RETURN TO SCHOOL OPERATIONS GUIDE
Term 2, 2020

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RETURN TO SCHOOL OPERATIONS GUIDE

Transition back to on-site schooling

- Following advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer and as announced by the Victorian Government, Victorian government schools will begin a transition back to on-site schooling for students.

- The Return to School Operations Guide supports schools to make an effective transition back to on-site schooling. The core elements of this approach are:

  o staged return for students commencing Tuesday 26 May 2020

  o all school staff to work from the school site from Monday 25 May 2020, with exceptions for some staff in identified risk categories, based on medical advice

  o voluntary prioritised coronavirus (COVID-19) testing available for all Victorian school staff from 13 May to 26 May 2020

  o enhanced hygiene practice and cleaning on school sites

  o physical distancing, in particular for adults

  o return of all students for on-site schooling at government schools from Tuesday 9 June 2020.

- Jenny Atta, Secretary, Department of Education and Training wrote to principals on Tuesday 12 May 2020 outlining the key steps in this process.

- The message from the Victorian Chief Health Officer and health and safety advice for schools is attached to this guide as Appendix 1.

- To assist school leaders in managing this transition back to on-site schooling, a Planning Checklist and Local Policy Template for optional use have been developed (Appendix 2). Communications materials to assist with the transition are attached here.

- 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. When determining the working arrangements that enable the transition back to on-site schooling, the consultative arrangements in place at each school must be used to ensure staff are consulted on, and have input into, the ways that work may be organised and allocated.

Staged return for students

- The staged return will be as follows:

  o Prep, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students on-site from Tuesday 26 May 2020

  o VCE and VCAL Year 11 and 12 students (and Year 10 students undertaking VCE studies for VCE classes where practicable) on-site from Tuesday 26 May 2020

  o all students enrolled in specialist schools, on-site from Tuesday 26 May 2020

  o students in Grade 3 to Year 10 continue remote and flexible learning program until 5 June 2020

  o students in Grade 3 to Year 10 being supervised on-site will continue remote and flexible learning program (students not able to be supervised at home and for whom no other arrangements can be made; and vulnerable students).

- Schools with existing composite Grade 2/3 classes can apply local discretion to the return of the Grade 3s.

- Schools will need to develop a school timetable and teaching program that reflects the above arrangements.

- The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) has advised that a 'venue density rule' of no more than one person per four square metres is not appropriate or practical in classrooms or corridors, nor maintaining 1.5 metres between students during classroom activities. Therefore, the previously established ratio of 10 students per class is no longer required in schools.

- All students in the year levels returning to on-site schooling are expected to attend school. Schools are not expected to provide remote learning where parents elect to keep these students at home, except where this is based on medical advice. The guide to absence coding during this transition phase is available on the School Policy and Advisory Guide Attendance page.

- To support all school staff to prepare for the transition **Monday 25 May 2020 will be a pupil-free day**. Schools will use this day to ensure the health advice will be followed in their school, re-establish school routines, establish an approach to assessing student learning progress during the period of remote and flexible learning, and identify students in need of immediate health and wellbeing support.

- It is important to support students to return to normal routine, acknowledging the situation, providing developmentally suitable information about what is occurring, as well as providing a safe space for students to raise their concerns and feelings.

- The Regional Health and Wellbeing contact role and supports for schools will also remain in place for the remainder of Term 2. DET Regional staff will be available to attend schools, practising physical distancing where practical.

Specialist schools

- All students are returning for on-site provision at specialist schools from Tuesday 26 May 2020.

- The advice provided by the Chief Health Officer applies to all schools, inclusive of specialist schools.

- Specialist schools will continue to be supported in this transition period to ensure a smooth return to on-site schooling.

Other school and curriculum settings

- The Victorian School of Languages (VSL) and Community Language Schools (CLSs) will also resume with face-to-face provision for Unit 3/4 VCE students from Tuesday 26 May.

- English language schools and English language centres will follow the same staged return as mainstream schools.

- Given their different operating arrangements, Flexible Learning Options (FLOs) should seek advice from their Region about their operation.

