

Term 4 Operations Guide

Victorian government schools

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FOR ALL VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

1 Term 4 priorities

The following priorities for students and staff guide school operations in Term 4.

Priority 1 – Mental health and wellbeing

Our highest priority is the mental health, safety and wellbeing of every student and member of staff. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds and many students with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted across all areas of their education.

All available resources will need to be effectively mobilised to ensure support for every student, including our most vulnerable.

This means encouraging and sustaining motivation for learning and supporting the development of personal and social capabilities of students as part of the curriculum. It includes re-engaging students and families where needed and implementing targeted strategies for at-risk cohorts.

This also means ensuring support for our school staff, who have sustained efforts through multiple transitions in modes of teaching and learning delivery.

Priority 2 – Learning

Some students have been able to more quickly progress in their learning in the remote and flexible learning environment, others have maintained their rate of progress, and some have, despite their best efforts and those of their families and teachers, fallen behind.

Our priority will be to ensure those who have fallen behind can catch up and those who have progressed significantly can continue to be extended and stretched in their learning.

Student voice and student agency should inform how we provide continuity of learning and support for every student in this environment.

Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum remain a focus, with schools also adapting their teaching and learning program in Term 4 to be responsive to the needs of their students.

Priority 3 – Transitions

Term 4 is a critical period, particularly for the children moving from kindergarten into Prep, from Grade 6 into Year 7, and those in Year 12 moving into employment or further education and training. Some students with disability face a significant milestone transitioning from school to community engagement, vocational pathways and independent living.

Students in other year levels will also prepare for a change of teachers and new classmates.

A key focus of Term 4 will be to make every effort to ensure each of these end-of-year and beginning-of-year transitions occurs as successfully as possible. This includes finding contextually appropriate ways to conduct orientations and end-of-year celebrations and ensuring transition information captures additional details as necessary.

2 School operations for Term 4

Easing coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions

All Victorian students have now returned to on-site learning and there are no differences in restrictions between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

The Term 4 Operations Guide supports schools to continue to operate safely and effectively on site. The guide now reflects operational settings for the remainder of Term 4.

Many school operations and activities have resumed, some with restrictions and all with health and safety measures in place.

This Guide includes operations and activities that:

- remain limited or restricted in some way in line with community or business requirements
- have only recently changed.

Detailed health and safety advice to accompany school operations and activities is also included and applies to all Victorian schools.

The Quick Reference of Permitted School Activities at the end of this document summarises permitted and restricted activities for the remainder of Term 4

3 Other school and curriculum settings

Victorian School of Languages and community language schools

The Victorian School of Languages and Community Language Schools can resume on-site learning for all students. Mixing of students from different schools/educational facilities is no longer restricted.

Tech Schools, KIOSC and Science and Mathematics Specialist Centres

Tech Schools, KIOSC and Science and Mathematics Specialist Centres can resume standard on-site delivery. There is no longer a need to limit use to single schools.

Mobile Area Resources Centres (MARC) or Mobile Art and Craft Centres (MACC)

MARC/MACC services can operate with regular cleaning of vehicles – enhanced cleaning is no longer required. Shared equipment should be minimised where possible and cleaned between users where practical or hand hygiene maintained before and after use.

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

Students in years 10 to 12 can participate in their VCE or VCAL classes, including VET studies, where these are held in other schools. They can also attend these classes at Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Schools should contact their RTOs to understand any changes to their current operating arrangements.

Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) and work experience

All structured workplace learning (SWL) is able to occur on-site for all students.

Work experience has commenced for all students, except those in high-risk settings (e.g. residential aged care facilities, hospitals).

For more information, refer to the [Structured workplace learning \(SWL\) and work experience during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) web page](#).

4 Curriculum expectations

On-site learning

It is important that schools have some increased flexibility in relation to curriculum provision in Term 4. This is in order to focus on the priorities of supporting students who need additional support to catch up, continuing to extend and stretch those students who have thrived and enabling students to make successful transitions.

For this reason, the usual requirements related to substantial attention to all eight key learning areas remain suspended for Term 4.

This enables flexibility for schools to effectively support students to catch up on learning they may have missed in the key areas of literacy and numeracy.

The focus of curriculum planning should therefore be literacy and numeracy together with time allocated to physical activity. Schools are able to determine the extent to which other learning areas are included in the teaching and learning program at the local level.

5 Attendance

All students are now expected to attend on site.

See 'Students who may be medically vulnerable' section of this Operations Guide (section below). [Attendance recording advice](#) is available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL). Further advice outlining the attendance responsibilities of the school and of parents and carers, and the circumstances in which schools may need to support individual students to learn from home is also available on [PAL](#).

Extended student absence during on-site learning provision

When on-site learning is permitted, schools are not expected to provide remote and flexible learning where parents or carers of students elect to keep their child at home, except where this is based on medical advice.

Where a parent or carer indicates that a student will be absent for an extended period and this is not based on medical advice, schools can make the learning materials developed for and provided in the on-site program available for use at home, where this does not require additional work, preparation or production by teachers.

