



COVID Safe Plan

13 October 2022

The following guidelines have been prepared after reviewing communications and directions from the Victorian Chief Health Officer and the Department of Education and Training.

COVID safe measures have changed but all Victorian schools are required to continue to implement important practices to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Schools must continue to take the important steps of ensuring air purifiers are in use, external ventilation is maximised, good personal hygiene is encouraged and face masks continue to be made available for staff and students who wish to wear them

The COVID Safe Plan, outlines the key health and safety risks, and guidelines and is available on the Schools website and intranet. In conjunction with this Operations Guide (Victorian Government Schools), it sets out the approach for managing safety risks. The COVID Safe Plan has been updated to align with the changes to the advice provided by the Department of Health.

The plan maintains the importance of the 3Vs:

- Ventilation,
- Vaccination and
- Vital COVID safe steps.

It is strongly recommended that students:

- who test positive to COVID-19 should stay home and isolate for 5 days
- should not attend school after 5 days if still symptomatic
- who are symptomatic but have not tested positive should not attend school
- advise the school of the COVID-19 positive test result.

Where students become symptomatic at school they should:

- be collected by their parents/carers
- undergo testing for COVID-19.

It is strongly recommended that staff:

- who test positive to COVID-19 stay home and isolate for 5 days
- should not attend after 5 days if still symptomatic
- who are symptomatic but have not tested positive should not attend school.

COVID-19 vaccination changes

The current mandatory vaccination requirement for staff, visitors, contractors and volunteers working in specialist schools ceased at 11.59 pm Wednesday 12 October. COVID-19 vaccination, including booster doses, continues to be strongly recommended for all school staff.

Rapid Antigen Test:

It is recommended that rapid antigen tests (RATs) are used by students and staff when symptomatic.

The Department of Health recommends that all Victorians should report their RAT result to the Department of Health online, or by calling 1800 675 398.

Staff are required to report a positive COVID-19 test result to Rossbourne on the day they receive a positive test result.

Students (or their parents) should also report a positive result to Rossbourne, on the day (if practical) they receive a positive test result.

Where a parent/carer informs the school by phone or written notification, the school should complete the Schools COVID Case Management Tool.

The Victorian Government have notified schools that they will continue to provide Rapid Antigen Tests over term 4 this year. As weekly and daily testing of staff and students are no longer required, RATs will be provided on a needs basis only. Parents and staff can request RATs (maximum 5 per week) by emailing or telephoning the Rossbourne administration. RATs will then be sent home with your child.

The ongoing availability of RATs to families and staff in our school will ensure that parents/carers and staff will have them should they need them if their child or staff member is a household contact or has symptoms.

Students and staff will do the tests at home and must report any positive test results to the school.

Families and staff must continue to notify the Department of Health and the school if their child or staff member returns a positive RAT result. Additionally, you should inform us if any of your children are household contacts.

If staff or students receive a positive test result at any time, they must report this through the Department of Health system ([Rapid antigen tests | Coronavirus Victoria](#)) or via the coronavirus hotline at 1800 675 398.

Students (or their parents) must also report a positive result to the school, this is so the school can support them, record that they will be absent while in 5-day isolation, and let the rest of the school community know there has been a positive case onsite and that they should monitor for symptoms.

All students and staff who return a positive result from a rapid antigen test should also follow the latest advice at <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/rapid-antigen-tests>.

[All RAT stock held by schools needs to be utilised by the end of Term 4, 2022 or sent home with students. This is because RATs need to be stored under 30 degrees, and stock left in unairconditioned buildings over the summer holidays may not be viable for Term 1, 2023.](#)

Staff/Students who show signs of cold or flu:

- Staff or students should get tested.
- Staff and students reminded they should not come to school if feeling unwell or if showing signs of cold or flu.
- Staff or students at school who show signs of cold or flu will be isolated from the school population prior to departure and wear a mask.

Face Masks

Staff and students who wish to wear a face mask should be supported to do so, and schools should continue to make face masks available for staff, students and visitors.

The Department of Health recommends that masks should be worn by a person who is a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 when leaving home.

Additionally, the Department of Health recommends that masks should be worn by a person who has COVID-19 for 10 days after a positive test when they need to leave home.

Rossbourne strongly recommend that all students and staff wear face masks whilst at school. The health and safety of our community is always our priority and as such may be directed by their teachers to wear a mask if teachers feel the risk of possible transmission is too high. Parents should provide a mask for their child to bring to school and encourage them to wear a mask, especially when indoors. Household contacts attending school who are over 8 years of age are required to wear face masks indoors unless they have a valid exemption.

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As an additional risk mitigation, it is strongly recommended by Department of Health that anyone leaving isolation on day 6 or 7, wears a face mask indoors away from home, and outdoors where they cannot physically distance. For those leaving isolation on day 6, wear a mask for 5 days but particularly the first 2 days. For those who are leaving isolation on day 7, wear a mask for 4 days but particularly first 2 days.

