

School Operations Guide

Term 3, 2021

From Friday 10 September



catholic education commission of victoria ltd
ACN 119 459 853

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For all Victorian Catholic schools

New guidance since the last version is highlighted **yellow** for ease of reference.

Regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA)

Based on advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer, all schools in regional Victoria except for Greater Shepparton will continue to provide remote and flexible learning except for students in the following categories who are able to attend on-site:

- A)** *Students in Prep to Year 2 and students in Units 3/4 VCE and final year VCAL and IB*
- B)** *Children who have been previously been attending because their parent/s and/or carer/s were considered [authorised workers](#)*
- C)** *Children experiencing vulnerability, including:*
 - a. in out-of-home care
 - b. deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family or family violence service, and assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home
 - c. identified by a school or early childhood service as vulnerable, (including via referral from a government agency, or funded family or family violence service, homeless or youth justice service or mental health or other health service)
 - d. Where a parent/carer indicates that a student with a disability is vulnerable because they cannot learn from home, and/or informs the school the student is vulnerable due to family stress, the school must provide on-site supervision for that student. This may apply to students enrolled in specialist schools and students with a disability enrolled in mainstream schools.

School staff moving between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria will also be required to undertake twice weekly COVID-19 PCR testing to help keep our schools safe; refer to section 6: *Testing requirements for moving between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria*.

Students and staff who live in regional Victoria and are enrolled in or work in a school in metropolitan Melbourne will continue with remote and flexible working arrangements in place in metropolitan Melbourne.

If you live in regional Victoria and need to travel into metropolitan Melbourne for your work or if you live in metropolitan Melbourne and work in a school in regional Victoria, an [authorised worker permit](#) is required

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) programs in regional Victoria can operate for students eligible for onsite learning or supervision and care

Metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA – continuation of remote and flexible learning

All schools in metropolitan Melbourne and in Greater Shepparton will continue to provide remote and flexible learning except for students in the following categories who are eligible for on-site supervision and care:

Category A

- Children where both parents and or carers are considered [authorised workers](#) who cannot work from home, work for an essential provider and where no other supervision arrangements can be made:
 - Where there are two parents/carers, both must be essential workers, working outside the home in order for their children to be eligible for on-site provision.
 - For single parents/ carers, the essential worker must be working outside the home in order for their children to be eligible for on-site provision.

Category B

- Children experiencing vulnerability, including:
 - in out-of-home care
 - deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family or family violence service, and assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home
 - identified by a school or early childhood service as vulnerable, (including via referral from a government agency, or funded family or family violence service, homeless or youth justice service or mental health or other health service)
 - Schools are asked to particularly consider the current vulnerability of children of Afghan heritage for the remainder of this term.
 - Where a parent/carer indicates that a **student with a disability** is vulnerable because they cannot learn from home, and/or informs the school the student is vulnerable due to family stress, the school must provide on-site supervision for that student. This may apply to students enrolled in specialist schools and students with a disability enrolled in mainstream schools. **Contact your diocesan education office if you require further advice.**

Authorised worker permits for on-site supervision

Parents and carers will only be able to request on-site supervision for their child/ren in **Category A** if they hold a permit as an [authorised worker](#). Schools should make an on-site attendance form available to parents/carers who require on-site learning for their child/ren. **A copy of a permit/s must be submitted as soon as practicable after issuance for those seeking Category A on-site supervision.** A permit is not required for accessing on-site supervision under Category B.

In rare circumstances a parent/carer does not need a worker permit. This includes law enforcement, emergency services or health care workers who carry employer-issued photographic identification. More information is available [here](#).

The role of schools in authorised worker permit compliance

Schools are not responsible for confirming the validity of permits of Authorised Workers.

Schools will not face any penalty if they allow a student on site in reliance of a parent's Authorised Worker status, which subsequently turns out to be false. The onus is on the permit holder to attest to the permit conditions and eligibility, and any penalties that apply if this information is incorrect would be given to the permit holder.

NSW parents/carers working in NSW providing an Authorised Worker Permit to Victorian School

NSW parents and carers also need to complete a Victorian Authorised Worker Permit to attest that they are **permitted to leave home and attend work in NSW**, and essentially be classified as an Authorised Worker for the purposes of accessing childcare or on-site supervision in Victorian ECEC or schools.

An Authorised Worker whose **employer's work premise is interstate**, or who is self-employed, a sole trader, an independent contractor or sub-contractor, **may issue themselves with an Authorised Worker Permit, signed as both the employer and worker**.

The onus is **on the permit holder** to attest to the permit conditions and eligibility, and any penalties that apply if this information is incorrect would be given to the permit holder.

Collecting items from school premises

Staff and students can attend school sites to pick up laptops/workbooks and any other items that are **essential** for the period of remote learning (including collecting/submitting equipment and items essential for VCE assessments).

Staff and students who attend to do this must adhere to the face mask requirements, collect the items and leave immediately, remaining on-site for the minimum time required to collect these items.

Any unnecessary interactions with others should be avoided and physical distancing between individuals should be maintained.

Authorised worker permits for school staff

In metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA, a permit is required for permitted workers to attend a workplace and travel between their home and workplace. From 11.59pm Thursday 9 September, work permits are no longer required in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton).

It is the employer's responsibility to issue a permit to employees who are required to work on-site if the employee's work is permitted and cannot be completed from home.

All employees required to travel to and from work must carry their worker permit or have a digital version available on their device. There are significant penalties for employers and employees. Penalties of up to \$21,808 (for individuals) and \$109,044 (for businesses) will apply for breaches of the scheme requirements.

School staff (including Principals, teachers and education support staff) as authorised workers for the purpose of access to early childhood services

School staff are [authorised workers](#) (working on site or from home), and are able to continue to send their children to early childhood services, where no other supervision arrangements can be made.

For single parents / carers, the person must be an [authorised worker](#) (working on site or from home), work for an authorised provider and where no other supervision arrangements can be made.

For dual parents/carers, only one person is required to be an authorised worker to access early childhood services.

Schools should provide eligible teachers with permits as needed, as permits will be required at early childhood services from Tuesday 24 August.

If school staff had a previous APAW permit issued in 2021 prior to 11:59pm on Sunday 22 August 2021 for on-site work, this may be used for access to childcare. Those that do not have an existing permit or undertaking authorised work from home must obtain a new APAW permit that can be sited by their childcare provider to confirm eligibility.

School principal responsibilities

Principals are responsible for issuing permits to school staff and school council employees who are required to attend schools for supervision, critical incidents and assessments that can't be done remotely.