Students absent for an extended period will be able to submit their learning exercises and work for comment and feedback if learning materials have been provided, according to the same timelines set for those participating in on-site learning. Teachers can provide comment and feedback in the same way that they would for students participating in on-site provision.

In the case that parents or carers make a choice for students not to attend on-site learning and where this decision is not based on medical advice – teachers, and, where relevant, education support staff, will not be expected and should not be requested by parents or carers or students to provide additional advice or support to students. This includes additional advice or support about the learning materials provided. This includes by email, phone or other forms of digital communication.

Schools must take steps to ensure that all vulnerable students are able to attend on site where the school identifies that it is in the best interests of the child.

Any parent or carer of a child enrolled in a specialist school who wishes to keep their child at home can do so, and where possible, the school can provide learning activities for the student to undertake at home, consistent with the arrangements outlined above.

Students who may be medically vulnerable

As per the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer, given the current low risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the community, students with medical vulnerabilities can feel reassured that they can safely return to learning on school sites.

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 coronavirus (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 coronavirus (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 coronavirus (COVID-19), outside of an acute illness.

Assessments should be reviewed alongside notable changes to coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in Victoria.

Schools must ensure students with medical needs have an up-to-date [Student Health Support Plan](#) 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.

Please see the [Health Care Needs](#) policy for further information on the student health support planning process. 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.](#)

6 Term 4 on-site arrangements – school staff

With the return of all students to on-site learning, all school staff should resume normal duties on site in accordance with the *Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017*. Some exceptions apply for medically vulnerable staff as outlined below.

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 Victorian Government education objectives in accordance with the *Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017*.

Staff who may be medically vulnerable

As per the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer, given the current low risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the community, those with medical vulnerabilities (or their carers) can feel reassured that they can safely return to working and learning on school sites.

As with other members of the community, teachers and other school staff may be at greater risk of more serious illness if they contract coronavirus (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 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 or access personal leave. Staff who are aged 70 years and older do not need to provide a medical certificate if they are seeking to work remotely.

Similarly, staff who are caring for an elderly or chronically ill relative or household member do not automatically need to refrain from working on site; they should consult with the treating medical practitioner of the person for whom they are caring, to seek advice about working on site. They should provide a medical certificate if they are seeking to work remotely or access personal leave.

These arrangements should be reviewed regularly at the school level during the course of the term and each time restrictions are eased further as risks of transmission and case numbers decrease.

The [Medical Advisory Service](#) is a specialised support service for principals to help them fulfil their responsibilities in relation to employee health.

Teachers working remotely

Teachers working from home can undertake a range of duties consistent with their employment. This could include the following.

- Curriculum development and planning, such as lesson plans in the relevant study area.
- Development and preparation of learning materials and assessment tasks. For example, allocate the teacher to work with a small group of on-site teachers for an ongoing focus (such as Year 8 A-D English classes preparation, correction, assessments).
- Marking of assessments and reviewing student progress.
- Facilitating small group or individual learning support to complement classroom instruction.
- Leading or co-teaching with in-classroom staff using videoconferencing and other technologies.
- Providing peer observation and feedback to other teachers.
- Coordinating professional development activities for staff.
- Support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students, such as 1:1 work over Webex.
- Preparation, development and reviewing reporting for the end of the year.
- Preparation for 2021, such as support for school enrolments and/or planning transition programs.
- Individual or small group counselling to support subject selection, course selection or careers counselling (secondary schools).

Working from home allowance

Employees who continue to work remotely are eligible to receive the working from home allowance. The allowance is comprised of a one-off \$100 payment for home office expenses as

well as \$20 per week for home office consumables and utilities. This \$20 per week will be paid on a pro-rata basis based on an employee's time fraction.

Employees on any type of leave (paid or unpaid) will not qualify for the payment, until their leave ends, and they commence or resume working remotely.

Reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs for Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs)

To increase the pool of available CRTs in regional schools, the Department is trialling a process of reimbursing regional schools for CRT costs of travel/mileage and accommodation. This trial will continue to run. It will not apply to schools within the metropolitan Melbourne area.

Schools will be responsible for the payment of the CRT's salary. This arrangement will apply to schools designated by the Department as 'regional'. A list of eligible schools is available.

Claims for reimbursement of travel/mileage and accommodation costs may be made by schools that engage CRTs either via an agency or as school council employees.

The Department has advised the agencies of the trial period, the eligible schools and the reimbursement criteria. Where the reimbursement criteria have been met, schools should lodge claims via the [Schools Targeted Funding Governance \(STFG\) Portal](#).

7 Student reporting requirements

Requirements for student reports for Semester 2 are adjusted in recognition of the disruptions caused by the transition to remote and flexible learning during Semester 2.

Further advice is available at the [Assessments and student reporting during remote teaching and learning](#) page.

8 Mental health and wellbeing

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

For students

- 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.
- In addition, the [Quick Guide to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources](#) highlights the most relevant evidence-based resources for teachers, parents and students.

For staff

The Department continues to provide its full suite of services to support staff mental health and wellbeing. This includes services and resources to address individual needs, as well as tools and supports to help guide staff through this time.

