work experience placements planned **in metropolitan Melbourne** from Friday 5 August - **Thursday 19 August** should be deferred, or if that is not possible, cancelled. If SWL or work experience placements are deferred or cancelled, all efforts should be made to arrange suitable alternative arrangements for students.

## Mobile Area Resources Centres (MARC) or Mobile Art and Craft Centres (MACC)

MARCs and MACCS are permitted to attend schools **in regional Victoria**, providing regular cleaning of shared and high-touch items is undertaken.

MARCs and MACCS are not permitted to attend schools **in metropolitan Melbourne**

## Community access programs and work experience programs for students enrolled in specialist school settings.

Specialist schools **in regional Victoria** can continue these programs, however programs operating in high-risk\* settings should not take place at this time. Students would need to be included in the density limits for the workplace and comply with any restrictions applicable to that workplace as well as the COVIDSafe Plan in place.

## 16. General Achievement Test (GAT)

Based on advice from the Department of Health's public health team, this year's General Achievement Test (GAT) for Year 12 students will be rescheduled to reduce the risk of a further spread of COVID-19 and to keep Victorian students, teachers and broader school communities safe from coronavirus.

On the rescheduled date, students who are in quarantine as positive coronavirus cases or Primary Close Contacts (PCC), as well as schools deemed exposure sites, will receive an exemption from the GAT. This will not disadvantage students' results and will be taken into account with the Consideration of Educational Disadvantage (CED) process.

In a normal year, individual students are assessed for special consideration on a case-by-case basis – but the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) will again use the CED process to finalise VCE results for each and every student completing one or more VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3-4 sequence in 2021.

Consistent with the approach in 2020, the process considers a range of data alongside exam results to calculate final VCE results - like the GAT, comparisons of performance across all assessments and schools and other learning data.

The process will also include assessments of the individual impact of coronavirus on each student including school closures, direct impacts on student' health, ongoing issues with remote learning and mental health challenges.

<sup>1</sup> High-risk settings are generally defined as high-risk areas of increased risk/transmission (aged care workers/healthcare settings), high-risk industries (such as meat works) where there are known cases/high levels of community transmission or a geographical area of high risk as determined by public health (i.e. exposure sites).

**DET and the VCAA will support schools to make appropriate COVIDSafe plans to hold the GAT.**

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## School-based assessments

Schools in **metropolitan Melbourne** should **not** be conducting on site school-assessed Coursework (SAC) or School-assessed Tasks (SAT) at this time.

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### 17. Outside School Hours Care programs

Outside School Hours Care programs **in regional Victoria** can recommence for all students in Regional Victoria, following operational guidance as applies to schools where appropriate.

Outside School Hours Care programs **in metropolitan Melbourne** can operate for students eligible for on-site supervision as outlined above (Page 4).

### 18. Camps and excursions

**School camps** and overnight stays **for regional Victorian schools** can take place **within regional Victoria**. Bookings of camps venues must be limited to single schools. Camp venues can only accept multiple schools attending at the same time if they can guarantee school groups will remain separated and will not share common facilities at the same time. **Mixing of staff and students between different schools is not recommended.**

Outdoor education including excursions and overnight stays **within regional Victoria**, for the purpose of outdoor education are permitted. Programs should only operate for staff and students from single schools.

All travellers to Alpine resorts are **strongly recommended** to have a COVID-19 test within 72 hours prior to arriving at the Alpine resorts and receive a negative test prior to entry (See '*Intrastate and interstate travel*').

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**Excursions** are permitted **within regional Victoria** and should take place with students from single schools only. There is no group size limit (but students should be in their class group) and excursions must be conducted in line with any specific capacity limits on venues that are being used.

In most cases, density limits can be removed when a venue is being accessed by staff and students from a single school only. However, schools should check with venues to confirm any additional obligations under the [Restricted Activity Directions](#).

#### **Collection of student contact details on excursions for contact-tracing**

Excursion venues are responsible for managing record keeping for contact tracing in line with current public health directives. Venues are required to use electronic record keeping that connects with a digital system provided by Services Victoria.

An electronic or hard copy list of student names (full name required) and contact numbers **must** be provided to the venue. Students are not required to individually check-in at the venue on the day.

**Schools should contact venues prior to the excursion to discuss record keeping arrangements, particularly to clarify responsibility of entering student details into the digital system.**

The Department of Health has **strongly recommended** that a **contact number for each individual student** (as per the student's school file) is provided to venues for recording purposes. If providing a private contact number for a student poses a privacy risk or the contact number is unknown, the school's 24-hr contact number may be used, but this should be the exception.

The [Parent Consent form](#) has been updated to advise parents/carers/guardians that when required, schools will be providing excursion venues with student contact details for contact-tracing purposes.

An [attendance form for contact tracing](#) has been developed to assist schools in preparing this information. The list should also contain the names and contact details of the adults attending the excursion (i.e. school staff, volunteers and support staff) and these persons **must** check-in individually on the day using the venue provided systems. **Schools can opt to use their own prepared list, but excursion organisers must refer to the proforma to ensure they capture all the required information.**

Schools are reminded to keep accurate internal records of the names and contact details of staff and students who attended excursions as well as the names and addresses of the locations and times visited.

**Camps and excursions for metropolitan Melbourne schools cannot take place at this time.**

## 19. Interschool activities

### Interschool sport (regional Victoria only)

Indoor and outdoor interschool sport is permitted but is limited to the minimum number of people required to participate in and facilitate the activity. It is also subject to venue capacity limits, including a density limit of 1 person per 4 square metres applying to any spaces being used. Record keeping obligations must be adhered to by staff and students visiting from other schools.