Your diocese will provide you with information of how permits will be issued to all principals to attend on-site. Casual relief teacher agencies are responsible for issuing permits to casual relief teachers.

Other school visitors, such as contractors or cleaners, must seek permits from their employers to attend schools.

Permits for school staff

For school staff permits, principals should determine those staff who will be required on-site.

1. If asked by the police the purpose of their travel, school staff can either:
 - provide the details of their school, including location, phone number and principal name and contact details OR
 - show the unsigned/ partially complete form if available (electronic or hardcopy)
OR

- provide the completed form if available (electronic or hardcopy).
- 2. Once school staff arrive at the school, the principal should finalise the form (where incomplete) for school staff attending on-site for future use.
- 3. Permits should only be issued to staff who need to attend on-site.
- 4. CRTs will need a permit. If they come from an agency, they will be given the form. If you employ them directly, you will need to send them the form and follow the steps as above.
- 5. Principals can issue permits for final year pre-service teachers working at their school.

To complete a permit for school staff:

- download it from the [Authorised worker permit webpage](#)
- complete the permit, including the employee's details and their expected work hours ensure an employee's expected work hours, place of work and permitted activity are correctly described on the worker permit
- ensure the staff member is aware of their responsibilities
- sign it and seek the employee's signature.

The permit cannot be altered once it is complete, however can be replaced as required.

Employee responsibilities

Employees:

- should be able to produce the address and phone number of their school and their principal's or employer's name and contact details if asked by police during travel to and from work
- must sign the permit
- may be required to show their worker permit from Wednesday 18 August to prove they are a permitted worker who can be travelling to and from work
- must carry their worker permit to work from Wednesday 18 August and photo identification when travelling to and from their workplace.

School-based assessments for VCE/VCAL

In line with eased restrictions in Regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton), year 12 students, and students in other year levels, who are studying Unit 3 and 4 subjects who reside in regional Victoria, can resume on site learning and proceed with essential assessments in line with broader health and safety controls in schools.

Schools and students who reside in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA, must continue to follow advice from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

(VCAA) to schools on VCE assessments and the on-site attendance for preparation and participation in permitted essential assessments.

To access this guidance, as well as stay updated with any changes, please visit:

- VCAA's website: <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/latest-news/Novel%20coronavirus%20update/Pages/SchoolsandEducators.aspx>

Students in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA must be tested for COVID-19 in the preceding 72 hours to being on-site. Evidence of a negative test is not required to be shown to the school but must be made available should the school opt to request it.

The COVID-19 testing requirement for attending onsite for Permitted Essential Assessments is for students only. Teachers attending on-site for the assessments are not required to be tested.

General Achievement Test (GAT) and VCE Examinations

The General Achievement Test (GAT) has been rescheduled and will take place on Tuesday 5 October 2021

VCE examinations will take place between 4 October – 17 November 2021

Further information on the GAT and VCE examinations will be provided directly by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

Other arrangements for Victorian border communities

Students and staff who live in and are enrolled in or work in a school in a cross-border community area and **attend a school in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA)** will be able to attend on-site **if they meet the eligibility criteria as per the above categories** (Page 4).

Students and staff who live in cross-border communities in bordering states and are enrolled in or work in a school **in metropolitan Melbourne (excluding Greater Shepparton)** will be able to attend on-site **if they meet the eligibility criteria as per the above categories** (Page 4).

The City of Wagga Wagga, Hay Shire Council, Lockhart Shire Council and Murrumbidgee Council are not included in the cross-border bubble. The cross-border area has been further reduced, with the following LGAs removed from 11.59pm Thurs 2 Sept:

Victoria: Bendigo, Shepparton, Benalla, Buloke, Loddon, Yarriambiack

NSW: Broken Hill, Edward River.

See also Cross-border permits guidance in this Operations Guide (page 26).

Testing requirements for moving between metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA and regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA)

Any staff crossing in and out of metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA will need to get tested for COVID-19 twice a week. This includes both:

- Staff who live in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA) who work in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA
- Staff who live in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA who work in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA).

For the period 10 September-17 September, 2021 this means the first test needs to occur within 72 hours after finishing the first day back for onsite learning and then again three days after their initial test.

Staff do not need to isolate following their test and can attend work while waiting for their test result.

As has been the case throughout the pandemic, if any staff present symptoms of COVID-19 they should not attend on site but get tested and isolate immediately.

Student attendance

Student attendance in both on-site and remote, must be recorded.

On-site supervision

On-site supervision must continue to be available in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA and students in Year 3 to 11 in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton), but only for students in the categories listed above (Pages 4/5), for the purpose of providing continuity of teaching, learning and support.

When on-site supervision is provided, hand sanitiser will be available at the entry points to classrooms and education will be provided on hand hygiene. Physical distancing will be implemented in classrooms to the extent feasible and unwell students will be excluded from attending.

The learning program delivered on-site will be the same as the learning program delivered to students undertaking remote learning. Students attending on-site will be supervised by staff on-site but follow the teaching and learning program provided by their classroom teacher.

Students attending on-site must be supervised at all times by staff with either current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration or a Working with Children Check. Education Support staff can provide direct support to and supervision of students, provided they have access to support from a VIT registered teacher.

School boarding premises and Medium-Term Residential Programs (MTRP)

Staff currently located in metropolitan Melbourne but work in a regional Victorian boarding school or MTRP, will require an authorised worker permit to travel to regional Victoria for work. Staff moving between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria are required to have twice weekly polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing PCR testing.

Students and staff who live in regional Victoria and are enrolled in or work in a boarding school but are currently not onsite, or MTRP in metropolitan Melbourne, will continue with remote and flexible working arrangements.

Vulnerable students or children of essential workers can return to metropolitan Melbourne to undertake on-site learning within a boarding premise or MTRP. These students would then be subject to metropolitan Melbourne Stay at Home restrictions.

Remote and flexible learning programs

Learning programs in **metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA** and **Years 3 to 11 in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA)** must be in place that ensure a learning program consistent with the guidelines below is delivered during this period to enable continued student learning growth. It is imperative that information about the planned and structured program is communicated to parents/carers.

