



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE -IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Friday 12th November 2021

Dear parents and carers,

As we continue to move through the Road Map outlined by the Victorian Government on the advice of the Chief Health Officer, there are a number of significant changes to the restrictions in place and the subsequent processes that schools must implement. These are all designed to provide a safe schooling and working environment for students and staff alike.

PARENT AND CARER VACCINATION STATUS

All parents and carers attending schools, including for drop off and pick up must also adhere to physical distancing, density limits, face mask requirements and practise respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene.

Parents and carers who enter school buildings must check in using the QR code.

Parents and carers who enter school buildings must CURRENTLY have had at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and must have had two doses of COVID-19 vaccine by 29 November 2021 or have a valid medical exemption. Proof of your vaccination status must be sighted by one of our Administration Officers. This information is subject to the same privacy requirements as all of the other confidential, private information that you share with us, and will not be disclosed to a third party.

Parents and carers who attend the front office for a momentary period, for example, to pick up their child, and do not have sustained contact with staff or students, are not required to show proof of vaccination. Please be aware that the density limit for the office area is three people, so you may be asked to wait outside in order to comply with density limits.

Parents and carers attending any event or activity inside a school building including, but not limited to tours, assemblies, Foundation (Prep) transition and whole of school events are required to show evidence of vaccination.

Meetings and other discussions (such as Student Support Group meetings and Student Achievement Conferences) with parents and carers who do not meet vaccination requirements will be held virtually.

Parents and carers attending school sites for drop off and pick up who do not enter school buildings, do not need to comply with vaccination requirements.

RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING PROGRAM

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved the use of rapid antigen testing for home use from Monday 1 November.

The Department of Education and Training is currently working with the Department of Health to roll-out a state-wide program for any new COVID-19 exposures on school sites from Monday 15 November. This program will help unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students to return to school as quickly as possible after being identified as a primary close contact (PCC) after a seven-day quarantine, instead of a 14-day quarantine.

We will have more information for parents and carers ahead of the state-wide roll-out, including factsheets, web copy, video content and other materials to assist with the program.

How the rapid antigen testing program will work

The at-home rapid antigen testing program is an **opt-in program** for unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated, students. Our school will provide you with rapid antigen test kits. You do not need to buy these test kits.

Should we have a positive COVID case or exposure at our school, parents and carers will be notified of any child (who is unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated) who has been identified as a primary close contact (PCC) of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

If you want to take part in the at-home rapid antigen testing program, your child must quarantine at home for seven days. On day six of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local COVID-19 testing site. If the test is negative, you must provide the results to your child's school, and your child can then return to school on day eight.

Students will then be required to return a negative rapid antigen test result each morning from days eight to 14 on school days, which must be reported to the school by 8:30am before they arrive at school.

Parents and carers should continue to follow current school policy and public health advice. If your child is unwell, even with the mildest of symptoms, they must stay at home and get tested for COVID-19 with a standard (PCR) test, regardless of a negative rapid antigen test result.

Our school will communicate with you as soon as we are aware that we have a confirmed COVID-19 case, including with instructions on how to conduct these tests, how to report the results, and support available if needed.

A pilot program was held this week, and from Monday, a state-wide roll-out of rapid antigen testing is one of many strategies currently in place to support schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information about what strategies are in place, please visit the [department's website](#) or call the department's COVID-19 hotline on 1800 338 663.

COVID 19 ISOLATION AREA WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Earlier this year, as part of the Department of Education and Training's response to COVID -19, our school was visited by members of the Department of Health. This team conducted training sessions for selected key members of our staff on the following for areas:

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Demonstrate the correct sequence for putting on (donning) and taking off (doffing) PPE e.g., gown, facial mask, gloves etc
- **Hand Hygiene** - Demonstrate the correct hand rubbing practice and understanding the importance of hand hygiene in breaking the chain of infection
- **Cleaning/Waste Management** – Understand cleaning requirements for different items based on frequency of touch, demonstrate understanding of different types of waste and practice waste disposal
- **Management of a sick child** - Outline how a student displaying COVID-19 symptoms should be managed in a school, demonstrate correct donning and doffing station locations setup

As part of this training, the Department of Health team identified that the laundry area of our school, which has a separate room, and a courtyard, was the most appropriate place for a child presenting with any COVID symptoms to be isolated in, with a staff member in full PPE, until they can be collected by their parent or carer. The reasons for this include:

- The need for the space to be as ventilated as possible by fresh air, but that the space be in a location and position that the air passing through would not exit onto another space where staff and students will be.
- The space needing to be quarantined for an hour after the student with symptoms has left, and then cleaned.
- The 'sick bay', being located in the office which would cause the office area to be a contaminated area (via ventilation) and then needing to be vacated, which would significantly impact school operations.

We understand that this will seem less than an ideal space for a child who is feeling unwell to be waiting for their parent or carer, however, we will continue to prioritise the health and wellbeing of our students as we move out of restrictions.

If you have any concerns or questions with regard to this information, please do not hesitate to contact me at any stage via my email Kirshy.McAinch@education.vic.gov.au, on the office phone 5447 3267 or on my mobile 0414 956 936.

With thanks,



Kirshy McAinch

Principal