



24 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are looking forward to welcoming students back to school soon. A special welcome to children and their families who are joining our communities for the first time in 2022. Thank you for your support as we keep working together to respond to COVID-19.

Back to School safety

We will start the 2022 school year with strong COVID-smart measures developed by the NSW Government in partnership with NSW Health. With safety, wellbeing and learning our priorities, these include:

- Rapid antigen test (RAT) kits will be provided to all families to help you monitor your child's health and minimise transmission of COVID-19 in our schools
- Wearing of surgical masks indoors is **required** for all staff and students in Year 7 and above, and **strongly recommended** for all primary students (see fact sheet for more information)
- Only fully vaccinated visitors essential to delivering and supporting learning or wellbeing can come on to a school site for at least the first four weeks, though parents and carers are permitted onsite for Kindergarten and Year 7 transition to school
- Students will be kept in their year / cohort groups on school grounds as far as possible, with other measures that may include staggered drop-off and pick-up, break times, and playground and canteen access to minimise the spread of COVID-19
- Continued use of good hygiene, enhanced cleaning, good airflow and ventilation in learning spaces, and physical distancing practises.

A fact sheet is also attached to help your family stay up-to-date about these COVID-smart measures. This includes more details about masks, watching for symptoms, vaccinations, ventilation and what happens when a student or staff member tests positive to COVID-19.

Rapid Antigen Testing information

Your school will distribute packs of rapid antigen test (RAT) kits for all students and staff. RAT kits are a quick and easy screening tool to be used twice a week to help detect COVID-19 and their use is an important step to support the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. It is a simple process of placing a nose or throat swab in a chemical solution which is put onto a scanning device. Results can be ready within 15 minutes. Use of RAT kits is highly recommended but not mandatory. All positive results must be notified immediately to the school and NSW Health using the ServiceNSW app.

Your school will be in contact with more details about COVID-safe pick-up for packs of RAT kits shortly.

As always, our caring school staff are ready to assist if you have any additional questions about the arrangements for returning to school. Thanks again for your understanding and consideration as we keep working together to respond to COVID-19.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Whitby', is written over a white background.

Gregory B. Whitby AM KSG FACE FACEL
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COVID-smart measures for schools

Information for **parents and students**



Being together in a classroom is the most effective way for students to learn and grow. Since COVID-19 remains a relatively mild illness for most children, we're committed to return to school safely in 2022. We will support this through the following measures.



WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS

- If your child is unwell, even with mild symptoms you must keep them home and get them tested. If they display any symptoms they should take a PCR test (nose and throat swab) or rapid antigen test (RAT).
- If symptoms continue your child should not come to school, even if they get a negative rapid antigen test result. Your child may return when they get a negative PCR test result and have no symptoms.



VACCINATIONS

- All staff on school sites must be fully vaccinated.
- We strongly encourage all students and their families to get vaccinated. Children aged 5 to 11 can now get vaccinated. Parents are encouraged to book their child in for a vaccination at the first available opportunity.
- Once eligible, all adults are encouraged to get booster shots.



TESTING

Before the start of term 1

- Rapid antigen tests will be provided to all staff and students through their schools. Schools will inform their local communities on how these kits can be collected.
- All staff and students are asked to take a rapid antigen test twice a week and get a negative result before attending school. Your child's school will provide advice on when tests should be taken.

At the start of term 1

- For the first 4 weeks, students and staff should take a rapid antigen test **twice a week on the morning before attending school**. Test kits will continue to be supplied by schools.
- Students who are household close contacts must isolate at home for 7 days.



COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES

- If your child has no symptoms and there is a positive case in their class, year or other grouping, they can continue to attend school in line with NSW Health advice.
- Staff and students who get a positive rapid antigen test result must register it on service.nsw.gov.au or the **Service NSW app** as soon as possible.
- Staff and students who receive a positive rapid antigen or PCR test result must tell their school as soon as possible, and follow NSW Health advice.
- Schools will regularly communicate to parents about the presence and impact of COVID-19 in their community. Parents should expect to be provided with details of any impacted year groups or cohorts.



VENTILATION

- Fresh air is the most effective form of ventilation to minimise risk of transmission. Where natural ventilation is limited, schools will consider alternatives, such as air purifiers.
- Using outdoor spaces will continue to be encouraged.



MASKS

- All primary and secondary school staff will be required to wear masks indoors.
- No vented masks or cloth masks should be worn. If required, surgical masks will be available at schools.
- Secondary school students are required to wear masks.
- Primary school students are strongly recommended to wear well-fitted masks indoors.



ACTIVITIES

- COVID-19 will be considered in all risk assessments. Guidance will be provided to schools on applying appropriate safeguards across a range of activities.
- Parents will be made aware of the risk of exposure and will need to give their permission for participation in extra-curricular, out of school hours or off-site activities



STUDENT COHORTING

- Schools will continue using cohort arrangements and consider staggered drop-off and pick ups, break times, playground and canteen access.
- Depending on the school, cohort size and timetables, cohorts may be based on classes, years or stages.



VISITORS

- Visitors on school sites should be kept to a minimum to support essential school activities or student needs. Visitors will be required to wear a mask indoors and will be encouraged to wear a mask outdoors if they cannot maintain physical distancing.
- Schools are advised to allow a maximum of 2 parents or carers per student onto school grounds for Kindergarten orientation or Year 7 transition.



KEEPING SCHOOLS OPEN

- Parents are asked to respect the rules at their child's school to help keep the community safe.
- Schools will do everything they can to maintain continuity of face-to-face learning including the use of more casual staff.
- Schools will need to make localised staffing decisions to ensure appropriate supervision can be maintained.
- Schools will not be able to guarantee particular staff for any cohort and students may not have their regular teacher for a class.



LEARNING FROM HOME

- We will continue to monitor the situation and where face-to-face learning is not possible, learning from home options will be supported for short periods.

For more info, visit nsw.gov.au/covid-19

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