The following are the daily minimum guidelines schools are expected to meet:

- Schools should ensure adequate provision is made in learning programs for 2 hours a week of Religious Education.
- For students in **Prep to Grade 2**, schools will provide learning programs that include the following as a minimum:
 - literacy activities that take a total of about 45-60 minutes
 - numeracy activities of about 30-45 minutes
 - additional learning areas, play-based learning and physical activity of about 30-45 minutes.
- For students in **Grades 3 to 6 and Years 7 to 10**, schools will provide learning programs that include the following, as a minimum:
 - Literacy: 45-60 minutes
 - Numeracy: 30-45 minutes
 - Physical activities: 30 minutes
 - Additional curriculum areas: 90 minutes

- For students in the **senior secondary years**, teachers will provide learning resources and tasks that enable students to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes defined in the relevant VCE study designs and VCAL strands.

Schools must continue to deliver the **Tutor Learning Initiative** using remote learning and should provide further extension learning activities as appropriate for individual students.

Schools should continue to make as much use as possible of the remote delivery and wider resources available through the High Ability Program, and of the remote learning programs provided by Tech Schools, KIOSC and Science and Mathematics Specialist Centres.

Where appropriate, for students with disabilities and students in specialist schools who may be ungraded, teachers will be guided by age-equivalent daily minimum guidelines, with consideration of the student's stage of learning and individual education plan.

Please contact your diocesan education office or other regional staff for support or assistance.

Staff arrangements

The principal retains full authority for the management of the school workforce, and it continues to be the principal's responsibility to make the school-based decisions required to deliver education objectives in accordance with the [Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018](#) (VCEMEA 2018).

Where teachers and support staff are not required on-site, they must work from home.

Where possible, school leadership should be represented on-site. Principals will need to ensure that there are sufficient staff on-site to run the school's teaching and learning programs. Principals should consult their staff to identify those willing and able to work on-site. All specialist school staff will be required to be available to work on-site, except those medically vulnerable. They should ensure staff are consulted on, and have input into, the ways work may be organised and allocated.

Staff work hours at home should be consistent with the attendance arrangements already in place at each school and determined in accordance with the school's local consultative arrangements. Schools should communicate these hours of work to parents/carers and indicate that teachers and support staff are not required and will not necessarily be available to students or families/ carers outside these hours. Staff working from home, including teachers and education support staff, will not visit or work in students' homes. Working alone or in isolation from others presents hazards of which employees should be made aware, including impacts on mental wellbeing. Principals and school staff are encouraged to develop a program of regular contact with staff who are working from home.

If it is necessary to identify which staff are to work on-site either for a specified day or days or as part of a roster to meet the above requirements, the school should follow procedures determined at the school using the school's consultative procedures or in the absence of local arrangements the following process should be used:

- a) The principal will notify all staff they are seeking volunteers to be available to work onsite for a specified day or days or as part of a roster.
- b) Where it has been identified that there are insufficient staff to meet the needs of the school, the principal will provide an opportunity for the employees to provide reasons why they should not be considered for work on-site for a specified day or days or as part of a roster.
- c) The principal will take into account the overall work needs of the school and the submissions from individual employees in accordance with (c) above in determining which staff will be required to work on-site for a specified day or days or as part of a roster.
- d) The principal will make every effort to ensure that an employee is not identified to work on-site where there are compelling personal compassionate grounds pertaining to that employee.

School staff working on-site to support a school's supervision program are able to have their children attend their usual school for those days they are working on-site and where no other supervision arrangements can be made.

Staff and student vaccinations

As part of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination roll-out, all school staff and all students aged 16 and over are now eligible to receive a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine.

Young people aged 12-15 years are also eligible to receive a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine if they:

- Have an [underlying medical condition](#)
- Are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Information about vaccines and eligibility can be found on the Department of Health website: [Who can get vaccinated against COVID-19 | Coronavirus Victoria.](#)

Notwithstanding the extension of operating hours for some vaccination centres, some staff may have difficulty booking a vaccination appointment outside school hours. Where this is the case, principals should approve leave to facilitate attendance at a vaccination appointment without impact to an employee's personal leave balance. Any leave required subsequent to a vaccination for an adverse reaction is to be taken as personal leave. When booking a vaccination appointment, staff should seek approval from their principal to minimise the impact of any leave on the school's operations.

Schools are requested to exercise flexibility to enable staff to access vaccination appointments.

For guidance on schools not governed by MACS, please discuss this with the relevant diocesan education office or employer representative.

Priority access for final year staff and students

To help support the safe conduct of end-of-year exams, the Victorian Government has announced a vaccination blitz for final year school students, their teachers and for VCE exam supervisors and assessors.

The blitz will begin on 7 September and continue until 17 September. During the blitz, final year students, their teachers and VCE exam supervisors and assessors will have access to priority timeslots to attend their vaccination appointment at a vaccination centre.

Final year students, their teachers and VCE exam supervisors and assessors will also be able to book their first and second doses via a dedicated appointment booking hotline.

These additional pathways will help support a faster booking process and minimise absence for students during their schooling hours.

The Department of Health will release details of the dedicated phone number and session information from Friday September 3. Bookings will open on Monday 6 September. Walk-in appointments won't be available as part of this vaccination blitz.

COVID-19 and Vaccination – Your questions answered webinar

- The Victorian Department of Health is hosting a live webinar for final year high school students, their families and educators to provide information on COVID-19 vaccination. You can join the free webinar on Friday 3 September, 4.00-5.00pm via this [link](#) (no need to register)
- Topics covered include:
 - Vaccines, development and safety
 - Accessing and consenting to a vaccination
 - How to book an appointment
 - Q+A with the panel
- This event will be held via Microsoft Teams Live. For access information, see [here](#).

Please note Microsoft Teams is not compatible with iPhone browsers. Please download the Microsoft Teams app to watch the webinar on an iPhone.

For more information regarding vaccination refer to the [Victorian Government COVID-19 vaccine website](#) and [Information for education staff receiving a COVID-19 vaccine](#) or contact the Department of Health Coronavirus hotline: 1800 675 398.

Staff who may be medically vulnerable

Advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer is that, as with other members of the community, teachers and other school staff may be at greater risk of more serious illness if they contract COVID-19 if they are:

- aged 70 years and older

- aged 65 years and older and with chronic medical conditions.
- of any age and have a compromised immune system
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and are aged over 50 years and with one or more chronic medical conditions.

Staff who are medically vulnerable should seek advice from their medical practitioner in relation to their on-site attendance. Where the employee is unable to work either on site or remotely, they can access personal leave by providing a medical certificate.

Similarly, staff who are living with or caring for elderly or chronically ill relatives should seek advice from the medical practitioner of the person for whom they are caring to determine if they can attend on site or should work remotely. They should provide a medical certificate if they are seeking to access personal leave.

