

Advice for families re COVID procedures

In Term 2 2022, your child's school will operate with a number of COVID-smart measures that have been developed with NSW Health to minimise transmission and keep schools open.

These key measures include:

- rapid antigen testing (RAT) of students and staff who have COVID-19 symptoms or are identified as close contacts
- vaccinations
- maximising ventilation
- encouraging regular hand washing and continuing enhanced cleaning of schools
- assessing risk and applying appropriate safeguards across activities and events
- learning from home where face-to-face learning is not possible.

Close contacts attending school

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The announcement to ease the isolation requirements for close contacts was made on 20 April 2022. This will enable students and staff who are close contacts and have no symptoms to continue to attend school if they follow guidelines agreed with NSW Health.

Note that staff and students who have had confirmed COVID-19 in the last 12 weeks do not have to comply with the following guidelines if they become a household or close contact and are not required to self-isolate or test unless they develop new COVID-19 symptoms.

Close contacts attending school will need to adhere to the following in addition to the [NSW Health guidelines](#):

- They must notify the school if they are intending to return under this provision.
- They should conduct a daily RAT and return a negative result each morning before attending school for 5 school days.
- They (if in a secondary school setting) must wear a mask indoors except when eating or exercising.

Any visitor to a school site who is a close contact is required to advise the school that they are a close contact before they come on site. These visitors should conduct a daily RAT and return a negative result before attending. They must also wear a mask indoors at all times.

Students and staff at greater risk of serious illness, if they were to contract COVID-19, should speak with their health care professional to review their health support plan or COVID-19 action plan and speak with the school about any local considerations.

Staff and students cannot attend school if they are showing any symptoms of COVID-19. If symptoms occur at any time, your child should not attend school and should undertake a rapid antigen test (RAT).

Additional delivery of RATs will be provided for students and staff who are identified as close contacts and are returning to school. (See Mrs Wyatt)

- If the test comes back negative for COVID-19, the student should still not return to school until either:
 - The student no longer has any symptoms, or
 - A medical certificate is provided to the school confirming that symptoms are explained by another diagnosis (such as hay fever)

It is important that students do not attend school if they are unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19. Rapid antigen tests can produce false negative results and symptoms of other illnesses can also be similar to COVID-19, including flu, the common cold and stomach bugs.

If there is a positive case in your child's year or other grouping, your child can continue to attend school in line with NSW Health advice.

Schools are not required to keep students in their class or year group cohorts. This means schools do not need to stagger start and finish times and can conduct cross-year group activities and events such as assemblies.

Masks

Masks are not mandatory for staff and students in high schools. Staff and students will be supported to wear a mask if they choose to do so. Masks continue to be mandatory on public transport. This applies to students aged 12 years and older, and staff when travelling to and from school and during school excursions by public transport or by chartered transport services.

In line with the latest advice from NSW Health, masks are recommended for students and staff who have recovered from COVID-19, completed their 7-day isolation period and are no longer showing symptoms for an additional 3 days (from days 8 – 10 after receiving a positive COVID-19 result).

Additionally, mask wearing is mandatory for staff and high school students returning to school as close contacts for 5 school days.

Ventilation

Fresh air is the most effective form of ventilation to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Where there is no natural ventilation, schools will use mechanical ventilation to maximise fresh airflow in learning spaces. Using outdoor spaces will continue to be encouraged.

Hygiene and cleaning

Students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands regularly with soap and water. Schools will continue to use enhanced cleaning processes. Target areas include high-touch areas, hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and areas where students and staff move through regularly.