Specific examples include:

- **for principal class employees:** [Proactive Wellbeing Supervision service](#), which has been extended to include assistant principals during 2020, the [Early Intervention Program](#) for more intensive support, and all other [Principal Health and Wellbeing services](#)
- **for all staff:** personalised over-the-phone and video counselling through the [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- **for all staff and all people managers:** Wellbeing Webinars for all staff and people managers.

More information and the full list of supports and services can be found on the [COVID-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support for Schools](#) page.

9 COVIDSafe Plan

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.

The Department's [OHS Advisory Service or local Regional OHS Support Officers](#) can assist in tailoring the plan to individual school needs.

Principals must 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 eduSafe. The Department is proactively monitoring eduSafe to provide support.

Principals can also promote the [COVID-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support for Schools](#) page.

Local [Regional OHS Support Officers](#) can be contacted for assistance with local consultation if required.

A [draft agenda](#) has been developed for Health and Safety Committee (HSC) meetings to assist in facilitating consultation and identifying and managing risks.

Safety information and training

All Department staff working on site in schools are required to complete the eLearn module School infection prevention and control during coronavirus (COVID-19) as soon as possible, before the end of Term 4.

The module is available on LearnED via [this link](#) and will take about 20 minutes to complete. A parallel module is now also [available on FUSE](#) for preservice teachers, casual relief teachers and other staff working in schools who do not have eduPay access.

Principals will also have the flexibility to manage and monitor completion by their staff before the end of Term 4 through LearnED and manage non-completion through existing performance development plan (PDP) conversations.

COVIDSafe Roles and Responsibilities posters will be made available to schools in the [communications support pack](#). Posters have been updated to align with the changes to advice set out in this Operations Guide and must be displayed on the school's OHS noticeboard detailing the shared responsibility of health and safety in schools and the health and safety measures that should be applied in schools.

Required actions for suspected cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in staff in schools

Staff members who are unwell must stay home.

'Suspected case' means a person who is displaying one or more coronavirus (COVID-19) symptom. Symptoms include fever above 37.5 degrees Celsius, night sweats, chills, acute respiratory infection (such as cough, shortness of breath, sore throat), loss of smell, and/or loss of taste.

As soon as practicable after becoming aware of a suspected case in a staff member, and that the staff member has attended on a school site whilst symptomatic, or 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms, the principal must take the following four actions:

1. **Advise the staff member to self-isolate, by travelling home immediately.** If immediate travel home is not possible, the staff member must be directed to self-isolate at school, in a separate room where possible, while wearing a face mask and remaining at least 1.5 metres from any other person, until they can travel home.
2. **Advise the staff member to be tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) as soon as practicable,** and to self-isolate while awaiting the result of that test.
3. Manage the risk posed by the suspected case, including by **ensuring high-touch areas frequently used by the staff member have been cleaned since they were last on site.** Please contact the VSBA Cleaning team if required on cleaning@education.vic.gov.au.
4. **Inform all staff on site** (including the Health and Safety Representative) to be **vigilant about the onset of symptoms.** If they become unwell, they must notify their principal, get tested and self-isolate. A [draft email](#) and [further information on consulting with your staff](#) is available.

There are no longer required actions for multiple suspected cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in staff.

HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

Health and safety measures will be regularly reviewed in line with the changing context of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Victoria. These measures apply to all Victorian schools: specialist and mainstream, government, independent and Catholic.

Most school operations can now resume standard delivery alongside the continued promotion and reinforcing of core strategies such as staying home when unwell, enhanced cleaning, continuing regular hand hygiene and maintaining physical distance when practical to do so.

The COVIDSafe principles for schools have been adapted to reflect the very low risk of COVID transmission in the community.

The measures bring together Victoria's COVIDSafe principles for business while acknowledging the unique school setting as both a place of work for staff and a learning environment for children and young people, drawing on local and international literature.

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

Further advice on maintaining a COVIDSafe School and explanation of these principles can also be found at [Health and safety advice for schools in the context of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

10 COVIDSafe principles for schools

Reinforce COVIDSafe behaviours*	Create COVIDSafe spaces	Promote COVIDSafe activities	Respond to coronavirus (COVID-19) risk*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay home when unwell* Practise good hygiene* Ensure physical distancing (1.5m) * Wear a face mask* when indicated (students 12 years and older in secondary school, and staff) Avoid interactions in enclosed spaces* 	<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 <p>Not currently required with very low community transmission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Limit school access to outside visitors where possible</i> <i>Reduce mixing between groups</i> <i>Create workforce bubbles*</i> 	<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 at school Manage individual risk

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

11 Reinforce COVIDSafe behaviours

Stay home when unwell

The most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), is to ensure that any unwell staff and students remain at home and get tested, even with the mildest of symptoms.

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 coronavirus (COVID-19) if they develop symptoms that are different to or worse than their usual symptoms.

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 coronavirus (COVID-19) such as cough or runny nose.