- Outdoor education schools and camps, leadership schools, Tech Schools, Maths and Science Specialist Centres, the VSL and CLSs will remain closed for face-to-face provision (with the exception of the VSL and CLSs for VCE students). This is to avoid extensive contact between students from different schools. Further advice will be provided about their operation in the week of 1 June 2020.

Staff attendance

- All school staff will return to working on-site from Monday 25 May 2020, **beginning with a pupil-free day**.

- Staff will be required to attend for duty at their school in accordance with normal arrangements, making necessary adjustments to support physical distancing between adults. Teachers delivering a remote and flexible program will do so from their school site.

- Guidance on vulnerable staff has been updated by the Victorian Chief Health Officer. As with other members of the community, teachers and other school staff may be at greater risk of more serious illness if they contract coronavirus (COVID-19) if they are:

  o aged 70 years and older

  o aged 65 years and older and with chronic medical conditions.

  o of any age and have a compromised immune system

  o Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and are aged over 50 years and with one or more chronic medical conditions.

- The Chief Health Officer's advice does not require that staff who are caring for elderly or chronically ill relatives should refrain from working on-site.

- Staff in these categories, except for those over 70, are required to provide a medical certificate if they are advised they should work from home. See DHHS Fact sheet for 'at-risk' groups in the community.

- Normal attendance requirements for school staff will apply, consistent with the VGSA 2017.

- Schools may need to engage CRT staff to cover staff absences. If principals are concerned about cost pressures or a forecast deficit budget position, please contact the School Financial Management Support Unit schools.finance.support@edumail.vic.gov.au or (03) 7022 2222 for support or advice.

- Where school staff have children in Grade 3 – Year 10, if their children are not able to be supervised at home and no other arrangements can be made, those children can attend their usual school from Tuesday 26 May to Friday 5 June as required.

- Consideration should be given to streamlining work not specifically focussed on the immediate return and routines of students. School Reviews scheduled for Term 2 have been postponed and other audit activities have been modified or deadlines extended. CRTs and workload distribution may be considered.

- Staff who may be experiencing higher levels of anxiety or stress are encouraged to access departmental supports. See School health and safety measures.

Voluntary coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for all staff

- Voluntary prioritised coronavirus (COVID-19) testing is available for all Victorian school staff for a two-week period from 13 May 2020 to 26 May 2020.

- Guidance about the voluntary prioritised coronavirus (COVID-19) testing available for all Victorian school staff is available on the DET website. Advice on the testing was provided to all staff in the School Update. Principals should promote the testing and provide this link to all staff.

- Participation in testing is voluntary. Testing is available for all school staff, including those who are asymptomatic.

- Staff who are asymptomatic will be able to continue to work while they wait for their test results. Staff who are symptomatic will be considered a suspected case and required to self-isolate until test results are received. Any staff who are unwell must not attend school until symptoms resolve.

- Any positive coronavirus (COVID-19) cases will be reported to DHHS as per current practice. In the event of a confirmed case, DET will contact the school to provide advice and support for

enacting their coronavirus (COVID-19) management plan to contain any outbreak and commence contact tracing.

School health and safety measures

- Victoria's return to on-site school attendance is based on the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer. The message from the Victorian Chief Health Officer and health and safety advice for schools is attached to this guide as Appendix 1. This should be read in its entirety for full context.

- The health and safety advice at Appendix 1 indicates that schools should consider a variety of strategies to support physical distancing, particularly among adults, and good hygiene practices to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission within the practical limitations of a school environment. The actions at Appendix 1 are to be considered, adapted and implemented as necessary, according to the school setting and the individual needs of the staff, students and the wider school community.

- Consultative arrangements required by the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017 should be used at the school level.

Staggered start and finish

- Schools must give consideration to steps that can be taken to reduce the number of adults congregating outside the school at any one time, including parents and carers at peak times such as drop-off and pick-ups.

- Decisions will be informed by local circumstances, school layout, design and street frontage and will differ from school-to-school.

- Schools will need to put in place arrangements that meet the intent of the health advice and ensure community confidence.