From 11.59pm on Thursday, 22 September, **face masks will no longer be required on public transport** or in taxis, rideshare services or tourism vehicles and will instead be strongly recommended, in line with the existing indoor mask recommendations. Face mask are also no longer required on domestic flights under previously changes in effect from Friday 9th September.

Face masks may be used as an additional temporary risk-mitigation measure in exceptional circumstances, for example if a school experiences high levels of or prolonged transmission.

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

When to wear a face mask in Victoria

It is recommend wearing a mask:

- for 7 days if you have COVID-19 or are a close contact and:

you need to leave home, or

you cannot maintain physical distance

- if you are caring for someone at home who is sick with COVID-19
- if you have any COVID-19 symptoms
- if you are with people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19
- if you are visiting or working in a sensitive setting such as hospitals and aged care facilities
- if you know you are at a higher risk of falling very sick with COVID-19.

Social Distancing

- Where practical please observe the following to keep yourself, your friends and your family safe.
- Where available utilise space and create a social distance of 1.5 meters between desks.
- Supervisors constantly monitor students to maintain social distancing of students in the classroom and school grounds.
- Students should practise physical distancing where possible. Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 meters will not always be practical in the school environment. In these contexts, a combination of health and safety measures should be utilised to reduce risk.
- Limit mixing of cohorts

It is recommended by the Department of Health that face masks are worn in indoor settings or outside where physical distancing is not possible.

QR Codes and visitors to schools

All visitors, contractors and volunteers performing work on school sites (both inside and outdoors) must have had at three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine or have a valid medical exception.

Schools must advise visitors and volunteers they must adhere to COVIDSafe requirements: physical distancing, face mask requirements, cough etiquette, and good hand hygiene.

The use of Service Victoria QR codes for electronic record keeping is no longer required. Routine school visitor record keeping arrangements will continue to apply.

Vaccinations

Vaccination is no longer mandatory for staff or visitors in any Victorian school, including specialist schools. COVID-19 vaccination, including booster doses, continues to be strongly recommended for all school staff.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has updated its recommendations around fourth doses of COVID-19 vaccination. From Monday 11 July 2022, people over 30 years will be eligible for a fourth dose. ATAGI recommends that people aged 50 to 64 years should have their fourth dose, while those aged 30 to 49 years may choose to have a fourth dose.

Vaccination is not mandatory for students, but vaccinations are strongly encouraged as the best way to protect individuals, families and school communities from further outbreaks and the spread of COVID-19.

Schools must treat healthcare information, including an individual's vaccination status or diagnosed medical condition (such as COVID-19) in accordance with the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

An individual's COVID diagnosis or vaccination status is not to be shared or discussed unless the individual (or their parent/carer) provides consent, or unless schools are legally obliged or authorised to do so (for example, when requested by the Department of Health).

Rossbourne also makes available influenza vaccination to staff.

Ventilation

Ventilation is important with increased fresh air flow into indoor spaces where possible (including shared spaces, staff areas and thoroughfares). Staff and students should use outdoor learning areas or environments wherever possible, including as an alternative to staff areas.

Natural ventilation

Keep all windows, doors and vents open as much of the day as possible and when unoccupied, if practicable.

Keep these openings clear of any obstruction to air flow.

Door jambs should be used to keep doors open.

Aim to open windows and vents that are higher or towards the ceiling during poor or windy weather.

Exhaust fans are to be used as much as possible.

Take measures to maintain thermal, noise and other comfort, such as flexible uniform and seating arrangements.

Mechanical ventilation

Air recirculation should be eliminated or minimised by setting air conditioning units to use external air rather than recycling, where possible. Not all mechanical systems can operate using outside air (for example, most split systems).

Demand-controlled ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on occupancy or temperature should be disabled.

Turn on mechanical ventilation during school hours including when rooms are unoccupied, and if possible ideally two hours before and after the use of a space. Where available, timers can be used to manage operation.

Use of fans

Fans are only to be used with other natural and mechanical methods in place.

Fans should not be used if a person with respiratory symptoms is in the room.

If used, ceiling fans can be operated on the winter setting (where air is drawn upwards) and at the lowest speed.

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Other fans, such as pedestal fans, should not be directed to blow air from one person directly past another and should be set to the lowest speed.

Bathrooms, kitchens, and thoroughfares (hallways, corridors)

All available mechanical and natural ventilation options in bathrooms and kitchens should be operated for as much of the day as possible.

Maximise natural and/or mechanical ventilation in thoroughfares and minimise gathering in these spaces.

The use of enclosed spaces with little or no ventilation should be minimised, and limit numbers in the space.

Poor outdoor air quality

Minimise using spaces that can't be ventilated with fresh outdoor air.

Schools are encouraged to avoid or reduce the use of spaces that can't be ventilated with fresh outdoor air, including spaces with windows that don't open or open to environments with poor air quality or other pollutants. Rotate the use of spaces that can be well ventilated if available.

Maximise the use of outdoor learning areas or environments

Staff are encouraged to maximise the use of outdoor learning areas and environments.

Air purifiers

Air purifiers are available in all class rooms.