Interschool sport held off school sites, such as a physical recreation facility, must be conducted in line with any specific indoor and outdoor capacity limits (100 per indoor space and 300 per discrete outdoor space) in addition to the density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metres and any other obligations on venues including use of Service Victoria QR codes.

Spectators are not allowed (excludes people necessary for events such as teachers, and supervising staff). Schools should also put in place health and safety controls in line with the [School Sport Victoria COVID Safe Plan](#).

### Other interschool activities (regional Victoria only)

Interschool activities are permitted, with the density limit of 1 person per 4 square metres applied to any spaces and activities being used. Record keeping obligations must be adhered to by staff and students visiting from other schools.

Interschool activities held off school sites (e.g. entertainment venues or community facilities) must be conducted in line with any specific indoor and outdoor capacity limits (100 per indoor space and 300 per discrete outdoor space), density limits and any other obligations on venues including use of Service Victoria QR codes.

## 20. School productions and other events

**In regional Victoria**, school productions or other events held in an entertainment or function (e.g. theatre), community (e.g. community hall) or creative arts (e.g. music room or studio) facility can operate under the requirements of the [Restricted Activity Directions \(Regional Victoria\)](#).

The facility may be on a school premises or an external venue. Schools and external venue operators should **familiarise themselves with the current directions** as applicable to the venue type.

A summary of the current [Restricted Activity Directions \(Regional Victoria\)](#) for **entertainment facilities** (e.g. a theatre, music hall, concert hall or auditorium) is below:

- No capacity or density limits apply if the facility is being used for the purpose of providing an exclusive venue for the **exclusive use of a single school at any one time** for educational or school gathering purposes. In this situation **only students and staff can attend** the event.
- Where members of the public (including parents) are present, either as an audience member or a member of cast or crew, the following rules apply:
  - the number of members of the public in each non-seated indoor space or non-seated outdoor space at any one time is limited to the density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm (with infants under one year of age not counting towards this limit)
  - the number of members of the public in each indoor space (whether seated or non-seated) at any one time is limited to no more than 100 (with infants under one year of age not counting towards this limit)
  - the number of members of the public in each discrete outdoor space is limited to no more than 300 (with infants under one year of age not counting towards this limit)
  - a COVID Check-in Marshal is present at all entrances to the facility open to members of the public whenever the facility is operational
  - any food and drink facility within the entertainment facility operates in accordance with food and drink facilities restrictions
  - any retail facility within the entertainment facility operates in accordance with retail facilities restrictions
  - any dancefloor in the entertainment facility is closed
  - QR code check in requirements must be followed

A summary of current [Restricted Activity Directions \(Regional Victoria\)](#) for **community facilities** (e.g. public library, community hall, community centre) is below. A school gymnasium/hall being used for an activity other than physical recreation could be considered a community facility (noting that **large school gatherings are not recommended** at this time).

- No capacity or density limits apply if the facility is being used for the purpose of providing an exclusive venue for the **exclusive use of a single school at any one time** for educational or school gathering purposes. In this situation **only students and staff can attend** the event.
- Where members of the public (including parents) are present the following rules apply:
  - the number of members of the public permitted in each indoor space or outdoor space at any one time is limited to the density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm (with infants under one year of age not counting towards these limits)
  - **Note:** the persons conducting the activity/*workers* are not included for the purpose of calculating the limit on the number of members of the public
  - the number of members of the public in each indoor space (whether seated or non-seated) at the facility at any one time is limited to no more than 100 (with infants under one year old not counting towards this limit)
  - the number of members of the public in each outdoor space (whether seated or non-seated) at the facility at any one time is limited to no more than 300 (with infants under one year old not counting towards this limit)
  - a COVID Check-in Marshal is present at all entrances to the facility open to members of the public whenever the facility is operational
  - any dancefloor in the community facility is closed.

## 21. Use of playgrounds and other school facilities

**Playgrounds** remain open for school use and can be made available for community use out of school hours.

**Drinking fountains** can remain open.

**Use of school facilities by community and sport groups**, such as ovals and pools, is permitted **in regional Victoria** if the use aligns with Department of Health advice for the relevant activity, including the application of required density limits. Use of facilities during school hours should ensure there is no mixing between those using school facilities and school staff and students (e.g. a swim school's exclusive use of a school pool and changeroom). Also see 'use of school facilities' advice regarding cleaning requirements. **Use of school facilities is not permitted in metropolitan Melbourne.**

## 22. Other activities (in all settings)

**School tours** should not be conducted on-site for prospective students and their families at this time.

**Incursions** should not occur at this time (refer to Visitor Policy on Page 26)

**Non-essential meetings, and all school events, gatherings and assemblies** should be deferred or held remotely.

**Kinder to prep and Year 6 to Year 7 transition programs** are not permitted at this time.

**The School Breakfast Clubs program (SBCP)** and the **Secondary School Immunisation Program** are essential services that can be delivered on-site.

**School bus services** across the state will continue to operate as normal. Students are not required to check-in via a QR code service when travelling on private school buses or disability transport services, however school bus services **are required** to keep accurate records of students and staff (including drivers) accessing these services should this information be required for contact tracing. For more information, please see <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/school-bus-services>

## 23. School enrolment census

The deadline for submission of the 2021 School Enrolment Census has been extended to **Friday 13 August**.

## 24. Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of principals, teachers, school staff and students is a priority.

### For students

- Wellbeing check-ins - In addition to recording student attendance, schools **must** have in place processes and procedures to ensure that student wellbeing check-ins take place each day, on a group and/or individual basis.
- The [Mental Health Toolkit](#) has advice and resources to support student mental health and wellbeing. This includes advice on positive mental health promotion, curriculum support, how to identify and access support as well as parent and student-specific pages.
- In addition, the [Quick Guide to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources](#) highlights the most relevant evidence-based resources for teachers, parents and students.



