



COVID Safe Plan

26 September 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.

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 COVIDSafe Plan has been updated to align with the changes to the advice set out in the Operations Guide and Department of Health.

The plan maintains the importance of the 3Vs:

- Ventilation,
- Vaccination and
- Vital COVIDSafe steps.

Rapid Antigen Test:

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 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>.

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

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.

Household contacts attending school who are over 8 years of age are required to wear face masks indoors unless they have a valid exception.

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.

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

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

The Victorian Minister for Health has determined that COVID-19 vaccination is mandatory for staff who work in Special Schools. This includes principals, teachers, administration and education support staff, including casual relief teachers (CRTs).

All staff (including contracted teachers, student placement, volunteers working in close proximity to students) are required to have received three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine unless a medical exemption applies. Staff are required to show evidence of their vaccination status.

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.

A staff member who does not meet the vaccination requirements will not be assigned alternative duties in place of onsite duties.

Vaccination requirements for other visitors to specialist schools (not performing work)

Parents, carers and other adult visitors are no longer required to show evidence of a COVID-19 vaccination if not performing work or volunteering at the school.

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 suspect cases of COVID-19 in school

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

As soon as practicable after becoming aware of a suspected case in a staff member or student – and if that person has attended onsite while displaying symptoms, or 48 hours before they developed symptoms – the Principal must take the following actions.

1. Let the person know they need to follow guidelines in the [Testing Requirements for Contacts and Exposed Persons](#). If applicable, the effected person/s should follow the COVID-19 RAT procedure, which recommends a symptomatic person in a workplace takes a COVID-19 test.
2. If the symptomatic person is confirmed to have COVID-19, the Principal must follow the steps under the below section, *Management of confirmed cases and household contacts at school*.

Management of confirmed case of COVID-19 in school

Where a student or staff member is identified as a positive case, the following will apply (View Table 1 for scenario summary).

Principal actions: identification and notification

1. Parents/carers/staff should complete the [RA Test portal](#). If a test is positive to COVID-19 the Principal should be notified.
2. Students who report a positive result must isolate for five days and not attend school during that period.
3. Where a student/staff is a household contact of a positive case (that is, they have spent more than four hours with someone who has COVID-19 inside a house, accommodation, or care facility) they must inform the school. Household and household-like contacts are no longer required to quarantine as long as they take additional safety measures in the 5 days that would have been their quarantine period. Household contacts are required to inform the school that they are attending during the 5 day period.

Summary of actions to take

- notify the school if returning during their 5 day period;
- undertake daily rapid antigen testing five times within the 5 days;
- wear a face covering when indoors (if aged 8 years and above or unless they have a valid exemption);
- are not permitted to visit hospitals or care facilities unless an exemption applies.

They are **recommended** to avoid interaction with people at higher risk of severe disease from COVID-19.

If **symptomatic**, all students/staff must stay/return home, take a rapid antigen test, or get a PCR test if a rapid antigen testing kit unavailable.

4. Staff must report the result of a positive test to the Principal. Staff who report a positive result must isolate for five days and not attend school during that period.
5. Principals must notify the school community through a daily email (where applicable) when a student or staff member has (or multiple students or staff members) have returned a positive COVID-19 test result and had attended the school. The notification should include:
 - Dates of attendance
 - Affected group/cohort/year levels
 - Any relevant extracurricular activitiesThe notification can be provided to only the affected group/cohort/year level or to the whole school.
6. Ensure that staff or students refrain from returning to school if they remain symptomatic, unless it is known that their symptoms are caused by an underlying health condition or medication.
7. The Department will launch a new self-serve template portal for Principals to use in the event of a positive case associated with the school. Each template package will contain a message to parents/carers, a message to staff, and website/social media wording. The portal will be accessed through the [intranet](#); templates will be online before Monday 31 January.

Schools must treat health information, including an individual's vaccination status or diagnosed medical condition (including positive COVID-19 test results) in accordance with the Schools' Privacy Policy. COVID-19 diagnoses and vaccination statuses 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 (for example, to comply with a Pandemic Order). Further guidance on the handling of health care information can be found on PAL under [Privacy and information sharing – Health care information](#).

COVIDSafe routine cleaning

The cleaning arrangements at Rossbourne will return to the 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.

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 COVIDSafe 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.

Secondary school students are strongly encouraged to conduct rapid antigen testing at camps ie. each school day. Students should test at home on the morning of the camp.

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 - read the Staff Manual for details.