Employees in the above categories should seek advice from their medical practitioner in relation to their on-site attendance. Where the employee is unable to work on-site, they should provide a medical certificate if they are seeking to work remotely for this purpose or to access personal leave. These arrangements should be reviewed regularly during the Term.

Employees in the above categories who remain unvaccinated, or following an employee receiving a COVID-19 vaccination in circumstances where the employee's medical practitioner's advice is that they remain unable to work on site, continued provision of remote work will be available where;

- the employee provides a medical certificate setting out the recommendation from their medical practitioner, and;
- the principal forms a view that it is reasonable, practicable and appropriate for the employee to work remotely.

Staff who are living with or caring for elderly or chronically ill relatives should seek advice from the medical practitioner of the person for whom they are caring to determine if they can attend on site or should work remotely. They should provide a medical certificate if they are seeking to access personal leave.

Students who may be medically vulnerable

As per the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer, COVIDSafe measures have been put in place ensure that schools are as safe as possible for all children including those with medical vulnerabilities, however independent medical advice should always be taken on an individual basis.

An individual assessment is always recommended and decisions regarding school attendance should be informed by the nature of a child or young person's condition, its severity and intensity of required treatment. In most cases, the presence of common conditions of childhood, such as asthma, epilepsy or Type 1 diabetes, should not preclude a student from attending face-to-face learning.

In keeping with expert public health advice, some students may be at higher risk for severe outcomes or complications of COVID-19, for example those with chronic medical conditions. Any student with a chronic medical condition should seek advice from their medical

practitioner about attending school on-site at different stages in the COVID-19 pandemic. Given most of these conditions are rare in children, it should be an uncommon event for a child to be determined by a medical practitioner to be unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical reason raising concerns about COVID-19, outside of an acute illness.

Assessments should be reviewed alongside notable changes to COVID-19 transmission in Victoria and where eligible students have received a COVID-19 vaccination.

Schools must ensure students with medical needs have an up-to-date health plans and accompanying condition-specific health management plan (such as an [Asthma Action Plan](#)), based on medical advice from the student's medical or health practitioner, and consultation with the student and parents and carers.

For additional information to support decision-making, see:

- [Asthma Australia](#)
- [Royal Children's Hospital – advice for respiratory patients](#)
- [JDRF – Coronavirus and children with T1 diabetes.](#)

VCE/VCAL/VET provision in TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers and other training organisations

Students **in their final year of schooling in regional Victoria** can participate in their VCE or VCAL classes, including VET studies, where these are held at TAFEs, RTOs or schools **within regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA)**.

The following health and safety measures should be put in place to minimise risk associated with learning outside the school environment:

- Mixing of students from different educational facilities and schools should be minimised whenever practical.
- Physical distancing should be maintained whenever possible, particularly for classes that involve attendance by students from multiple institutions.

Students who live in metropolitan Melbourne and attend VET/VCAL classes at a regionally based TAFE or other training organisation **must** continue to learn from home.

Students who are enrolled in a **metropolitan Melbourne school and Greater Shepparton LGA**, TAFE, non-school senior secondary providers or other training organisation **must** continue to learn from home.

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Students undertaking School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) may continue their employment if it is on the [Authorised Providers and Authorised Workers list](#), and they have an [Authorised Worker Permit](#). Advice on authorised industries can be found

Structured workplace learning (SWL) and work experience

All SWL and work experience placements planned should be deferred, or if that is not possible, cancelled. If SWL or work experience placements are deferred or cancelled, all efforts should be made to arrange suitable alternative arrangements for students.

If the placement or work experience venue is listed on the [Authorised Providers and Authorised Workers list](#), it is still recommended that these are deferred or cancelled.

For placements that count towards VCE or VCAL units, all efforts should be made to arrange suitable alternative arrangements for students so these can occur at a later time.

Only students undertaking a School Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship are able to attend their work placement, if on the [Authorised Providers and Authorised Workers list](#).

Outside School Hours Care programs

Outside School Hours Care programs can operate for students eligible for on-site supervision as outlined above. **School groups should not be mixed.**

Camps and excursions

Camps and excursions cannot take place at this time.

School events, gatherings and assemblies

School events, gatherings, assemblies, and non-essential meetings should be deferred or held remotely in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA and in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA).

Interschool activities and school sport

All interschool activities should be deferred or held remotely.

Physical education and intraschool sport

Outdoor non-contact physical activity is permitted **in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA**

Outdoor and indoor contact and non-contact physical activity is permitted **in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA)**. Where using an external sporting facility **in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA)**, density limits do not apply where there is exclusive use of the venue by single schools, however schools should continue to apply COVIDSafe principles to decision making, including avoiding interactions in closed spaces and physical distancing where practicable.

Use of playgrounds and other school facilities

Playgrounds

In regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA) playgrounds remain open for school use. Community use can occur out of school hours only.

In metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA Playgrounds are open for school use and **are available for community use after school hours only**.

Playgrounds in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA are open for children under 12 with only one parent, guardian or carer accompanying them, unless a second parent, guardian or carer is required for children with additional needs. Adults must not remove their masks to eat or drink. Playgrounds opens for community use must have QR codes for checking in.

Swimming pools

Swimming and all other pool use in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA cannot occur at this time:

- Hydrotherapy pools can be accessed for the purpose of the provision of hydrotherapy services subject to the requirements of the [Restricted Activity Directions](#). Group hydrotherapy services are not permitted.

Outdoor and indoor pools can be used in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA):

- There is no limit on participant numbers where there is exclusive use of a pool facility by a single school at any one time for educational purposes
- Where there is not exclusive use of a pool by a single school, the requirements of the Restricted Activity Directions apply. Schools should speak to swimming pool venues to determine how restrictions apply to the activity being undertaken.

Use of school facilities by community and sport groups

Use of school facilities by community and sport groups is not permitted, the exception being indoor and outdoor markets to obtain food and groceries.