## For staff

The Department continues to provide its full suite of services to support staff mental health and wellbeing. This includes services and resources to address individual needs, as well as tools and supports to help guide staff through this time.

Specific examples include:

- **for principal class employees:** [Proactive Wellbeing Supervision service](#), which was extended to include assistant principals during 2020, the [Early Intervention Program](#) for more intensive support, and all other [Principal Health and Wellbeing services](#)
- **for all staff:** personalised over-the-phone and video counselling through the [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- **for all staff and all people managers:** webinars for all staff and people managers.

More information and the full list of supports and services can be found on the [COVID-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support for Schools](#) page.

## 25. QR codes and record keeping

**The use of Service Victoria QR codes for electronic record keeping is now mandatory in all schools to enable the effective contact tracing of any COVID-19 cases.**

QR code check ins **are required** to be used by:

- all visitors on school site (including contractors, external Department staff and building and maintenance staff)
- all parents who enter school buildings when on school site

QR code check ins **are not required** to be used by:

- staff
- students
- parents who come onto school grounds for drop off or pick up, but do not enter buildings.

Schools can permit parents to enter buildings on-site for student pick up and drop off providing sufficient QR code locations can be identified and utilised to ensure parents are able to check in. **Where this is not possible, parents should not be permitted to enter buildings for pick up and drop off.**

### Registering for a QR code

Schools must register their schools for a QR code. The process for setting up QR codes is very simple and straightforward. The key steps are:

1. Register your school [here](#)
2. Confirm your email address by clicking on the link in the email
3. Set up a password
4. Log into the QR code service portal
5. Fill in the school's details and click 'Register'
6. Your account is now set up

Detailed instructions for QR set up as well as receiving and displaying your [QR codes have been prepared.](#)

Schools are reminded that existing sign in and out processes should continue to be used to record visitor attendance, in particular the purpose of visits, for legal and regulatory obligations

Further information about QR code set-up can be found at [Register to use the Victorian Government QR Code Service](#)

## 26. Intrastate and interstate travel (regional Victoria only)

### *Interstate travel*

**Travel restrictions between states and territories and in some remote areas of Australia are in place.**

These restrictions are implemented by individual state and territory governments and are subject to change at very short notice. Schools **must** refer to the [Department of Health travel advice](#) and the relevant state/territory specific restrictions before confirming travel plans or bookings.

There is a requirement to apply for a permit to enter Victoria from any location in Australia – this includes Victorians who are returning from interstate travel. The [Victorian travel permit system](#) is based on a traffic light system, which allows for areas across Australia to be designated as green, orange or red according to their COVID-19 risk, in line with public health advice.

Schools should reconsider travelling to locations currently listed as a **red zone** or **orange zone**:

- if at the time of travel, a location is listed as an **orange** or **red zone**, staff and students **should not** travel to this location.

**Schools must not travel to an extreme risk zone.**

Schools should also work closely with their community and insurer when determining the appropriateness of interstate travel during 2021, considering:

- uncertainty of local epidemiology
- health and wellbeing of staff and students
- risk of financial loss (see further advice in 'Insurance' below).

### **Overseas travel**

On 25 March 2020, the Department of Home Affairs imposed a ban on Australians travelling overseas. Many other countries have also closed their borders to overseas travellers. Victorian schools **should not** make overseas travel plans and should anticipate the overseas travel ban to be in place for some time.

### **Insurance**

In addition to following [the Department of Health travel advice](#) schools should actively manage financial risk associated with travel by ensuring that they have adequate insurance, where possible. Most insurers will **not** cover for losses related to COVID-19 or government-directed travel restrictions.

The Department has travel insurance arrangements with the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA). While VMIA will **not** cover losses related to COVID-19, the policy generally provides broader cover than that available through commercial insurers. Information on travel insurance can be found [here](#). Schools should always consider the terms of coverage and any exclusions or limitations before accepting insurance. Please see the [Insurance for Schools PAL page](#) for more information.

### **Victorian Alpine Region**

All travellers (including staff and students on camps and excursions) to Alpine resorts are **strongly recommended** to have a COVID-19 test within the 72 hours prior to arriving at the Alpine Resorts and receive a negative test prior to entry. Children under 12 years are not included.

For more information, please see <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/travel-restrictions>

## 27. \*NEW\* Cross-border permits

Residents of the cross-border community local government areas will now be required to obtain a cross border extreme risk zone permit to cross between Victoria and NSW from 6.00pm Friday 13 August and must have an approved reason to travel.

If they have a permit, staff and students from the Cross-Border Community Area can still cross the Victorian-NSW border for the purposes of work or education (which includes childcare or early childhood services as well as universities and TAFEs etc).

The list of reasons Cross-Border Community Area residents can cross the Victorian-NSW border includes:

- Education (including childcare or early childhood services as well as higher education and TAFE etc)
- Necessary goods and services, including medical care
- Care or other compassionate reasons
- Work (whether paid or voluntary, including for charitable or religious purposes)
- Receiving a COVID-19 vaccination
- Organised/community sport and exercise connected to or organised by a club or facility<sup>2</sup>.

Residents can apply for a permit from 1.00pm Thursday 12 August at the [Service Victoria website](#) and via the Service Victoria app.

## 28. Health and safety advice for schools

COVIDSafe principles for schools should continue to be followed for on-site supervision.

The principles for maintaining a COVIDSafe school apply to all Victorian schools: specialist and mainstream, government, independent and Catholic. They are aligned with Victoria's COVIDSafe principles for business and acknowledge the unique school setting as both a place of work for staff and a learning environment for children and young people, drawing on local and international literature.