Table 1: Summary of student and staff scenarios

Scenario	Required actions for the staff member or student/family	Required actions for the school
<p>A student or staff member tests positive to COVID-19, either through RA test or PCR test</p>	<p>Isolate at home or in private accommodation for 5 days (inclusive of weekends) and do not attend school during this period. Inform the school, that they have tested positive to COVID-19. A negative test is not required to return to school following completion of 5 days of isolation.</p> <p>If they are asymptomatic, they may return to school on day 6. If they are symptomatic, they must remain in isolation until day 7. If they have symptoms after 7 days, they are strongly advised to stay home until their symptoms have resolved.</p> <p>As an additional risk mitigation, the Department of Health strongly recommends that you wear a face mask away from home indoors and outdoors when you cannot physically distance. If you are leaving isolation on day 6, wear a mask for 5 days but particularly the first 2 days. If you are leaving isolation on day 7, wear a mask for 4 days but particularly first 2 days. Consider taking rapid antigen tests before attending a workplace, including schools, sensitive settings or visiting people at higher risk of severe illness. If you are positive, stay home.</p> <p>Follow the Checklist for COVID cases.</p>	<p>The school must notify DET of positive student cases via the Vic Ed COVID Tool. The school should notify the school community that there has been a case at the school using the communication templates available.</p>
	<p>If a student or staff member tests positive through RA test, but they don't have symptoms or have not been in contact with anyone who has COVID-19 it is recommended getting a PCR test within 48 hours and stay isolated at all times until they receive their result. If the subsequent PCR test is negative, the student or staff member can return to school.</p>	<p>No further action.</p>

Scenario	Required actions for the staff member or student/family	Required actions for the school
<p>A student or staff member is a household contact or household-like contact*. <i>You have spent more than four hours with someone who has COVID-19 inside a house, accommodation, or care facility.</i> <i>Contact at school is not included in this definition, unless contact has occurred in a school-based residential setting, e.g. school camp or boarding school.</i></p>	<p>Notify the school that they are a household or household-like contact. Follow the Checklist for COVID contacts. Household contacts are no longer required to quarantine as long as they take additional safety measures, but are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notify the school if returning during their 5 day period; • undertake daily rapid antigen testing five times within the 5 days; • wear a face covering when indoors (if aged 8 years and above or unless they have a valid exemption); • are not permitted to visit hospitals or care facilities unless an exemption applies. <p>They are recommended to avoid interaction with people at higher risk of severe disease from COVID-19. If symptomatic, all students/staff must stay/return home, take a rapid antigen test, or get a PCR test if a rapid antigen testing kit unavailable.</p>	<p>No further action.</p>
<p>A student or staff member has been in contact with a case of COVID-19, including at school or at work.</p>	<p>If asymptomatic, students and staff should continue to attend school and monitor for symptoms. If symptomatic, all students/staff must stay/return home, take a rapid antigen test, or get a PCR test if a rapid antigen testing kit unavailable. On receipt of a negative test result, the student/staff member can return to school. If staff/students are too unwell to attend school, usual leave/absence policies apply. Follow the Checklist for COVID contacts.</p>	<p>No further action.</p> <p>The school is not required to seek rapid antigen test results from the students or staff unless a positive test is returned.</p>
<p>Staff/student has contracted COVID-19, completed their 5-day isolation period and is asymptomatic.</p>	<p>Staff/ students can safely return to school. They do not need to be tested if they have been re-exposed within 12 weeks of ending their self-isolation.</p>	<p>The school should confirm that the staff/student has completed their 5-day isolation period</p>

Scenario	Required actions for the staff member or student/family	Required actions for the school
<p>Staff/student has completed their quarantine period as a household contact and has returned a negative test result. However, during the quarantine period an additional member of the household has returned a positive result.</p>	<p>The quarantine duration for student/staff household contacts who are required to quarantine i.e. those who are not able to comply with the additional safety measures, is 5 days from the date of the first positive test of the household index case. Household contacts are not subject to rolling quarantine periods. If the index case remains in the household, or if subsequent cases are identified within the household, the quarantine end date for the close contact is unchanged.</p> <p>Staff/ students can safely return to school and do not require negative test documentation.</p> <p><i>Please note, if the staff or student becomes symptomatic, they should get tested and not attend school.</i></p>	<p>No further action.</p>
<p>Staff/student with a positive RAT (probable case) who receives a negative PCR test within 48 hours after the positive RAT</p>	<p>Staff/student can end their period of self-isolation period. They can safely return to school.</p> <p>Recommend that they notify school of negative PCR test result.</p> <p>If staff/students are too unwell to attend school, usual leave/absence policies apply.</p>	<p>The school should notify DET of the change in status of a student via the Vic Ed COVID Tool.</p>