Outdoor markets are permitted to operate on school grounds outside school hours with continued adherence to strict guidelines and controls in place, including:

- Mandatory electronic check-in of all attendees
- Prominent signage displaying Victorian Government QR code system at all points of sale
- Face masks required in indoor and outdoor settings, unless an exception applies
- Density quotient, that takes into account stalls, roaming space, and stall holders and organisers in attendance

- Cleaning and disinfection requirements before and after market operations, this includes high touch point areas e.g. poles and bathroom facilities, where applicable
- Adherence to COVIDSafe Plans including providing hand hygiene stations, physical distancing measures.
- Markets operate for selling of produce and take away only, no consumption on site

In addition, the following additional controls are in place to further mitigate risk of transmission:

- Stall holders should be kept to the minimum required to operate
- At least 1.5m between stalls
- All school buildings, toilets and playgrounds are closed to the public
- Cordon off the market area

More information is on the APAW list here: [Authorised provider and authorised worker list | Coronavirus Victoria.](#)

Singing, brass and woodwind classes

Singing and playing wind and brass instruments can occur in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA) if Department of Health recommendations to reduce transmission risk are followed. Recommendations include moving outdoors, increasing ventilation, physical distancing of 2 metres between performers and 5 metres between performers and the audience, reducing the number of people, or reducing the length of time an activity is conducted. Further advice on ways to reduce risk can be found in DH guidance: [COVID-19 transmission from air-circulating, wind-blowing devices and activities.](#)

Singing, brass, woodwind classes and groups in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA must be postponed or occur remotely during this time, unless for the purpose of essential VCE/VCAL assessment where VCAA guidance should be followed.

Other activities (in all settings)

The **Secondary School Immunisation Program** is an essential service that can be delivered on-site.

School bus services across the state will continue to operate as normal. Students are not required to check-in via a QR code service when travelling on private school buses or disability transport services, however school bus services **are required** to keep accurate records of students and staff (including drivers) accessing these services should this information be required for contact tracing. For more information, please see <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/school-bus-services>

Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of principals, teachers, school staff and students remains an important consideration.

The diocesan education offices of the CECV continue to provide a full suite of services to support staff mental health and wellbeing. This includes services and resources aimed at addressing individual needs, as well as tools and supports to help guide staff through this time.

For students

Wellbeing check-ins - In addition to recording student attendance, schools **must** have in place processes and procedures to ensure that student wellbeing check-ins take place each day, on a group and/or individual basis.

The [Mental health toolkit](#) has advice and resources to support student mental health and wellbeing. This includes advice on positive mental health promotion, curriculum support, how to identify and access support, as well as parent- and student-specific pages.

As part of the Mental health toolkit, the Department of Education and Training (DET) has partnered with Smiling Mind to produce [resources to support VCE and VCAL students](#) to remain positive and engaged in their education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional resources are available on the CEVN website:

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Wellbeing Resources](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Family Engagement and Support](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Supporting Learner Diversity](#).

Resources for principals and staff

In the Archdiocese of Melbourne, [principal wellbeing services](#) are available through Converge International for all primary and secondary school principals. Sessions for the employee assistance program have been extended and are now available from 9 am to 5 pm on weekends. Principals may also find Converge International's online magazine *Flourish* a useful resource for managing wellbeing. Work health checks will continue, with minor changes.

In the Diocese of Ballarat, principal and staff wellbeing services are available through [Converge International](#). Sessions for the employee assistance program have been extended and are now available from 9 am to 5 pm on weekends. Principals and staff may also find Converge International's online magazine *Flourish* a useful resource for managing wellbeing.

Principals in the Diocese of Sandhurst can contact [AccessEAP](#) for 24/7 employee assistance by calling 1800 818 728, making an online booking or using the EAP in Focus app.

Counselling is also available for staff from the AccessEAP employee assistance program, which is a confidential, free-of-charge service.

Child safety in remote online learning environments

Parents and carers are responsible for students' general safety at home or elsewhere.

Students and parents/carers should be given clear information about how and when they will receive learning materials and feedback.

Schools will create and communicate a schedule or calendar that shows what is expected of students in relation to the completion of learning tasks.

For students with a disability, students in out-of-home care and Koorie students, schools and parents/carers should continue to work together to identify and plan responses for areas of need.

If there are medically vulnerable students in classes who may not be able to return to onsite schooling when other students have returned (based on medical advice), schools must consider supporting continuity of their education.

Principals and school staff must:

- identify risks that are reasonably foreseeable for students who are learning at home
- take reasonable steps that are in the school's control to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students.

For more information, refer to the [CEVN website](#), which provides advice to all staff about how to support child safety in remote learning environments.

If school staff become aware of an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, they must follow all normal procedures for responding to and reporting child abuse, including the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#).

Health and safety advice for schools

COVIDSafe Plan for schools

COVIDSafe principles for schools should continue to be followed for on-site supervision.

The principles for maintaining a COVIDSafe school apply to all Victorian Catholic schools.

Droplet transmission

A person can be infected with coronavirus (COVID-19) by touching respiratory droplets like saliva or tears from an infected person. These are spread through coughing, sneezing, kissing, talking or singing.

These droplets can enter your mouth, nose or eyes and cause infection. This can happen by having close face-to-face contact, being within 1.5 metres of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19), or by touching a contaminated surface before touching your face.

Airborne transmission

Saliva or tears from an infected person can stay in the air after they cough, sneeze, talk or even sing. This means that coronavirus (COVID-19) can be spread through these tiny infectious particles suspended in the air.

Sometimes, the virus can remain in the air for some time in settings such as in indoor spaces with poor ventilation.

Contaminated surfaces transmission

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can spread when secretions or droplets from an infected person land on surfaces. The virus can live on surfaces for hours or days, depending on the temperature, humidity, type of surface, and how much of the virus is present.

If you touch an infected surface, you could become infected by then touching your nose, mouth or eyes. You could also spread the virus from one surface to another and infect other people.

For more information on the science behind COVID-19 see [Facts about coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

A combination of strategies is required to minimise transmission risk. No single strategy completely reduces risk and not every measure will be possible in all educational settings. Where some controls are not feasible, others should be enhanced. Strategies should also be adjusted over time in line with the changing risk of transmission in the community.

Additional measures to promote COVIDSafe activities should be implemented on school premises for students and staff continuing to receive on site supervision, including:

- limiting school access to outside visitors where possible
- reduce mixing between groups
- create workforce bubbles*

| Reinforce COVIDSafe behaviours | Create COVIDSafe spaces | Promote COVIDSafe activities | Respond to COVID-19 risk |
|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stay home when unwell • practise good hygiene* • ensure physical distancing (1.5 m)* • wear a face mask* • avoid interactions in enclosed spaces* • Get vaccinated when eligible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make hand hygiene easy • keep surfaces clean and implement enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection • promote outdoor air ventilation and do not have air conditioners on recirculate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • move activities outdoors where possible, weather permitting • adapt, modify or defer higher risk activities • limit school access to outside visitors where possible • reduce mixing between groups • create workforce bubbles* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep records and act quickly if someone becomes unwell* • use personal protective equipment • clean and disinfect appropriately if a staff member or student has been unwell while at school • manage individual risk |

* These items denote Victorian government [COVIDSafe principles for business](#) and may require adaptation for the school context.