Young children with persistent mild symptoms

Younger children (in grades Prep to 2) who have had a negative coronavirus (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 coronavirus (COVID-19) test, the child can return even if they are not completely free of symptoms. Any worsening of symptoms will require review and repeat coronavirus (COVID-19) testing, if considered appropriate by the doctor.

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

For further information for schools and to distribute to families see: [Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic.](#)

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. Staff should direct or supervise 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 amongst food handlers where these services are operating, as per the Department's [Safe Food Handling Guidance](#).

Drinking fountains

Drinking fountains and taps should be reopened for normal use.

Flushing of taps should be implemented prior to use for drinking as metals can dissolve into drinking water from plumbing fittings, particularly where water has been sitting stagnant in plumbing for long periods of time.

To flush fresh water through the water system after periods of non-use, schools should run a tap furthest from the main for two to three minutes. Flushing for longer may be needed for larger water systems. Following this, flush remaining taps and fountains that are used for drinking for a few seconds. This will clean any water that has been sitting in individual plumbing fittings.

Ensure physical distancing

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

Staff **must** practise physical distancing 1.5m between themselves and other staff members or adults to the extent that is reasonably practicable. Staff should physically distance themselves from students where appropriate and feasible.

A face mask provides protection when physical distance cannot be maintained. Physical distancing is not practical when providing direct care. In this situation a face mask together with standard precautions, including hand hygiene, are important for infection control.

Students **should** practise physical distancing where possible. Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not always be practical in the school environment and 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 do not apply in classrooms and other spaces for the purposes of student use, including corridors and other shared areas.

Density limits of one person per two 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.

Strategies that can be considered to support physical distancing include:

- the careful management of movement of adults through school reception and staff rooms, and 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
- signage and rostering so that access to shared physical spaces and food preparation areas can be managed
- using larger spaces such as libraries for large classes such as English or Mathematics
- reminding students, staff and visitors including through signage, of the importance of physical distancing where possible
- reconfiguring class spaces where possible, using all available space in the school
- marking the floor indicating physical distancing in appropriate locations (e.g. canteens).

Avoid interactions in close spaces

Space out staff workstations as much as possible and limit the number of staff in offices. This might mean re-locating staff to other spaces (such as the library or unused classrooms).

Consider opportunities to adapt indoor activities outdoors, for example having outdoor meetings, holding classes outside, encouraging staff and students to eat outside.

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 in the [Occupational Health and Safety Management System](#) and support staff and students to use a combination of sun protection measures when UV levels are 3 or above.

Face masks in schools

As per the directions of the Victorian Chief Health Officer, the following actions are mandatory.

- Face masks to be worn by individuals over the age of 12 when on public transport and school buses – unless you have a lawful exemption.
- Individuals over the age of 12 must carry a face mask at all times.
- The same exemptions to the wearing of face masks apply in schools as when people are out in the community. This includes students who are over the age of 12 and are unable to wear a face mask due to the nature of their disability. This also includes students or staff who have a medical condition, such as problems with their breathing, a serious skin condition on the face, a disability or a mental health condition.

Face masks are no longer required in school settings. However, they are recommended for use by staff and students when physical distancing of 1.5m cannot be maintained.

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

More information

Schools must display information and signage at school entrances and in communal areas such as staff rooms encouraging staff and students to wear masks when physical distancing of 1.5m cannot be maintained. Posters are available in the [communications support pack](#).

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

Supplies

All schools have been provided with supplies of single-use face masks and reusable face masks. Single-use face masks should be made available to any person on site who requires a face mask, including students, staff and visitors. For more information see: [Face mask allocations for Term 4](#).

Managing safe school arrival and departure

To ensure consistency with physical distancing measures, students and families should be reminded to maintain 1.5 metres between each other as far as is practicable at the start and end of the school day.

Schools must implement actions to reduce the congregation of adults around the school and reduce congestion. Schools can do this through strategies such as the use of multiple entry/exit points, creating spaces for egress in different areas of the school and appropriate signage to communicate expected behaviours.

It is no longer required to reduce mixing amongst different year levels. Implementing staggered start and finish times in order to reduce congestion is no longer required.

Schools must communicate 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. Posters and a parent letter are available in the [communications support pack](#).

Temperature screening

Mandatory temperature testing of all students on arrival to schools is not currently required.

Should community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) increase, temperature checking may be reintroduced for some schools.

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 Department's [Infectious Diseases policy](#) and related 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 a hand sanitiser before and after performing routine care or first aid.

12 Create COVIDSafe spaces

Make hand hygiene easy

Hand sanitiser should be made available at entry points to classrooms. Age-appropriate education and reminders about hand hygiene should be provided.

If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser that contains at least 60 percent alcohol should be made accessible.

Keep surfaces clean

As per the 'Cleaning and personal hygiene products' section of this Operations Guide, extended and increased cleaning arrangements will continue in Term 4. This involves progressive cleaning throughout the day to keep surfaces clean and reduce risks of transmission from high-touch services.

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 with users wiping down items where appropriate, for example using a disinfectant/detergent wipe or cloth.