- Specific attention should be paid to:

  o opening as many entry and exit points to the school as is safe, and allocating staff to ensure students are safely supervised and students and parents feel confident with the arrival/departure from school

  o staggering start and finish times by groups of grades or year levels (for example, junior/middle/senior), while also enabling siblings to arrive/leave together at the same time and be safely supervised while on the school site (noting there may be some impact on total instructional time)

  o asking parents to avoid or minimise time in or around the school grounds. Families will need to plan for and adapt to altered arrangements to arrive at specified times

  o signage to remind staff, students and families of the need for changed behaviours

  o staggering lunch and recess to reduce mixing of grade levels where possible and reducing possible congestion in staff rooms

  o where possible, allocating different areas of the school grounds to different grade or year levels during breaks, in order to reduce mixing amongst different year levels.

- The greater the likelihood of congestion, especially amongst adults, the more strategies schools will need to consider.

Other health and safety measures

- Playground equipment can be used. However, students should practise hand hygiene before and after use. Playgrounds should be wiped down as part of the enhanced cleaning program.

- Schools should consider the necessity of using shared equipment at this time. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use.

- Students should bring their own water bottle for use at school as students should not drink directly from drinking fountains at this time. Taps may be used to refill water bottles.

- The DET *Students Using Mobile Phones Policy* remains in place. Remind staff and students to clean their phones regularly. Phones can be turned on with the COVID SAFE app activated immediately before and after school. Schools are managed environments which include records of student, staff and visitor attendance, which can support contact tracing.

Physical distancing – Staff

- Close attention and proactive management must be provided to physical distancing for staff. Staggering breaks for students can contribute to managing required access to staffrooms and other shared spaces. Specific attention should be paid to:

  o using spaces within the school that can support physical distancing for staff, such as libraries and vacant classrooms

  o signage and rostering so that access to physical spaces and food preparation areas can be managed

  o offices being appropriately spaced

  o the movement of adults through school reception being carefully managed, complemented with clear signage and access to sanitiser.

- The Safety Management Plan for COVID-19 applies to all schools, and outlines the key OHS risks and links to the latest guidance. The Department's OHS Advisory Service or local OHS regional officer can assist in tailoring the plan to individual school needs. Schools should use their OHS consultation mechanisms to implement the health and safety guidance to the extent reasonably practicable, and escalate unresolved issues via eduSafe, which is being proactively monitored by the Department to provide support. Principals can also promote the COVID-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support for Schools page.

Mental health and wellbeing

- The mental health and wellbeing of principals, teachers, school staff and students will be an important consideration during the Return to School transition. The pupil-free day on 25 May and the transitional period 25 May – 5 June provides an opportunity to consider and plan around both student and staff wellbeing.

- The Department continues to provide its full suite of services to support staff mental health and wellbeing. This includes services and resources aimed at addressing individual needs, but also tools and supports to help guide staff navigate through this time. Specific examples include:

  o **for principal class employees:** Proactive Wellbeing Supervision service which has been extended to include assistant principals during 2020; the Early Intervention Program for more intensive support; and all other Principal Health and Wellbeing services

  o **for all staff:** Personalised over-the-phone and video counselling through the Employee Assistance Program

  o **for all staff and all people managers:** Wellbeing Webinars cover a range of relevant topics for the current situation 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.

Cleaning

- Extended and increased cleaning arrangements have been introduced and will continue. This involves progressive cleaning throughout the day to ensure that risks of transmission are reduced for high-touch services.

- For schools under the metropolitan area-based model, the Victorian School Building Authority will ensure cleaning providers provide the extended and increased cleaning.

- For regional schools and metropolitan schools that are yet to transition to the area-based model, schools should arrange extended cleaning and altered schedules with their cleaning provider. Schools will be advised of additional funding for their school to undertake this cleaning.

- For cleaning and for personal hygiene product queries, please contact cleaning@edumail.vic.gov.au

Personal hygiene products

- For the procurement of personal hygiene products (soap, toilet paper, hand sanitiser) schools should actively monitor cleaning and hygiene supplies and reorder in advance of needing access to additional materials.

- continue to use your usual supplier; the State Purchase Contract supplier for office supplies, Complete Office Supplies (COS); or retail outlets in the first instance.

- if unavailable, schools can purchase products from their cleaning providers, if supplies are unavailable, schools should contact the Department at cleaning@edumail.vic.gov.au who will connect schools with a supplier for toilet paper and soap or directly supply schools with hand sanitiser.