Practise good hygiene

- All staff, students and visitors to schools should practise good 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.
- Hand sanitiser should be available at entry points to classrooms. Schools should provide age-appropriate education and reminders about hand hygiene. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol should be made accessible.
- Sharing of food is not permitted.
- Use non-contact greetings (not shaking hands).
- Use paper towelling to dry hands.
- Students should sit in the same chair during class time where possible.
- Restricted student access in main building administration area
- Stationary – staff to email requirements to Receptionist and then material will be left in staff room for collection.
- Minimal staff foot traffic through office – unless urgent – email / phone first.
- No students at copier in staff room.
- No bells, teacher to monitor time and send student to the next class or break.
- Disinfectant in staff kitchen re fridge, toaster etc – staff to be responsible.
- Signs are in place around the school reminding students and staff to wash hands and markers are placed on the ground around the school to indicate appropriate social distance.
- Encourage students to spread out and use all available ground space at recess and lunch time.

- Each teacher/staff member is responsible for cleaning/disinfecting their space and the room they teach in; tables, chairs, any high use areas within the classroom and door handles.
- Regular risk assessment of high use areas around the school will be carried out and these areas to be disinfected at the end of a school day.
- Students to bring their own drink bottle. No sharing permitted.
- Zoom assemblies are recommend if social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Student work to be submitted electronically were suitable.

Management of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in school

The Department of Health recommends that a person who tests positive to COVID-19 report that result to their employer, school and household.

Where a student or staff member is identified as a positive case, the following steps should be taken:

Principal actions: identification and notification

1. Parents/carers should notify the school by phone or written notification, the school should complete the Schools COVID Case Management Tool.
2. Students who report a positive result are recommended to isolate for a minimum of 5 days and not attend school until their symptoms have resolved. Students who isolate as a result of a positive COVID-19 test should be supported in the same way as students with an extended absence due to illness or injury, with learning materials provided to support their continued learning.
3. Staff should report the result of a positive test to the school.. Staff who report a positive result are recommended to isolate for a minimum of 5 days and not attend school during that period.
4. There is no longer a requirement for principals to inform the school community of a positive case associated with the school.

Schools must treat health information, including positive COVID-19 test results, in accordance with the Schools' Privacy Policy. COVID-19 diagnoses are not to be shared or discussed unless the individual (or their parent/carer) provides consent, or unless schools are legally obliged or authorised to do so.

Management of suspected case of COVID-19 in school

A 'suspected' or 'symptomatic' case means a person who displays any [COVID-19 symptoms](#).

A staff member, student or visitor who is symptomatic should be recommended to undergo testing for COVID-19. Parents of students who are symptomatic should be asked to collect their child from school and to keep them home until they are no longer symptomatic.

COVID Safe routine cleaning

The cleaning arrangements at Rossbourne are per business-as-usual cleaning scope on the advice of the Department of Health.

If there is an outbreak of COVID-19 the Department of Health or a Local Public Health Unit will advise schools if additional cleaning is required, based on risk assessment as part of an outbreak management plan.

Access of cleaning/disinfecting will remain available to each teacher/staff member to be utilised as required; i.e. tables, chairs, any high touch areas within the classroom and door handles.

Doors where practical will remain open to allow fresh air movement and reduce the need for multiple people to touch the door handle. No hand devices will also be attached to doors, where practical.

Camps & Excursions

All school camps & excursions will be individually assessed to identify if they will proceed. For additional information please consult the Rossbourne – COVID Safety Policy and Procedures for School Camps.

In planning for camps Rossbourne will conduct a risk assessment to consider the following:

- Limiting activity to the smallest possible cohort size (e.g. a single class group, or single school; or smallest possible group or number of schools for interschool activity)
- Holding the activity in outdoor spaces or large indoor spaces that allow greater physical distancing
- Considering the non-participation of persons (staff or students) at higher risk of severe disease from COVID-19 (e.g. who are immunocompromised or have significant co-existing medical conditions)
- Staggering of groups who participate in the activity

Prior to a student attending a camp or overnight stay, parents/carers must be informed about the COVID safe measures that will be in place during the camp or activity and must provide permission for their child to attend.

Parents/carers must be informed that if a confirmed or probable case is present at the camp while infectious, others attending the camp may be identified as household-like contacts. This will depend on the sleeping, living and dining arrangements in place at particular campsites. Household-like contacts are still permitted to participate in camp as long as they wear a mask when indoors (if aged 8 and above or have a valid exemption) and complete 5 rapid antigen tests within the 5 day period that would have been their quarantine period. A household-like contact attending camp during this period must notify the educational facility they are attending under these requirements.

Students will be requested to conduct a rapid antigen test at home on the morning of the camp and confirm the result.

Communicating and consulting with staff and families

Rossbourne will keep staff and families updated of COVID-9 safe practices and requirements to keep all people safe at Rossbourne.

Mental Health

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

Students

Rossbourne students' are encouraged to discuss any issues with their home room teacher or the school's Educational Psychologist.

Staff

Rossbourne staff are encourage to discuss any matters of concern with the Principal or HR Manager.

Staff assistance is also available from professional counselling and psychological services - see the Staff Handbook for details.