There is no requirement for books to be placed aside for a given period after use or if loaned to students.

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 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 DHHS: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) transmission from air-circulating, wind-blowing devices and activities \(Word\)](#)

13 Promote COVIDSafe activities

Standard delivery for most school activities can resume.

Visitors to school grounds must comply with physical distancing and face mask recommendations set out in this Operations Guide, and practise good hand hygiene.

There is no requirement to limit the number or type of visitors to school premises, however the density limit of one person per two square metres should be applied to any spaces being accessed by parent/carers and other visitors.

To support contact tracing, schools must keep a record of all staff, students and visitors who attend on-site for more than 15 minutes. Schools must record the name, contact details, date, and time of

attendance at school, as well as the areas of the school that the person attended. Schools can use existing mechanisms such as visitor sign-in procedures, student attendance records and staffing rosters to record this information.

Kinder-to-school transition

Kinder-to-school transition activities are permitted in schools, such as parents, educators and children meeting a Prep teacher in a school environment.

On-site visits by a Prep teacher to meet a Kindergarten teacher and children in kindergarten settings is also permitted across Victoria.

There are no limits to the number or size of groups, however the visitor density limit of one person per two square metres should be applied to any spaces being accessed by children, parents/carers and staff involved in transition activities.

Additional funding is available in Term 4 to support children transitioning to school in 2021, in response to the ongoing impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This will enable Foundation teachers to visit children and early childhood teachers and educators at kindergarten settings.

These visits will provide an opportunity for early childhood teachers to discuss their educational program and the strategies they use to support children's learning. It will also provide Foundation teachers with the opportunity to observe and interact with children in the kindergarten learning environment to support the development of continuity between this and the school learning environment.

Guidance, webinars and a template letter are available to help schools meet the needs of children transitioning to prep: [Supporting positive transitions from kindergarten to school in 2021](#) and [Guidance Foundation Teachers Transitions Visits to Kindergartens - Schools](#).

Year 7 transitions

Primary to secondary school transition activities can resume. This includes Grade 6 students and their teacher or parents meeting Year 7 educators in the secondary school environment.

The visitor density limit of one person per two square metres should be applied to any spaces being accessed by students, parent/carers and staff involved in transition activities.

Statewide Orientation Day

Health and safety measures for orientation activities have been revised in line with current restrictions.

- There are no limits to the total number of students on site at each school, however the visitor density limit of one person per two square metres should be applied to any spaces being accessed by students, parent/carers and staff involved in transition activities.
- Mixing of students is now permitted.
- Students are no longer required to be allocated into single class groups for the day.
- Schools may hold transition activities in line with this advice on other days — in addition to, or instead of, the Statewide Transition Day.

Adapt, modify or defer higher-risk activities

End of year assemblies, graduations and other gatherings (e.g. school sports events)

If an event is held **with external guests** (parents/carers/visitors) then the overall attendee limit (inclusive of guests, staff and students) must be based on available floor space of the venue; with the density limit of one person per two square metres applied.

If an event is held exclusively with students and staff **from a single school**, density limits do not apply to the venue or dancefloor, regardless of whether the event is held at school or at a hospitality venue, entertainment facility or community facilities.

School formals

School formals are permitted to resume.

If held on school premises and attended **exclusively by students and staff from a single school**, venue density limits do not apply to the venue or dance floor.

If held at an external hospitality venue, entertainment facility or community facility the school will need to abide by the restrictions on the type of venue, including restrictions on dancing — dance floors can operate with a maximum of 50 people or a density limit of one person per four square metres, whichever is fewer people.

Public events on school premises

A public event is defined as an organised public gathering for a common purpose, which is conducted on a one-off or periodic basis, open to members of the public, publicly announced or advertised, and may be subject to specific license, approvals or permits.

Any activity that meets this definition **may be required to comply** with the [Public Events Framework](#).

Professional development and staff meetings

Face-to-face professional development and staff meetings can recommence. The density limit of one person per two square metres should apply to spaces used by staff for these activities.

Components of the professional development or staff meetings that can reasonably be conducted online should still be pursued wherever possible.

Sport and recreation

Indoor and outdoor contact and non-contact sport can resume.

Outdoor facilities are recommended for physical education and recreational play where possible.

Limit use of changing rooms by allowing students to wear sports uniforms for the entire day, stagger use of facilities to reduce occupancy and promote hand hygiene in and around these facilities.

Hand hygiene must be practised before and after use of any sporting equipment.

In line with community advice, reasonable precautions are still advised to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission and sporting activity.

All interschool sports (indoor and outdoor) are now permitted. In line with community advice, reasonable precautions are still advised to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission with sporting activity. Schools should follow Sport and Recreation Victoria [guidance](#) when planning sporting activities and interschool sport.

School Sport Victoria will be updating guidance for interschool sport.

Swimming pool use

Swimming pools and aquatic facilities on school grounds can be used by students (in all parts of Victoria), with the following safety measures in place:

- use of the changing facilities should be staggered to limit the number of students in the changing rooms at one time
- schools with their own pool on site should be aware of [changes to the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations](#) governing category 1 facilities (including schools) that includes a requirement to register aquatic facilities with local government

- venue caps or density limits do not apply if a facility is being used exclusively by a single school for educational purposes.