As COVID-19 is a new virus, new scientific research is regularly emerging. Currently, the World Health Organization suggests that COVID-19 can be transmitted by contact with droplets or airborne aerosols from an infected person, and contaminated surfaces. Airborne aerosols are tiny particles that float in the air. This understanding may change as more research emerges and more is learned about COVID-19.

A combination of strategies is required to minimise transmission risk. No single strategy completely reduces risk and not every measure will be possible in all educational settings. Where some controls are not feasible, others should be enhanced. Strategies should also be adjusted over time in line with the changing risk of transmission in the community.

Additional measures to promote COVIDSafe activities should be implemented on school premises for students and staff continuing to receive on site supervision, including:

- limiting school access to outside visitors where possible
- reduce mixing between groups
- create workforce bubbles\*

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<sup>2</sup> Limited to minimum numbers and no spectators, and no access to alpine resorts. Persons will be subject to limitation that they must not travel further than reasonably necessary for the reason they cross the border.

Reinforce COVIDSafe behaviours*	Create COVIDSafe spaces	Promote COVIDSafe activities	Respond to COVID-19 risk*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay home when unwell and get tested*</li> <li>Practise good hygiene*</li> <li>Ensure physical distancing (1.5m)*</li> <li>Wear a face mask*</li> <li>Avoid interactions in enclosed spaces*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make hand hygiene easy</li> <li>Keep surfaces clean and implement regular environmental cleaning.</li> <li>Promote outdoor air ventilation and do not have air conditioners on recirculate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limit school access to essential visitors only</li> <li>Move activities outdoors where possible, weather permitting</li> <li>Adapt, modify or defer higher-risk activities</li> <li>Reduce mixing between groups</li> <li>Create workforce bubbles*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep records and act quickly if someone becomes unwell*</li> <li>Use personal protective equipment where indicated</li> <li>Clean and disinfect appropriately if a staff member or student has been unwell at school</li> <li>Manage individual risk</li> </ul>

\*These items denote Victorian Government [COVIDSafe principles for business](#) and may require adaptation for the school context

## COVIDSafe Plan

The [Safety Management Plan for COVID-19 \(COVIDSafe Plan\)](#) applies to all schools, outlines the key health and safety risks and links to the latest guidance.

In conjunction with this Operations Guide, it sets out the approach for managing safety risks in schools in accordance with the minimum requirements for COVIDSafe Plans.

The COVIDSafe Plan has been updated to align with the changes to the advice set out in this Operations Guide.

The Department's [OHS Advisory Service or local Regional OHS Support Officers](#) can assist in tailoring the plan to individual school needs.

Principals must consult with their local Health and Safety Representative(s) and Health and Safety Committee(s) (if applicable) to implement the health and safety guidance to the extent reasonably practicable and escalate unresolved issues via eduSafe. The Department is proactively monitoring eduSafe to provide support.

Principals can also promote the [COVID-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support for Schools](#) page. [Local Regional OHS Support Officers](#) can be contacted for assistance with local consultation if required.

A [draft agenda](#) has been developed for Health and Safety Committee (HSC) meetings to assist in facilitating consultation and identifying and managing risks.

## Reinforce COVIDSafe behaviours

**Key behaviours required for reducing COVID-19 transmission risk include staying home when unwell, performing regular hand hygiene, practicing respiratory hygiene, wearing masks where required and where possible pursuing strategies to support physical distancing.**

Education settings are uniquely placed to integrate these messages into everyday learning and practice, through role modelling and formal and informal learning opportunities.

Students and staff should continue to be vigilant and remain home if unwell. Further information can be found in [Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Hand hygiene remains one of the critical measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission. Hands should be cleaned with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or washed with soap and water for 20 seconds.

Students and staff should be encouraged to cough or sneeze into their elbow or into a tissue and then disposed of.

Physical distancing should be encouraged where possible and [density limits](#) implemented in office spaces and areas generally accessed by the public, such as reception.

Congestion within the school and at entry points should be avoided where feasible by adjusting drop-off and pick-up processes, signage and one-way flow of individuals in more confined spaces such as locker bays and canteens.

### Stay home when unwell

The most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, is to ensure that any unwell staff and students remain at home and get tested, even with the mildest of symptoms.

### Students and staff with underlying conditions (such as hay fever or asthma)

If a student or staff member has persistent symptoms due to an underlying condition such as hay fever or asthma, the student should still be tested for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms that are different to or worse than their usual symptoms.

Parents/carers and staff should also consider getting a medical certificate from their treating GP to confirm that it is safe for them to attend school with persistent symptoms that may overlap with some of the symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough or runny nose.

### Young children with persistent mild symptoms

Younger children (pre-school up to Grade 2) may have prolonged post-viral symptoms such as a runny nose or cough and may return to school following a negative COVID-19 test even if they are not completely free of symptoms. They will need a medical certificate from their GP to confirm they are otherwise well or have recovered from their acute illness.

Any worsening of symptoms will require review and repeat COVID-19 testing, if considered appropriate by the doctor.

Students with a negative COVID-19 test whose symptoms have completely resolved do not need a medical certificate to return to the school.

For further information for schools and to distribute to families see: [Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

## Practise good hygiene

All staff, students and visitors to schools should undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet. Staff should direct or supervise young students where required.

Sharing of food is not permitted.

Use non-contact greetings (not shaking hands, hugging or kissing).

Ensure the highest hygiene practices amongst food handlers where these services are operating, as per the Department's [Safe Food Handling Guidance](#).

## Safety information and training

Any Department staff working on-site in schools who did not complete the eLearn module School Infection Prevention and Control During COVID-19 in Term 4, 2020, **must complete the module as soon as possible**.