- See Access to cleaning supplies and services for advice on enhanced cleaning, information about personal hygiene products and Procurement tips for high demand items for advice about procurement of consumables.

Managing a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

- DET has procedures in place with the Department of Health and Human Services to manage suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools.

- Contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 activate the established procedures if a student or staff member:

  o is a confirmed case

  o has been in close contact with a confirmed case.

- Schools must inform the Department by making an IRIS incident alert.

- DHHS defines 'close contact' as someone who has either:

  o had at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

  o shared a closed space for more than two hours with someone who is a confirmed case.

- Unless you have a student or staff member in one of the two above categories, you do not need to take further action. Communication should not be made with the school community. Temporary school closure can only occur at the direction of the Regional Director.

- If a school has a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Department will work with the school to undertake a deep clean and the school will be made operational as soon as possible.

Access to devices

- For students who are continuing to learn from home and do not have access to digital technologies, government schools should continue to loan existing devices and support internet access to students where possible.

- As students return to learning on-site, where necessary schools should ask that devices are brought to school each day and then allow students to take devices home each day to support out of school learning. It is important that families understand that devices remain the school's property and that devices support the school's learning and teaching program. These arrangements should apply until further notice.

Outside School Hours Care

- Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and vacation care services on school sites will continue to operate with the relevant risk mitigation measures in place. Schools using staggered start/finish times should liaise with their OSHC provider about any implications for OSHC operations.

- The Commonwealth Government announced on 6 April 2020 that the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package would replace Child Care Subsidy and payments from families until 28 June 2020. As a condition of this funding, parent fees are not to be charged during this period.

- For funding queries related to the Commonwealth Education and Care Relief Package , contact the Commonwealth Government on ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au or call 1300 667 276.

- For all other queries, schools are advised to contact DETs dedicated coronavirus (COVID-19) phone advice line during business hours on 1800 338 663.

School transport

- The Student Transport Program, including the Students with Disabilities Transport Program, will continue operation with enhanced cleaning and physical distancing from adults (driver and other attendants) where practical. Usual timetables will apply.

- The Department of Transport continues to work closely with DHHS and transport operators to implement measures to limit the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) so that students can feel confident travelling on public transport to school.

- Students should practise hand hygiene before and after catching school transport (i.e. prior to leaving home and at the end of the school day) and practise physical distancing at bus stops and train stations and interchange locations for other shared transport services.

Next steps

- To assist school leaders in managing this transition back to on-site schooling, a Planning Checklist and Local Policy Template have been developed (Appendix 2). This is provided as a resource should schools wish to develop a local policy to communicate important information to their communities. Schools should contact regional teams, use the resources available and linked in this guide and 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@edumail.vic.gov.au

Contacts

- **DET COVID-19 hotline:** DETs dedicated coronavirus (COVID-19) phone advice line during 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

- **Finance:** School Financial Management Support Unit: schools.finance.support@edumail.vic.gov.au or (03) 7022 2222

- **Cleaning:** cleaning@edumail.vic.gov.au

- **OSHC and other early childhood:** DETs dedicated coronavirus (COVID-19) phone advice line during business hours on 1800 338 663

- **Student transport:** student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au or 7022 2247

APPENDIX 1: FULL HEALTH ADVICE AND MESSAGE FROM CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE FOR RETURN TO ON-SITE SCHOOLING IN THE CONTEXT OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

The purpose of this guidance is to support schools to continue to provide safe teaching and learning environments for staff and students as schools transition back to on-site schooling.

MESSAGE FROM THE VICTORIAN CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

As Victoria's Chief Health Officer, and as a member of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, and with the health, wellbeing and safety of students and staff front of mind, I fully endorse a return to on-site schooling for all Victorian schools.

As you know, since the beginning of Term 2, most children have been learning remotely in order to limit the number of people moving around the state and to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

This careful approach continues, and I trust that you have confidence in my view that it is safe for our community to have school students begin a phased return to classrooms.

I thank teachers, staff and families for their incredible efforts in helping deliver remote and flexible schooling and, in doing so, helping to flatten the curve of the pandemic.

These efforts, in addition to significant testing, mean we are now in a position to begin moving back to face-to-face teaching.