Use of woodwind and brass instruments, singing, voice projection and dance

Use of wind and brass instruments, singing and voice projection does entail risk of potential spread of aerosols and droplets.

Musical instruments may be used and group singing is permitted without specified limits. However, schools must consider and implement measures that may prevent or significantly reduce the risk of infection transmission as outlined by DHHS [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) transmission from air-circulating, wind-blowing devices and activities \(Word\)](#). Measures include physical distancing, moving outdoors, increasing ventilation, reducing the number of people, or reducing the length of time.

Food technology and student cooking

Food preparation can continue in schools with frequent hand hygiene.

Canteens can operate with the highest hygiene practices amongst food handlers, as per the Department's [Safe Food Handling Guidance](#).

Excursions

Excursions can resume across Victoria for all schools. There are no restrictions on travel between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

There is no limit on group sizes, but excursions must be conducted in line with any specific capacity limits on venues that are being used.

Health and safety [and cleaning requirements](#) will continue to apply at all external venues.

Camps

School camps, including to attend remote campuses, can resume across Victoria for all schools. There are no restrictions on travel between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Multiple schools can attend a single facility.

Further advice is available on the [School Camps web page](#).

Interschool activities

All interschool activities can resume. Density limits of one person per two square metres should be applied to spectator areas when parents or other guests are in attendance. See Sport and Recreation for further information about interschool sport.

14 Respond to coronavirus (COVID-19) risk

Management of an unwell student or staff member

It is important that any staff member or student who becomes unwell while at school gets tested and returns home. While it is unlikely that a staff member or student who is unwell with flu-like symptoms will have coronavirus (COVID-19), there are sensible steps schools can take while a student awaits collection by a parent or carer as a precaution.

- Staff and students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough or sore throat, should be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision and students should be collected by a parent or carer as soon as possible. Urgent medical

attention should be sought where indicated. It is not suitable for an unwell student to travel home unsupervised.

- Where staff or students are experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), the important actions to follow include hand hygiene, physical distance and putting on a surgical face mask (both staff and student where appropriate). See the Department's [guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).
- In the context of schools supporting students with complex health needs, if the care of an unwell child or young person is to be prolonged (for example, because it will take some hours for a parent to collect a child) and maintaining distance is not practical when providing supervision or direct care, the staff member should wear surgical face mask, gloves, gown and eye protection. See the Department's [guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).
- Face masks should not be used in situations where an individual is unable to safely or practically tolerate a face mask (for example, a child with complex medical needs including existing respiratory needs. Children who are two years or younger must not wear face masks as they are a choking and suffocation risk).
- Health care plans, where relevant, should be updated to provide additional advice on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell it is advisable in the first instance to contact the parent or carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the student, and taking a precautionary approach, request the parent or carer to collect their child if concerns remain.
- Staff or students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) should be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps.
- Where staff or students have been tested, they must isolate until they receive their test result.
- Staff and students are generally 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. Staff continue to be required to present a medical certificate in accordance with personal leave policy for periods of absence on personal leave.
- Follow cleaning guidance according to the situation of the case. If a student spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), clean surfaces immediately with disinfectant wipes while wearing gloves.

Managing a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department has comprehensive procedures in place with DHHS to manage suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools.

- Contact the Department by calling 1800 126 126 to report an IRIS incident alert if a student or staff member tests positive to coronavirus (COVID-19). Schools do not need to take further action, until directed to do so.
- The Department will notify WorkSafe on behalf of the affected school.
- WorkSafe may be in contact with the affected school to ensure the school is following the health and safety guidance outlined in this document and has implemented their COVID-19 Safety Management Plan. Please contact the OHS Advisory Service (1300 074 715) for support in managing occupational health and safety matters.

Monitoring of close contacts in schools

To minimise further community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has introduced a new system for the identification, notification and monitoring of close contacts (primary and secondary).

In line with this, schools will now be advised if a student at their school has been identified by DHHS as a close contact of a person with coronavirus (COVID-19).

Close contacts are contacted directly by DHHS regarding requirements for quarantine and testing; the student should not attend school until they are advised by DHHS that their quarantine has concluded. Students should bring a copy of the clearance message (text, email or letter) they receive from DHHS indicating that their quarantine period has ended when they return to school.

Schools will be asked to confirm that the student identified as a close contact is not attending school during this time. If the student is attending school, they must be sent home immediately and notify their Area Executive Director. The school is not required to close due to a close contact attending.

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 Area Executive Director 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.

DHHS has provided a [factsheet](#) with additional information on primary close contacts, secondary close contacts, quarantine periods and more.

15 School site closures

The Department works closely with individual schools and DHHS to manage and respond to reported cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) that may include exposure to the virus at a school site.

The Department's rapid school site closure, cleaning and contact tracing process, agreed with 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 on-site 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 coronavirus (COVID-19) having attended that site.