The module is available on LearnED via [eduPay login](#) and will take about 20 minutes to complete. A parallel module is now also [available on FUSE](#) for preservice teachers, casual relief teachers and other staff working in schools who do not have eduPay access.

Principals should review completion records through LearnED and manage non-completion through existing performance development plan (PDP) conversations. Should managers or principals need help to monitor staff progress and completion rates, a short [LearnED LMS for Managers](#) module, including a number of detailed [Quick Reference Guides](#), is available.

## Ensure physical distancing

A variety of strategies to support physical distancing among all students and staff should be pursued, where possible.

**Staff must practise physical distancing 1.5m between themselves and other staff members or adults to the extent that is reasonably practicable. Staff should physically distance themselves from students where appropriate and feasible.**

**Students should practise physical distancing where possible. Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not always be practical in the school environment and may be particularly challenging in the younger years of primary school. In these contexts, a combination of health and safety measures should be utilised to reduce risk.**

Density limits do not apply in classrooms and other spaces for the purposes of student use, including corridors and other shared areas.

**Density limits of 1 person per 4 square metres apply to staff areas such as staff lunchrooms and areas accessed by the public, such as reception areas.**

**For public areas, signage must be displayed to indicate the maximum number of members of the public that may be present in the space at a single time.**

Strategies that can be considered to support physical distancing include:

- the careful management of movement of adults through school reception and staff rooms, and timing of staff arrival and departure
- where multiple staff are required in a classroom, reminding staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as practical
- signage and rostering so that access to shared physical spaces and food preparation areas can be managed
- reminding students, staff and visitors including through signage, of the importance of physical distancing where possible

- reconfiguring class spaces where possible, using all available space in the school
- marking the floor indicating physical distancing in appropriate locations (e.g. canteens).
- actions to reduce the congregation of adults around the school and reduce congestion. Schools can do this through strategies such as the use of multiple entry/exit points, creating spaces for egress in different areas of the school and appropriate signage to communicate expected behaviours.
- communicate the strategies in place to parents through local signage and communications to school communities to remind staff, students and families of the need for behaviours that support physical distancing. Posters and a parent letter are available in the [communications support pack](#).

### **Avoid interactions in close spaces**

Space out staff workstations as much as possible and limit the number of staff in offices according to the density quotient. This might mean re-locating staff to other spaces (such as the library or unused classrooms).

Consider opportunities to adapt indoor activities outdoors, for example having outdoor meetings, holding classes outside, encouraging staff and students to eat outside.

Use signage to promote physical distancing in more confined spaces such as locker bays, changing rooms and canteens.

For activities occurring outdoors, schools should follow the Outdoor Activities guidance in the [Occupational Health and Safety Management System](#) and support staff and students to use a combination of sun protection measures when UV levels are 3 or above.

### **Face masks in schools**

**Please see the Department of Health [website](#) for the latest face mask requirements as advice may change at short notice**

As directed by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, the following advice applies to all school settings:

- School staff and secondary school students aged 12 or older must always wear a face mask indoors and outdoors at school, including when attending an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program, unless a lawful exception applies.
- Children under 12 years of age and students at primary school are not required to wear face masks when at school, or when attending an OHSC program.
- For communication purposes, teachers and education support staff are not required to wear face masks while teaching, but those who wish to do so, can. It is recommended that face masks be worn while teaching wherever practicable.
- Face masks are mandatory for all school staff and school students aged 12 or older when travelling to and from school on public transport and when in taxis or ride share vehicles.

There are a number of lawful reasons for not wearing a face mask, including for staff and students who are unable to wear a face mask due to the nature of their disability. This includes students or staff who have a medical condition, such as a breathing problem, a serious skin condition on the face, or a mental health condition.

A face mask must cover the nose and mouth. Face shields, scarves or bandanas do not meet these requirements.

## Face masks at external premises

- Staff and students attending camps and excursions will be required to meet any face mask requirements of an external provider/venue, including transport providers, unless a lawful exception applies.

## Staff and students unable to wear face masks

- A combination of strategies are required to limit transmission of COVID-19. Where students and staff are unable to wear face masks, other transmission reduction strategies, such as physical distancing, can be enhanced, noting that any additional or enhanced strategies should be aimed at the whole school or class population.
- Staff members unable to wear face masks should avoid providing supervision or care of students with COVID-19 symptoms.

## Face masks during school sport

- Where required, students can remove face masks when engaged in any strenuous exercise.
- Schools are **strongly encouraged** to maximise the use of outdoor environments for school sport and physical activity, particularly during periods of community transmission.

## More information

- Schools must display information and signage at school entrances and in communal areas such as staff rooms encouraging staff and students to wear masks wherever they are required, including where physical distancing of 1.5m cannot be maintained. Posters are available in the [communications support pack](#).
- School staff should refer to the Department [guidance for the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) in education](#) to determine when additional PPE is required and for information on the correct and safe use of PPE.

## Create COVIDSafe spaces

***The spaces where staff and students teach, learn and play have an important role in protecting against COVID-19 transmission, particularly surface and airborne transmission.***

*Reducing the need to interact with high-touch surfaces, regular environmental cleaning, cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces and good hand hygiene can protect against surface transmission.*

*Promote use of hand hygiene facilities by keeping them well stocked and in readily accessible locations, for example at the entrance to buildings. Hand sanitiser should be accessible in every occupied room, particularly where access to running water and soap is not readily available.*

*Outdoor air ventilation should be increased whenever possible, including in bathrooms, to dilute the concentration of airborne virus and to encourage air moving through a space. Wherever possible switch air handling units with central recirculation to 100% outdoor air and avoid use of fans in shared spaces. Where this is not possible, windows should be open as much as possible. Further advice on ventilation can be found in [COVID-19 transmission from air-circulating, wind-blowing devices and activities](#).*



## Make hand hygiene easy

Hand sanitiser should be made available at entry points to classrooms. Age-appropriate education and reminders about hand hygiene should be provided. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol should be made accessible.