This is in addition to the available evidence that largely indicates that transmission between children in the school environment is low.

This growing evidence, coupled with low levels of community transmission in Victoria, means that the risk posed to staff and students returning to on-site schooling at this time is very low.

As we begin this transition, the following guidance provides some sensible steps schools can take.

Everyone in the Victorian community has a role to play in protecting themselves and keeping the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) suppressed.

Thank you for your incredible contribution to Victoria's response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Adj Clin Prof Brett Sutton

Victorian Chief Health Officer

ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Schools should consider a variety of strategies to support physical distancing and good hygiene practices to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission within the practical limitations of a school environment. The following actions are to be considered, adapted and implemented as necessary according to the education setting and the individual needs of the staff, students and the wider school community.

Attendance on-site

Perhaps the most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), is to ensure that any unwell staff, children and young people remain at home.

While the risk of transmission of the virus is very low, staff or students most at risk of severe illness should individually assess appropriateness for on-site attendance at this time with support from their medical practitioner.

As the main risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school environment is between adults, it is important that visitors to school grounds are limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations.

- All unwell staff and students must stay home.

- Parents/carers of students with complex medical needs (including those with compromised immune systems), should seek advice from the student's medical practitioner to support decision-making about whether on-site education is suitable, noting that this advice may change depending on the status of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Victoria. This is in line with the DET Health Care Needs policy.

- In line with other members of the community, teachers and staff may be at greater risk of more serious illness if they are infected with coronavirus (COVID-19) if they are:

  o aged 70 years and over

  o aged 65 years and over and have chronic medical conditions

  o of any age and have a compromised immune system

  o Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and are aged over 50 with chronic medical conditions.

Such teachers and staff may be considered vulnerable and should take additional care to protect themselves and consider working from home. Also see DHHS Fact sheet for 'at-risk' groups in the community.

- Visitors to school grounds should be limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations (e.g. student health and wellbeing services, specialist curriculum programs, maintenance workers).

- Additional staff, including parent volunteers, should be discouraged from attending school at this time. Activities dependent on and involving parents (e.g. specialist programs, 1:1 reading) should be cancelled.

- Parent-teacher information sessions and interviews should meet physical distancing requirements of 1.5m between adults, or else be replaced with virtual alternatives.

- Activities that involve on-site attendance by students from different educational institutions (e.g. interschool sport or interschool debating) should not take place or be replaced, where possible, with virtual alternatives.

- School assemblies, excursions, camps and other non-essential large gatherings must be postponed or adapted considering use of technology.

Hygiene

Everyone can protect themselves and prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) by continuing effective hand hygiene. Enhanced hygiene measures should continue during the return to on-site teaching and learning.

- All staff and students should undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet. This should be directed or supervised by staff where required.

- Where soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser should be provided in every occupied room.

- It is recommended that students do not drink directly from drinking fountains at this time. Instead they should bring their own water bottle for use (and refilling) at school.

- The Department of Education and Training Students Using Mobile Phones policy remains in place. Staff and students should be reminded to clean their phone regularly.

- Where relevant, ensure the highest hygiene practices amongst food handlers where these services are operating, as per the Department of Education and Training Safe Food Handling policy. Sharing of food should not occur.

School arrival and departure

As the main risk of introducing coronavirus (COVID-19) to the school environment is from adults, close proximity between adult members of the school community should be avoided, particularly during school drop-off and pick-up.

- Schools should encourage staff and parents to observe physical distancing measures by not congregating in areas inside or around the school.

- Local school arrangements to practice physical distancing and minimise interaction of students and adults within the school and at school entry points may include:
  o staggered drop off and pick-up times to reduce the number of adults congregating at the school gate or outside classrooms
  o placing dots at the school gate to encourage spacing between adults
  o encouraging parents to enter the school grounds only when essential to do so and contacting the school by phone or email as required.

- Encourage non-contact greetings.

- Schools should not conduct wide-scale temperature checking of students as there is limited evidence to demonstrate the value of such checks.

Considerations for teaching and learning environments

Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not always be practical in education settings. Physical distancing is most important between adults.

Reducing mixing between different cohorts (either classes or year levels) is recommended as a precautionary measure to minimise risk of spread of transmission and aid containment in the rare event of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) on site.