If a site closure is required, you will be informed by your Regional Director and will be provided with full support by the Department's Regional and Area teams. You will be assigned a case manager to support you through the process. The case manager may be your SEIL or another regional staff member.

Support will include communication material to send to your school community to inform them of the closure, provide updates as required and advise when the site will reopen.

Drafting a one-page plan that considers how you will inform staff, school council, community and any organisations that use your site, such as out-of-school-hours care providers, will assist.

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

Infectious cleaning

In most cases where a school site closes due to a positive case, some or all of the school site will undergo an 'infectious clean', also known as a deep clean. This clean is arranged and paid for by the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) and this applies to all Victorian Government schools, both metropolitan and regional.

Once advised of the need for cleaning to occur, the VSBA will contact the principal as soon as possible to make arrangements.

The cleaning is conducted in accordance with guidelines that have been developed with DHHS.

As part of these guidelines, paper is not thrown away. If needed, to allow cleaning of high-touch surfaces, paper is packed away (by cleaners in personal protective equipment) or, for surfaces that would not normally be touched (for example, posters on the wall), paper is left in situ.

Schools should close spaces that are not needed and only use the administrative and teaching spaces required to implement any physical distancing requirements and maintain effective learning conditions.

To support the delivery of an 'infectious clean' if it should be required, it is recommended that school staff working on site:

- keep their desks neat and tidy
- file important documents before they leave each day
- take personal belongings home each day (such as jackets, shoes, hats, gloves and face masks)
- do not leave food or food containers out in the open (such as tea bags, biscuits and fruit)
- store away unused shared and loose items (such as toys, musical instruments and sporting equipment)
- keep personal cutlery in a sealed container, not left out on a workstation.

Ensuring access to technology and essential learning materials

To support continuity of engagement and learning in the event of a school site closure, staff and students should be encouraged to take their laptop, iPad or other device home each day, along with textbooks or any other essential learning materials.

Remote learning platforms (such as Seesaw and Google Classrooms) at schools should be kept up to date to support continuity of learning in the event of an extended school site closure (more than two days).

Support for contact tracing

If a school site is required to close, it is likely that the principal will be asked to support contact tracing through providing details of identified close contacts.

Easy access to class lists, records of people who have attended the site and being able to provide contact details will support this.

16 Cleaning and personal hygiene products

Extended and increased cleaning arrangements have been introduced and will continue. This involves progressive cleaning throughout the day to ensure that risks of transmission are reduced for high-touch services.

With the return of on-site learning, cleaners on site will increase from the start of Term 4.

For schools under the metropolitan area-based model, the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) will ensure cleaning providers provide the extended and increased cleaning.

For regional schools and metropolitan schools that are yet to transition to the area-based model, enhanced cleaning, which includes extended and increased cleaning and altered schedules, should be arranged by schools with their cleaning provider. Schools have been advised of additional funding for their school to undertake this cleaning.

Schools should contact the Department for any questions at: cleaning@education.vic.gov.au. See also the [Cleaning policy](#) on PAL.

Personal hygiene products

For the procurement of personal hygiene products (such as soap, toilet paper and hand sanitiser), schools should actively monitor cleaning and hygiene supplies and reorder in advance of needing access to additional materials.

Schools should continue to use their usual supplier: the State Purchase Contract supplier for office supplies, Complete Office Supplies (COS), or retail outlets in the first instance.

If unavailable, schools can purchase products from their cleaning providers. If supplies are unavailable, schools should contact the Department at cleaning@education.vic.gov.au who will connect schools with a supplier for toilet paper and soap or directly supply schools with hand sanitiser.

See [Access to cleaning supplies and services](#) for advice on enhanced cleaning, information about personal hygiene products and [Procurement tips for high-demand items](#) for advice about procurement of consumables. See also the [Personal Hygiene](#) policy on PAL.

Replenishment of sanitary pads and tampons

Scheduled replenishment of sanitary product dispensers in school bathrooms has resumed in all schools.

Schools may request an on-demand replenishment at any time by filling in [this online form](#).

Replenishment is occurring in line with DHHS guidelines and under COVIDSafe plans.

For more information about your school's sanitary pad and tampon replenishment schedule, please contact Asaleo Personal Care on acvicschools@asaleocare.com

For more information about the operation of the Free Sanitary Pads and Tampons in All Government Schools initiative during Term 4, please contact healthadvice@education.vic.gov.au.

Infectious cleaning, in the event of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

See 'School site closures' section of this Operations Guide.

17 School buses and transport

All school bus services have resumed their regular timetables.

- The School Bus Program will operate as normal across regional Victoria.
- The Students with Disabilities Transport Program services (bus and taxi) will continue to operate statewide for students with disability.
- Public transport services (including school buses) will continue to operate a normal timetable, providing a reliable option for students traveling to school.

The Department and the Department of Transport continue to work closely with DHHS and transport operators to implement measures to limit the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) so that students can feel confident travelling on school transport.

Transport operators will continue enhanced cleaning across all services to ensure that high-touch surfaces such as handrails and seating areas are regularly disinfected.