## Keep surfaces clean

COVIDSafe routine cleaning arrangements will continue for all Victorian government schools in Term 3. This involves daily end-of-school-day cleaning, with a particular focus on cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces, and the inclusion of some elements that were not cleaned every day prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Schools should consider the necessity of using shared equipment at this time. Such items may include shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, and musical instruments. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use. Risk can be further minimised with users wiping down items where appropriate, for example using a disinfectant/detergent wipe or cloth.

Consider adjusting how staff and students interact within the built environment to reduce contact with certain surfaces. For example, a simple measure such as keeping a door open will reduce the need for multiple people to touch the door handle. Consider use of plexiglass as a physical barrier at school reception and canteen where practical and feasible

## Promote outdoor air ventilation

**Schools are strongly encouraged to increase fresh air flow into indoor spaces whenever possible and to maximise the use of outdoor learning areas or environments, particularly during periods of community transmission.**

Where possible, air recirculation should be eliminated or minimised by setting air conditioning units to use external air rather than recycling. Door jambs should be used where possible to keep air circulating and avoid the need to close and open doors. Further advice to assist with managing ventilation is available from the Department of Health: [COVID-19 transmission from air-circulating, wind-blowing devices and activities](#)

## Promote COVIDSafe activities

***Some school-based activities may need to be altered, deferred or delivered remotely to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk. Decisions regarding the types of activities that take place should consider the potential risk associated with the activity, the level of community transmission, and available modifications to minimise risk.***

*Where appropriate and weather permitting, opportunities for outdoor learning and working should be considered as alternatives to interactions indoors due to improved ventilation.*

*Events subject to the [Public Event's Framework](#), should follow advice from DJPR regarding their registered event. They should be planned in line with relevant restrictions in the community, adhering to indoor and outdoor patron limits as well as [density limits](#).*

*Large school gatherings (ceremonies, assemblies, school formals etc.) are not permitted at this time.*

## Limit visitor access

Visitors to **all school** premises should be limited to essential school services and operations.

Principals are best placed to make decisions regarding what visitors are essential to the operation of their school, noting the following:

- Within **metropolitan Melbourne**, schools should review the [Authorised provider and authorised worker list](#) when making decisions regarding the suitability of any staff or workers coming on to site (other than those directly involved in the care and supervision of students).
- Within **regional Victoria**, schools should review the [Authorised provider and authorised worker list](#) when making decisions regarding the suitability of staff or workers that reside in metropolitan Melbourne (other than those directly involved in the care and supervision of students). Only workers or volunteers permitted under the [Authorised provider and authorised worker list](#) to work in metropolitan Melbourne are able to travel to regional Victoria for work purposes.

Essential visitors to school grounds **must** comply with density limits, face mask requirements, QR code check-ins and practise good hand hygiene.

- The density limit of 1 person per 4 square metres should be applied to any spaces and activities being attended by parent/carers and other visitors. The density limit applies to all persons in the space, including students.

### QR codes and record keeping

The use of Service Victoria QR codes for electronic record keeping is **mandatory** in all schools to enable the effective contact tracing of any COVID-19 cases.

QR code check ins **are required** to be used by:

- all essential visitors on school site (including contractors, external Department staff and building and maintenance staff)
- all parents who enter school buildings when on school site for essential purposes

QR code check ins **are not required** to be used by:

- staff
- students
- parents of eligible students who come onto school grounds for drop off or pick up, but do not enter buildings.

Schools are reminded that existing sign in and out processes should continue to be used to record essential visitor attendance, in particular the purpose of visits, for legal and regulatory obligations.

Further information is available at: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-qr-code-service>

## Adapt, modify or defer higher-risk activities

### Swimming pools

Outdoor and indoor pools can be used **in regional Victoria**:

- There is no limit on participant numbers where there is exclusive use of a pool facility by a single school at any one time for educational purposes

- Where there is not exclusive use of a pool by a single school, the requirements of the Restricted Activity Directions apply. Schools should speak to swimming pool venues to determine how restrictions apply to the activity being undertaken.
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### **Physical education and intraschool sport**

Outdoor and indoor contact and non-contact physical activity is permitted.

Where using an external sporting facility **in regional Victoria**, density limits do not apply where there is exclusive use of the venue by single schools, however schools should continue to apply COVIDSafe principles to decision making, including avoiding interactions in closed spaces and physical distancing where practicable.

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### **Singing, brass, woodwind classes and groups**

Singing and playing wind and brass instruments can occur **in regional Victoria** if Department of Health recommendations to reduce transmission risk are followed. Recommendations include moving outdoors, increasing ventilation, physical distancing of **2 metres** between performers and 5 metres between performers and the audience, reducing the number of people, or reducing the length of time an activity is conducted. Further advice on ways to reduce risk can be found in DH guidance: [COVID-19 transmission from air-circulating, wind-blowing devices and activities](#).

Singing, brass, woodwind classes and groups **in metropolitan Melbourne** must be postponed or occur remotely during this time.

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### **Provision of routine care and first aid**

Physical distancing is not practical when providing direct care. In this situation standard precautions, including hand hygiene, are important for infection control.

Standard precautions are advised when coming into contact with someone to provide routine care and/or assistance (for example, the use of gloves for nappy-changing, toileting or feeding).