- Promote fresh air flow indoors and maximise use of outdoor learning areas or environments with enhanced ventilation where possible and as practical depending on weather conditions.

- Mixing of staff and students between rooms should be avoided where possible.

- Local school arrangements to reduce mixing between students and staff from different classes or year levels outside of the learning environment may continue to be of use as precautionary measures and include:

  o staggering of break times and separating different classes or year levels when outdoors

  o considering the order and pace in which classrooms are vacated

  o organising student traffic in corridors and locker bays (e.g. dividing the corridor for traffic direction).

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

Considerations for offices and staff facilities

As the greatest risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school environment is between adults, close proximity between staff should be avoided where possible and especially in offices and staff rooms.

- Workstations should be spaced out as much as possible, and the number of staff in offices limited. This might mean re-locating staff to other spaces (e.g. library or unused classrooms).

- In line with other workplaces across Victoria, remind staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as possible in the reception, staff room and offices.

Cleaning and facilities management

Environmental cleaning, coupled with regular hand hygiene, remains important to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission.

- Continued extension of routine environmental cleaning, including progressive cleaning throughout the day to ensure that risks of transmission are reduced for high-touch services. See Access to cleaning supplies and services.

- Schools should consider the necessity of using shared items or equipment at this time. Such items may include shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, musical instruments etc. Hand hygiene immediately before and after use of shared equipment is recommended. Risk can be further minimised by users of high-touch shared equipment wiping items down where appropriate, for example using a disinfectant/detergent wipe or cloth.

Sport and recreation

In line with community advice, reasonable precautions are still advised to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the context of sport and recreation.

- Playground equipment can be used, however students should be directed to practice hand hygiene before and after use.

- Swimming and aquatic facilities should not be used.

- Outdoor facilities are preferred for the purpose of physical education and recreational play. Where indoor facilities are used, please limit the number of students.

- Non-contact sports should be encouraged. Hand hygiene must be practised before and after use of any sporting equipment.

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 in to contact with someone for the purpose of providing routine care and/or assistance (for example, the use of gloves for nappy-changing, toileting, feeding).

- Standard precautions as per the Department of Education and Training Infectious Disease policy and related policies should be adopted when providing first aid. For example, use gloves and 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.

- Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), for example face masks, is not required to provide routine care or first aid for students who are well, unless such precautions are usually adopted in the routine care of an individual student.

Management of an unwell student or staff member

It is important that any staff member or student who becomes unwell while at school returns home. While it is unlikely that a staff member or student who is unwell with flu-like symptoms will have coronavirus (COVID-19) there are some sensible steps schools can take while a student awaits collection by a parent or carer as a precaution.

- Staff and students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough or sore throat, should be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible. Urgent medical attention should be sought where indicated. It is not suitable for an unwell student to travel home unsupervised.

- Where staff or students are experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), the important actions to follow include hand hygiene, physical distance and (where possible) putting on a face mask. See DET guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education.

- In the context of schools supporting students with complex health needs, if the care of an unwell child or young person is to be prolonged (for example, because it will take some hours for a parent to collect a child) and maintaining distance is not practical when providing direct care, gloves, gown and eye protection could be considered if available.

- Face masks should not be used in situations where an individual is unable to safely or practically tolerate a mask (for example, a child with complex medical needs including existing respiratory needs, and younger children).

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

- If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell it is advisable in the first instance to contact the parent/carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the student, and taking a precautionary approach, request the parent/carer to collect their child if concerns remain. A trained staff member could take the temperature of the student, where appropriate, to support decision making. Gloves should be worn for the purpose of taking a temperature.

- Staff or students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) should be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps. A medical certificate is not required to return to an education setting after a period of illness, however staff and students should not return until symptoms resolve.

- Follow cleaning guidance according to the situation of the case. If a student spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), clean surfaces immediately with disinfectant wipes while wearing gloves.

Managing a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department of Education and Training has comprehensive procedures in place with the Department of Health and Human Services to manage suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools.

- Contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 to discuss what to do next if a student or staff member:
  - is a confirmed case
  - has been in close contact with a confirmed case.
- Schools should also inform the Department by making an IRIS incident alert.
- Department of Health and Human Services defines 'close contact' as someone who has either:
  - had at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
  - shared a closed space for more than two hours with someone who is a confirmed case.

Unless you have a student or staff member in one of the two above categories, you do not need to take further action, unless directed to do so.

APPENDIX 2: PLANNING CHECKLIST AND LOCAL POLICY TEMPLATE

RETURN TO SCHOOL PLANNING CHECKLIST

This Return to School Planning Checklist is to support transition to on-site schooling in Term 2, 2020, along with the Return to School Operations Guide. A Policy Template, for your optional use, can be found here.

Immediate planning priorities

☑ Advise school community about return to on-site schooling and attendance expectations
Communicate with staff about return to school date
Ensure adequate cleaning supplies, monitor and reorder proactively.

☑ Seek advice and assistance if unable to source ade-quate supplies.

☑ Notify and support staff if they want to undertake voluntary coronavirus (COVID-19) testing

☑ Commence school planning to practise physical distancing

Student program

☑ Ensure students who are continuing their remote learning from home based on medical advice are supported with learning materials

☑ Develop on-site schooling timetable

☑ Continue to provide on-site remote and flexible learning programs for students where required

☑ Maintain student reporting requirements including attendance and student protection

☑ Regular communication with students and families

☑ Plan for monitoring and responding to wellbeing concerns

Staff

☑ Actively manage and allocate teaching and support staff (including CRTs) to support on-site and home-based learning

☑ Continue to promote and monitor staff wellbeing

☑ Support vulnerable staff working from home, maintaining regular communication about their wellbeing and work performed at home

School health and safety measures – coronavirus (COVID-19)

☑ Review your school's Safety Management Plan and email safety@edumail.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 074 715 for support

☑ Ensure unwell staff and students stay away from school

☑ Maximise fresh air flow indoors

☑ Use outdoor learning areas where practical depending on weather conditions

☑ Cancel or defer school camps and excursions

☑ Continue to notify any suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) by contacting DHHS and making an IRIS incident alert

- ☑ Hold meeting(s) and establish regular communication and consultation with employees. Consider technology so meetings can be held remotely

School health and safety measures – Physical distancing and access

- ☑ Ensure unwell staff, students, parents and carers remain at home
- ☑ Manage access to school site by non-essential visitors and other adults, including parents and carers
- ☑ Manage access and physical distancing to school site by con-tractors
- ☑ Advise parents of car park, drop off and restricted access to school
- ☑ Manage and monitor student drop off and pick up including supervision at key times
- ☑ Manage access to and control of school car park
- ☑ Supervise movements between school gate and classroom for younger students and as required
- ☑ Maintain physical distancing of adults, including in staff office spaces, where possible
- ☑ Display promotional materials promoting hygiene and physical distancing in appropriate locations
- ☑ Consider reorganisation of the school day to decrease contact between classes and year levels (e.g. staggered start, break and lunch times where practicable)
- ☑ Minimise or rearrange gathering points
- ☑ Defer or consider using technology for school assemblies

School health and safety measures – Infection control

- ☑ Provide facilities for regular handwashing and ensure that hand sanitiser is provided in every occupied room
- ☑ Ensure adequate cleaning supplies, monitor and reorder proactively
- ☑ Ensure there is no sharing of food and that food handlers up-hold highest hygiene standards
- ☑ Ensure students do not drink directly from drinking fountains
- ☑ Prioritise increased cleaning of high-touch areas and shared equipment
- ☑ Seek advice and assistance if unable to source adequate supplies cleaning@edumail.vic.gov.au

School health and safety measures – Psychological wellbeing

- ☑ Monitor mental health and wellbeing of staff and ensure that they are aware of the available tools and supports on the COVID-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support for Schools page
- ☑ Prioritise your own health and wellbeing and talk to your SEIL and access the support services as required

Access to devices

- ☑ Plan the management of loaned devices and internet access to students

Outside School Hours Care

- ☑ Continue to operate OSHC with risk mitigation measures in place

School transport

☑ Communicate with students and families that school transport will continue with enhanced cleaning and physical distancing from adults

☑ Ensure students practise hand hygiene before and after catching school transport