The Safety Management Plan for COVID-19 ([COVIDSafe Plan](#)) applies to all schools, outlines the key health and safety risks and links to the latest guidance.

In conjunction with this Operations Guide, it sets out the approach for managing safety risks in schools in accordance with the minimum requirements for COVIDSafe Plans.

The COVIDSafe Plan has been updated to align with the changes to the advice set out in this Operations Guide.

Your diocesan education office's OHS team can assist in tailoring the plan to individual school needs.

Principals should consult with their local Health and Safety Representative(s) and Health and Safety Committee(s) (if applicable) to implement the health and safety guidance to the extent reasonably practicable and escalate unresolved issues via their diocesan education office.

Reinforce COVIDSafe behaviours

Key behaviours required for reducing COVID-19 transmission risk include staying home when unwell, performing regular hand hygiene and, where possible, pursuing strategies to support physical distancing. Face masks are recommended when physical distance cannot be maintained.

Education settings are uniquely placed to integrate these messages into everyday learning and practice, through role-modelling and formal and informal learning opportunities.

Students and staff should continue to be vigilant and remain home if unwell.

Hand hygiene remains one of the critical measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission. Hands should be cleaned with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or washed with soap and water for 20 seconds.

Students and staff should be encouraged to cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue.

Physical distancing should be encouraged where possible and density limits implemented in office spaces and areas generally accessed by the public, such as reception.

Congestion within the school and at entry points should be avoided where feasible by adjusting drop-off and pick-up processes, signage and one-way flow of individuals in more confined spaces such as locker bays and canteens.

Staying at home

The most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, is to ensure that any unwell staff and students remain at home and get tested, even with the mildest of symptoms. Everyone should consider their health before they start work or attend school and ensure that they are free from coronavirus symptoms and have not had contact in the past 14 days with a person confirmed to have coronavirus or a person suspected to have coronavirus.

Students with underlying conditions (such as hay fever or asthma)

If a student has persistent symptoms due to an underlying condition such as hay fever or asthma, the student should still be tested for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms that are different to or worse than their usual symptoms. Students whose symptoms are clearly typical for their underlying condition can continue to attend school.

Parents/carers should also consider getting a medical certificate from the child's treating GP to confirm that it is safe for them to attend school with persistent symptoms that may overlap with some of the symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough or runny nose.

Young children with persistent mild symptoms

For younger children (in Prep to Year 2) who have had a negative COVID-19 test that was taken after they developed symptoms, the decision about return to school should be made in conjunction with the child's treating GP. If the GP is satisfied the child has recovered from

their acute illness, is otherwise well and does not need a repeat COVID-19 test, the child can return even if they are not completely free of symptoms. Any change or worsening of symptoms will require review and repeat COVID-19 testing, if considered appropriate by the doctor.

Students with a negative COVID-19 test whose symptoms have completely resolved do not need a medical certificate to return to school.

Practise good hygiene

All staff, students and visitors to schools 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 for young students or where required.

Sharing of food is not recommended. Where this occurs, individual portions should be encouraged alongside strict hand hygiene.

Use non-contact greetings (not shaking hands, hugging or kissing).

Ensure the highest hygiene practices among food handlers where these services are operating, as per [Safe Food Handling Guidance](#).

Ensure physical distancing

A variety of strategies to support physical distancing among all students and staff should be pursued, where possible.

Staff **should** practise physical distancing of at least 1.5m between themselves and other staff members or adults wherever possible. Staff should physically distance themselves from students where appropriate and feasible.

Students **should** practise physical distancing where possible. Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 meters will not always be practical in the school environment and this may be particularly challenging in the younger years of primary school. In these contexts, a combination of health and safety measures should be utilised to reduce risk.

Density limits of 1 person per 4 square metres apply to staff areas such as staff lunchrooms and areas accessed by the public, such as reception areas. For public areas, signage must be displayed to indicate the maximum number of members of the public that may be present in the space at a single time.

For public areas, signage must be displayed to indicate the maximum number of persons that may be present in the space at a single time.

Strategies that can be considered to support physical distancing include:

- rostering access to shared spaces, limiting time in these spaces and promote breaks outdoors.
- carefully managing the movement of adults through all common areas, including school reception and staffrooms, and the timing of staff arrival and departure

- where multiple staff are required in a classroom, reminding staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as practical
- providing signage and rostering so that access to shared physical spaces and food preparation areas can be managed
- reminding students, staff and visitors, including through signage, of the importance of physical distancing where possible
- reconfiguring class spaces where possible and using all available space in the school, **using floor markings where appropriate.**
- marking the floor indicating physical distancing in appropriate locations (e.g. canteens)
- acting to reduce the congregation of adults around the school and reduce congestion. Schools can do this through strategies such as using multiple entry/exit points, creating spaces for egress in different areas of the school and providing appropriate signage to communicate expected behaviours
- communicating the strategies in place to parents through local signage and communications to school communities to remind staff, students and families of the need for behaviours that support physical distancing.

Avoid interactions in close spaces

Space out staff workstations as much as possible and limit the number of staff in offices. This might mean relocating staff to other spaces (e.g. the library or unused classrooms).

Consider opportunities to adapt indoor activities outdoors, **for example holding classes outside. Staff rooms should be closed except for access to tea/coffee/food making facilities.**

Where possible, staff to rest, eat and meet in outdoor areas only.

Use signage to promote physical distancing in more confined spaces such as locker bays, changing rooms and canteens.

For activities occurring outdoors, schools should follow the outdoor activities guidance and support staff and students to use a combination of sun protection measures when UV levels are 3 or above.

Get vaccinated when eligible

COVID-19 vaccines are free, safe and effective. Choosing to get vaccinated helps protect ourselves, our families and our community. For more information on eligibility and access too vaccinations see **Staff and student vaccinations** above.

Face masks in schools

Please see the Department of Health website at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au for the latest face mask requirements as advice may change at short notice.

As directed by the Victorian Chief Health Officer:

- School staff and secondary school students aged 12 or older must **always wear a face mask** at school, including when attending an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program, unless a lawful exception applies.
- It is recommended that children under 12 years of age and students at primary school wear face masks when at school, or when attending an OHSC program.
- Staff must wear face masks while teaching wherever practicable, except where removal of a face mask is necessary for effective communication.
- Face masks are mandatory for all school staff and school students aged 12 or older when travelling to and from school on public transport and when in taxis or ride share vehicles and recommended for primary school aged students.