Standard precautions as per the Department's [Infectious Diseases policy](#) and related policies should be adopted when providing first aid. For example, use gloves and an apron when dealing with blood or body fluids/substances. Always wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after performing routine care or first aid.

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### **Reduce mixing between groups and create workforce bubbles**

Mixing of staff and students between rooms should be avoided by staggering lunch breaks.

Where multiple staff are required in a classroom, remind staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as practical.

Schools should consider ways to cohort staff working on site into workforce bubbles, for example having the same group of staff working on the same day.

Professional development and staff meetings should be conducted online or deferred (unless essential face to face training for first aid, anaphylaxis, or infection control. In these instances, density limits of 1 person per 4 square metres apply).

**Staff should not work across multiple schools in metropolitan Melbourne.**

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**Staff in regional schools should also avoid working across multiple sites as much as practical, noting there will be some workforces who will need to work across multiple schools (i.e. health and wellbeing staff and casual relief teaching staff).**

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## Respond to COVID-19 risk

**Any staff member or student who becomes unwell while at school with symptoms of COVID-19 must return home immediately and get tested, with a designated space(s) made available on school premises to support isolation where required.**

Staff or students most at risk of severe illness as a result of COVID-19 infection should continue to individually assess appropriateness for on-site attendance with support from their medical practitioner, noting that these assessments should be reviewed alongside notable changes to COVID-19 in Victoria. Further information can be found in [Advice for schools and families on medical vulnerability during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Good record-keeping in schools, including for any visitors, enables the prompt identification of individuals who may have been in contact with a confirmed case.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used in line [Guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education settings](#), with staff trained to understand when and how to use PPE appropriately.

Schools must notify the Department of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school, providing requested information and taking required actions.

Appropriate cleaning and disinfection must take place following a confirmed case on school premises.

Further information about the required steps for the management of unwell students and staff can be found in this guide and the [Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) fact sheet.

## Management of an unwell student or staff member

It is important that any student (or staff member) who becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms while at school gets tested and returns home.

The symptoms to watch out for are:

- fever
- chills or sweats
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- runny nose
- loss or change in sense of smell or taste

Some people may also experience headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

Schools should refer to the following guidance (updated June 2021), which sets out actions required to safely isolate individuals prior to being collected and returning home:

- [Personal protective equipment guide](#) for education settings
- [Management of students displaying COVID-19 symptoms](#) in education settings

This guidance should also be followed in a situation where a student (or staff member where appropriate) is made aware while at school that they are required to get tested, isolate and/or quarantine following public health advice.

Staff or students experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should be advised to get tested and stay home until they receive a test result. See [Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Health care plans, where relevant, should be updated to provide additional advice on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of COVID-19.

Staff and students are not required to present a medical certificate stating they are fit to return to an education setting after a period of illness, however staff and students should not return until symptoms resolve. If they have been tested for COVID-19, they must also wait for a negative test result. Staff continue to be required to present a medical certificate in accordance with personal leave policy for periods of absence on personal leave.

## Required actions for suspected cases of COVID-19 in staff in schools

Staff members who are unwell must stay home. 'Suspected case' means a person who is displaying one or more symptoms of COVID-19. The symptoms to watch out for are:

- fever
- chills or sweats
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- runny nose
- loss or change in sense of smell or taste.

Some people may also experience headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

As soon as practicable after becoming aware of a suspected case in a staff member, and that the staff member has attended on a school site whilst symptomatic, or 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms, the principal must take the following four actions:

1. **Advise the staff member to self-isolate**, by travelling home immediately. If immediate travel home is not possible, the staff member must be directed to self-isolate at school, in a separate room where possible, while wearing a face mask and remaining at least 1.5 metres from any other person, until they can travel home.
2. **Advise the staff member to be tested for COVID-19 as soon as practicable**, and to self-isolate while awaiting the result of that test.
3. **Manage the risk posed by the suspected case**, including by ensuring high-touch areas frequently used by the staff member have been cleaned since they were last on-site, including areas used by the staff member e.g. their workspace AND any high-touch surfaces likely to have been frequented by the staff member. Please contact the VSBA School Cleaning team if required on [cleaning@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:cleaning@education.vic.gov.au)
4. Inform all staff on-site (including the Health and Safety Representative) to be vigilant about the onset of symptoms. If they become unwell, they must notify their principal, get tested and self-isolate. A [draft email](#) and [further information on consulting with your staff](#) is available.

### Managing a confirmed case of COVID-19

The Department has comprehensive procedures in place with the Department of Health to manage suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in schools.

- Contact the Department by calling 1800 126 126 to report an IRIS incident alert if a student or staff member tests positive to COVID-19. Schools do not need to take further action, until directed to do so.
- The Department will notify WorkSafe on behalf of the affected school in the event of a confirmed case of a staff member.
- WorkSafe may be in contact with the affected school to ensure the school is following the health and safety guidance outlined in this document and has implemented their COVID-19 Safety Management Plan. Please contact the OHS Advisory Service (1300 074 715) for support in managing occupational health and safety matters.

### Monitoring of close contacts in schools

To minimise further community transmission of COVID-19, the Department of Health has introduced a new system for the identification, notification and monitoring of close contacts (primary and secondary).

In line with this, schools will now be advised if a student or staff member at their school has been identified by the Department of Health as a close contact of a person with COVID-19.

Close contacts are contacted directly by the Department of Health regarding requirements for quarantine and testing; the student or staff member should not attend school until they are advised by the Department of Health that their quarantine has concluded. Students or staff members should bring a copy of the clearance message (text, email or letter) they receive from the Department of Health indicating that their quarantine period has ended when they return to school.