Physical distancing is to be maintained for adult bus staff (driver and other attendants) where practical.

Physical distancing should be exercised by parents and school staff at bus stops, interchanges and school bus loading areas.

Students should:

- not use transport if unwell
- practise hand hygiene before and after using transport (prior to leaving home and at the end of the school day)
- practise physical distancing at bus stops, train stations and interchange locations for other shared transport services where practical.

Students 12 years and older **must** wear face masks whilst travelling. Where possible, siblings should be seated together. Bus staff will not monitor the wearing of face masks or bus seating plans, but are encouraged to discuss these arrangements with schools if needed.

Schools are reminded of the 40km speed limit for school zones and school crossings.

18 **Maintenance, construction and building upgrades**

Updated advice will be provided shortly.

19 **Outside School Hours Care**

Outside school hours care (OSHC) may operate before and after school and summer holiday programs, following public health directions and applying the operational health and safety advice to schools.

For further information, see [Outside school hours care during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

20 **Access to devices**

Where students in government schools have been provided with a device and internet access, this must continue until the end of the year.

Staff and students using laptops and other portable devices should be encouraged to take them home at the end of the school day and over weekends.

21 **Mobile phone policy**

During the period of learning from home, students may have become used to using mobile phones during the school day.

With the return to on-site learning, it is critical that students and staff understand that the Department's [Students Using Mobile Phones Policy](#) remains in place to ensure appropriate use of technology.

The policy helps create a safe environment for students to learn without distractions or inappropriate mobile phone use (such as cyberbullying), as well as greater opportunities for social interaction and physical activity during recess and lunchtimes.

Schools are managed environments that include records of student, staff and visitor attendance, which can support contact tracing. Phones can be turned on before and after school, with the COVIDSafe app activated when school finishes.

Schools should remind staff and students to clean their phones regularly.

22 Key contacts

Schools should contact their SEIL to discuss any queries.

Staff health and safety: Local consultation must continue with staff, Health and Safety Representatives and OHS Committees (if applicable). For further advice and support contact your local [Regional OHS Support Officers](#) or the Department's [OHS Advisory Service](#) phone 1300 074 715 or email safety@education.vic.gov.au.

DET COVID-19 hotline: The Department's dedicated coronavirus (COVID-19) phone advice line on 1800 338 663 can address or appropriately refer calls, including about OSHC and other early childhood matters. This operates from 8am to 6pm, seven days a week.

International students (both onshore students and offshore students engaging in remote learning): international@education.vic.gov.au or (03) 7022 1000

Finance: schools.finance.support@education.vic.gov.au or (03) 7022 2222

Cleaning: cleaning@education.vic.gov.au

Student transport: student.transport@education.vic.gov.au or (03) 7022 2247.

APPENDIX 1 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING AT HOME

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

- Students and parents/families 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 disability, students in out-of-home care and Koorie students, schools and the parents or carers should continue to work together via the [Student Support Group](#) (maintaining a current [Individual Education Plan \(IEP\)](#)) 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 on-site schooling when other students have returned (based on medical advice), schools must give consideration to 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, see fact sheet: [Child Safety, Reportable Conduct and Duty of Care in Remote Online Learning Environments](#), 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](#).

APPENDIX 2- QUICK REFERENCE OF PERMITTED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

COVIDSafe behaviours

Key actions for schools	All Victorian schools
Temperature checks	NO
Face masks	RECOMMENDED Face masks are recommended when physical distancing of 1.5 meters cannot be maintained.
Working across multiple sites	YES

Create COVIDSafe spaces

Key actions for schools	All Victorian schools
Enhanced environmental cleaning	YES
Enhanced hand hygiene facilities	YES
Enhanced ventilation	YES
Community use of school playground	YES
Libraries (for borrowing and as a learning space)	YES

Promote COVIDSafe activities

Key actions for schools	All Victorian schools
Visitors	YES
Pre-service teacher placements	YES
Health, wellbeing, inclusion visits	YES
School tours	YES
Excursions	YES
Community pool use (outdoor pool)	YES
Community pool use (indoor pool)	YES
Incursions	YES
School photos	YES
Camps and overnight stays	YES
Assemblies (whole school and year level)	LIMITED

	Density limits apply with external guests
Formals	LIMITED Density limits apply with external guests or if held at external venues
Graduation ceremonies	LIMITED Density limits apply with external guests
Kinder transition program	YES
Year 7 transition programs	YES
Non-contact sports (indoors)	YES
Contact sports (indoors)	YES
Contact sports (outdoors)	YES
Non-contact sports (outdoors)	YES
Interschool and intraschool sports	YES
Other interschool activity (such as debating)	YES
Singing, brass and woodwind classes and groups	YES Music activities including group singing and wind instrument use can resume with health and safety measures in place in line with DHHS advice
Swimming (school-based pool)	YES
Professional development and staff meetings (face to face)	YES

Respond to coronavirus (COVID-19) risk

Key actions for schools	All Victorian schools
Keep visitor records	YES
Maintain adequate PPE supply	YES