There are a number of lawful reasons for not wearing a face mask, including for staff and students who are unable to wear a face mask due to the nature of their disability. This includes students or staff who have a medical condition, such as a breathing problem, a serious skin condition on the face, or a mental health condition.

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

Face masks at external premises

Staff and students attending camps and excursions will be required to meet any face mask requirements of an external provider/venue, including transport providers, unless a lawful exception applies.

Staff and students unable to wear face masks

A combination of strategies are required to limit transmission of COVID-19. Where students and staff are unable to wear face masks, other transmission reduction strategies, such as physical distancing, can be enhanced, noting that any additional or enhanced strategies should be aimed at the whole school or class population.

Staff members unable to wear face masks should avoid providing supervision or care of students with COVID-19 symptoms.

More information

Schools must display information and signage at school entrances and in communal areas such as staffrooms as reminders for staff to wear face masks when not teaching.

School staff should refer to the CECV's [Guidance for the use of personal protective equipment in education](#) to determine when additional personal protective equipment (PPE) is required and for information on the correct and safe use of PPE.

Create COVIDSafe spaces

The spaces where staff and students teach, learn and play have an important role in protecting against COVID-19 transmission, particularly surface and airborne transmission.

Reducing the need to interact with high-touch surfaces, regular environmental cleaning and cleaning of high-touch surfaces and good hand hygiene can protect against surface transmission.

Promote use of hand hygiene facilities by keeping them well-stocked and in readily accessible locations, for example at the entrance to buildings. Hand sanitiser should be accessible in every occupied room, particularly where access to running water and soap is not readily available.

Outdoor air ventilation should be increased whenever possible, including in bathrooms, to dilute the concentration of an airborne virus and to filter air recirculating in a space. Wherever possible, switch air handling units with central recirculation to 100% outdoor air and avoid use of fans in shared spaces. Where this is not possible, windows should be open as much as possible. Further advice on ventilation can be found on the DHHS website: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) transmission from air-circulating, wind-blowing devices and activities](#).

Make hand hygiene easy

Hand sanitiser should be made available at entry points to classrooms, and age appropriate education and reminders should be provided on hand hygiene. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol should be made accessible.

Keep surfaces clean

COVIDSafe routine cleaning arrangements should continue for all Catholic schools in Term 2. This involves daily end-of-school-day cleaning, with a particular focus on cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces, and the inclusion of some elements that were not cleaned every day prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Schools should consider the necessity of using shared equipment at this time. Such items may include shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, and musical instruments. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use. 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.

Consider adjusting how staff and students interact within the built environment to reduce contact with certain surfaces. For example, a simple measure such as keeping a door open will reduce the need for multiple people to touch the door handle. Consider use of plexiglass as a physical barrier at the school reception and canteen where practical and feasible.

Promote outdoor air ventilation

Schools are strongly encouraged to increase fresh air into indoor spaces whenever possible and to maximise the use of outdoor learning areas or environments.

Where possible, air recirculation should be eliminated or minimised by setting air conditioning units to use external air rather than recycling.

Door jambs should be used where possible to keep air circulating and avoid the need to close and open doors.

Further advice to assist with managing ventilation is available from the DH: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) transmission from air-circulating, wind-blowing devices and activities](#).

Promote COVIDSafe activities

Some school-based activities may need to be altered, deferred or delivered remotely to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk. Decisions regarding the types of activities that take place should consider the potential risk associated with the activity, the level of community transmission and available modifications to minimise risk.

Where appropriate and weather permitting, opportunities for outdoor learning and working should be considered as alternatives to interactions indoors due to improved ventilation.

Singing and playing wind and brass instruments must be postponed or occur remotely at this time.

School gatherings (ceremonies, assemblies, school formals etc.) are not permitted at this time.

Limit school access to outside visitors where possible

Visitors to school premises should be limited to essential school services and operations.

Principals are best placed to make decisions regarding what visitors are essential to the operation of their school, noting the following:

- Within **metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA**, schools should review the [Authorised provider and authorised worker list](#) when making decisions regarding the suitability of any staff or workers coming on to site (other than those directly involved in the care and supervision of students).
- Within **regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA)**, schools should review the [Authorised provider and authorised worker list](#) when making decisions regarding the suitability of staff or workers that reside in metropolitan Melbourne (other than those directly involved in the care and supervision of students). Only workers or volunteers permitted under the [Authorised provider and authorised worker list](#) to work in metropolitan Melbourne are able to travel to regional Victoria for work purposes.

Essential visitors include for example:

- Health and wellbeing staff
- Parish Priests

QR codes and record keeping

The use of Service Victoria QR codes for electronic record keeping is mandatory in all schools to enable the effective contact tracing of any COVID-19 cases.

QR code check ins are required to be used by:

- all essential visitors on school site (including contractors, external staff and building and maintenance staff)
- all parents who enter school buildings when on school site for essential purposes

QR code check ins are not required to be used by:

- staff
- students
- parents of eligible students who come onto school grounds for drop off or pick up, but do not enter buildings.

Schools are reminded that existing sign in and out processes should continue to be used to record essential visitor attendance, in particular the purpose of visits, for legal and regulatory obligations

Further information is available at:

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-qr-code-service>.

Cross-border permits

Residents of the cross-border community local government areas will now be required to obtain a cross border extreme risk zone permit to cross between Victoria and NSW from 6.00pm Friday 13 August and must have an approved reason to travel.

The state-wide NSW lockdown does not impact the cross-border permit system.

Cross border extreme risk zone permits are not required for people under the age of 18 travelling independently, but they must comply with all other conditions (only travelling for the permitted reasons including education).

If a student (under the age of 18) is travelling with someone over the age of 18, that adult would require a permit and would need to list the student in their cross border extreme risk zone permit application as their dependent/a person under 18.

If they have a permit, staff from the Cross-Border Community Area can still cross the Victorian-NSW border for the purposes of work or education (which includes childcare or early childhood services as well as universities and TAFEs etc).

The list of reasons Cross-Border Community Area residents can cross the Victorian-NSW border includes:

- Authorised work or permitted education (including permitted childcare and early childhood services)
- Necessary goods and services, including medical care and getting a COVID-19 test
- Care and compassionate reasons
- Getting a COVID-19 vaccination

- Visiting an intimate partner
- Moving house
- Driving someone who cannot drive themselves for one of the above reasons
- Travelling between places in Victoria where it is easier to travel through NSW

Residents can apply for a permit from 1.00pm Thursday 12 August at the [Service Victoria website](#) and via the Service Victoria app.