Schools will be asked to confirm that the student or staff member identified as a close contact is not attending school during this time. If the student or staff member is attending school, they must

be sent home immediately and notify their Area Executive Director. The school is not required to close due to a close contact attending, unless advised otherwise by the Department.

When notified that a student or staff member has been in close contact with a positive case of COVID-19 and/or has visited a public exposure site, call the Department on 1800 126 126 to report an IRIS incident alert. Schools do not need to take further action until directed to do so.

### Supporting students during quarantine

Schools are asked to provide support to identified close contact students and their families during the quarantine period to facilitate continued engagement in learning and address wellbeing needs.

The relevant Area Executive Director will work with the school to confirm that the student is following quarantine directions, as well as provide support to the student and family as needed.

Further information is available from the Department of Health on primary close contacts, secondary close contacts, quarantine periods and more. See <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/what-do-if-you-are-close-contact>

### Infectious cleaning

In most cases where a school site closes due to a positive case, some or all of the school site will undergo an 'infectious clean', also known as a deep clean. This clean is arranged and paid for by the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) and this applies to all Victorian Government schools, both metropolitan and regional.

Once advised of the need for cleaning to occur, the VSBA will contact the principal as soon as possible to make arrangements. The cleaning is conducted in accordance with guidelines that have been developed with the Department of Health.

As part of these guidelines, paper is not thrown away. If needed, to allow cleaning of high-touch surfaces, paper is packed away (by cleaners in personal protective equipment) or, for surfaces that would not normally be touched (for example, posters on the wall), paper is left in situ.

### Deep cleaning

Schools should close spaces that are not needed and only use the administrative and teaching spaces required to implement any physical distancing requirements and maintain effective learning conditions.

To support the delivery of an 'infectious clean' if it should be required, it is recommended that school staff working on-site:

- keep their desks neat and tidy
- file important documents before they leave each day
- take personal belongings home each day (such as jackets, shoes, hats, gloves, and face masks)
- do not leave food or food containers out in the open (such as tea bags, biscuits, and fruit)
- store away unused shared and loose items (such as toys, musical instruments, and sporting equipment)
- keep personal cutlery in a sealed container, not left out on a workstation.

See the [Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines](#) for advice on cleaning and disinfection when a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified in a Victorian Government School.

## Contacts

- **DET COVID-19 hotline:** DETs dedicated COVID-19 phone advice line during Mon-Fri business hours on **1800 338 663** can address or appropriately refer calls on all matters.
- **Staff health and safety:** Further advice and support in phone 1300 074 715 or email [safety@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:safety@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- **Finance:** School Financial Management Support Unit: [schools.finance.support@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:schools.finance.support@education.vic.gov.au) or (03) 7022 2222
- **Cleaning:** There will be no change to the current cleaning arrangements in schools. For cleaning information or advice, please contact [cleaning@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:cleaning@education.vic.gov.au)
- **OSHC and other early childhood:** DETs dedicated COVID-19 phone advice line during business hours on 1800 338 663
- **Student transport:** [student.transport@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.transport@education.vic.gov.au) or 7022 2247
- **SEILs:** Schools should contact their SEIL to discuss any queries. Local consultation should continue with staff, Health and Safety Representatives and OHS Committees (if applicable). For further advice and support in phone 1300 074 715 or email [safety@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:safety@education.vic.gov.au)



## Summary of key operational requirements

### COVIDSafe behaviours

Key actions for schools	Metro Melbourne	Regional Victoria
Temperature checks	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
Face masks	<b>YES – INDOORS AND OUTDOORS</b>	<b>YES – INDOORS AND OUTDOORS</b>
Working across multiple sites	<b>NO</b>	<b>MINIMISE</b>

### Create COVIDSafe spaces

Key actions for schools	Metro Melbourne	Regional Victoria
COVIDSafe routine cleaning	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
Enhanced hand hygiene facilities	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
Enhanced ventilation	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
Community use of school playground	<b>YES</b> For school use. Community use can occur out of school hours only.	<b>YES</b> For school use. Community use can occur out of school hours only.
Community use of school facilities (indoors and outdoors)	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b> See guidance <b>page 16</b>
Libraries (for borrowing and as a learning space)	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>

### Promote COVIDSafe activities

Key actions for schools	Metro Melbourne	Regional Victoria
Visitors to schools	<b>ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY</b> Visitors to school premises should be limited to essential school services and operations	<b>ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY</b> Visitors to school premises should be limited to essential school services and operations
Students placements	<b>YES</b> Only for <b>final year</b> pre-service teacher placements (see <a href="#">APAW</a> list)	<b>YES</b> <b>All</b> student placements (permitted at discretion of school)
Health, wellbeing, inclusion visits	<b>ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY</b>	<b>YES</b>
School tours	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>

Excursions	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b> See guidance <b>page 13</b>
Swimming and all other pool use	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b> See guidance <b>page 26</b>
Incursions	<b>NO</b> (See Visitor Policy on <b>Page 26</b> )	<b>NO</b> (See Visitor Policy on <b>Page 26</b> )
School photos	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
Camps and overnight stays	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b> See guidance <b>page 13</b>
Assemblies (whole school and year level), formals, graduations	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
Kinder transition program	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
Year 7 transition programs	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
All sporting activities (indoor, outdoor, contact and non-contact)	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b> See guidance <b>Pages 27</b>
All interschool activities (such as debating)	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
Singing, brass and woodwind classes and groups	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b> Following recommended health advice
Professional development and staff meetings (face to face)	<b>NO</b> Should be conducted online or deferred	<b>NO</b> Should be conducted online or deferred

### Respond to COVID-19 risk

Key actions for schools	Metro Melbourne	Regional Victoria
Keep visitor, staff and student records	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
Maintain adequate PPE supply	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>