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

Standard precautions as per the DET's [Infectious Diseases policy](#) and related CECV policies should be adopted when providing first aid. For example, use gloves and an apron when dealing with blood or body fluids/substances.

Always wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser before and after performing routine care or first aid.

Reduce mixing between groups and create workforce bubbles

Stagger drop off and pick up times (noting operations of school hours should be not disrupted)

Use of multiple entry and exit points to prevent concentrations of students and minimise parents onsite.

Staff should not work across multiple schools in metropolitan Melbourne.

Staff in regional schools should also avoid working across multiple sites as much as practical, noting there will be some workforces who will need to work across multiple schools (i.e. health and wellbeing staff and casual relief teaching staff).

Professional development and staff meetings must be conducted online or deferred (unless essential face to face training for first aid, anaphylaxis, or infection control. In these instances, density limits of 1 person per 4 square metres apply.

Respond to COVID-19 risk

Any staff member or student who becomes unwell while at school with symptoms of COVID-19 must return home immediately and get tested, with a designated space(s) made available on school premises to support isolation where required.

Staff or students most at risk of severe illness as a result of COVID-19 infection should continue to individually assess appropriateness for onsite attendance with support from their medical practitioner, noting that these assessments should be reviewed alongside notable changes to COVID-19 in Victoria. Further information can be found in [Advice for schools and families on medical vulnerability during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

Good record-keeping in schools, including for any visitors, enables the prompt identification of individuals who may have been in contact with a confirmed case.

PPE should be used in line with the CECV's [Guidance for the use of personal protective equipment in education](#), with staff trained to understand when and how to use PPE appropriately.

Schools must notify their diocesan education office of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school, providing requested information and taking required actions.

Appropriate cleaning must take place following a confirmed case on school premises.

Further information about the required steps for the management of unwell students and staff can be found in the [Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) fact sheet.

Management of an unwell student or staff member

Everyone should consider their health before they start work or attend school and ensure that they are free from coronavirus symptoms and have not have contact in the past 14 days with a person confirmed to have coronavirus or a person suspected to have coronavirus. Staff members must stay home when unwell or if they may have been exposed to coronavirus in the past 14 days.

It is important that any student (or staff member) who becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms while at school gets tested and returns home.

The symptoms to watch out for are:

- loss or change in sense of smell or taste
- fever
- chills or sweats
- cough
- sore throat

- shortness of breath
- runny nose

Some people may also experience headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

Staff or students experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should be advised to get tested and stay home until they receive a test result.

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

Staff and students are not required to present a medical certificate stating they are fit to return to an education setting after a period of illness, however staff and students should not return until symptoms resolve. If they have been tested for COVID-19, they must also wait for a negative test result. Staff continue to be required to present a medical certificate in accordance with personal leave policy for periods of absence on personal leave.

Supporting students during quarantine

Schools are asked to provide support to the close contact student and their family during the quarantine period to facilitate continued engagement in learning and address wellbeing needs.

The relevant diocesan education office staff will work with the school to confirm that the student is following quarantine directions, as well as provide support to the student and family as needed.

The DHHS has provided [guidance](#) on primary close contacts, secondary close contacts, quarantine periods and more.

School site closures

Diocesan Catholic education office staff are working closely with individual schools and the DHHS to manage and respond to reported cases of COVID-19 that may include exposure to the virus at a school site.

The rapid school site closure, cleaning and contact tracing process, agreed with the DHHS, reduces the risk of any transmission occurring at a school site and ensures that school sites can reopen, and staff and students can return to onsite learning as quickly and safely as possible.

In the event of a confirmed case, schools should prepare for the possibility that at some point they may be required to close a school site due to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 having attended that site.

If a site closure is required, you will be informed by your diocesan education office and will be provided with full support by office staff.

Some simple steps can ensure that schools are able to manage the site closure process effectively and support continuity of learning for both students and staff.

Appendix 1 – Quick reference of permitted school activities

COVIDSafe behaviours

| Key actions for schools | Metro Melbourne (including Greater Shepparton LGA) | Regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA) |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Temperature checks | NO | NO |
| Face masks | YES – INDOORS AND OUTDOORS | YES – INDOORS AND OUTDOORS |
| Working across multiple sites | NO | MINIMISE |

Create COVIDSafe spaces

| Key actions for schools | Metro Melbourne (including Greater Shepparton LGA) | Regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA) |
|---|--|---|
| COVIDSafe routine cleaning | YES | YES |
| Enhanced hand hygiene facilities | YES | YES |
| Enhanced ventilation | YES | YES |
| Community use of school playground | YES For school use only Community use can occur out of school hours (see playground section for additional requirements) | YES For school use. Community use can occur out of school hours only. |
| Community use of school facilities (indoors and outdoors) | NO See Page 16 for the exception | YES See guidance page 18 |
| Libraries (for borrowing and as a learning space) | NO | YES |

Promote COVIDSafe activities

| Key actions for schools | Metro Melbourne (including Greater Shepparton LGA) | Regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA) |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Visitors to schools | ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY Visitors to school premises should be limited to essential school services and operations | ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY Visitors to school premises should be limited to essential school services and operations |
| Students placements | YES Only for final year pre-service teacher placements | YES All student placements (permitted at discretion of school) |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | Placements for all students can continue to occur in the <i>remote learning</i> environment at discretion of school | |
| Health, wellbeing, inclusion visits | ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY | YES |
| School tours | NO | NO |
| Excursions | NO | NO |
| Swimming and all other pool use | NO Hydrotherapy pools for the purposes of hydrotherapy services can be used (Group hydrotherapy services not permitted) | YES See guidance page 18 |
| Incursions | NO | NO |
| School photos | NO | NO |
| Camps and overnight stays | NO | NO |
| Assemblies (whole school and year level), formals, graduations | NO | NO |
| Kinder transition program | NO | NO |
| Year 7 transition programs | NO | NO |
| All sporting activities (indoor, outdoor, contact and non-contact) | NO | YES See guidance pages 17 |
| All interschool activities (such as debating) | NO | NO |
| Singing, brass and woodwind classes and groups | NO | YES Following recommended health advice |
| Professional development and staff meetings (face to face) | NO Should be conducted online or deferred | NO Should be conducted online or deferred |

Respond to COVID-19 risk

| Key actions for schools | Metro Melbourne (including Greater Shepparton LGA) | Regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA) |
|---|--|--|
| Keep visitor, staff and student records | YES | YES |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Maintain adequate PPE supply | YES | YES |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|