

# Term 4 Operations guide

Victorian government schools

**Updated:** 11 September 2020



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# FOR ALL VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

**This guide applies to the operations of schools during Term 4. Schools should continue to follow the existing School Operations Guide (dated 18 August) for the duration of Term 3.**

## 1 Term 4 priorities

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

### Priority 1 – Wellbeing and Equity

The wellbeing, and particularly the mental health, of every student and member of staff is the highest priority.

This means encouraging and sustaining motivation for learning, re-engaging students and families where needed, and supporting the social and emotional learning of children and young people alongside curriculum-based learning.

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

All available resources will need to be effectively mobilised to ensure support for every student, including our most vulnerable, as well as access to support services for all school staff.

### Priority 2 – Learning and Excellence

Some students have been better able to 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, not progressed in their learning.

It will be important to meet all students at their point of need – both to support those who have not progressed in their learning to catch up and those who have progressed to continue to extend and stretch their learning.

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 student needs.

### Priority 3 – Transitions

Term 4 is a critical period, particularly for the children moving from kindergarten into Prep, from Grade 6 into Year 7, from Year 11 to Year 12, and those in Year 12 moving into employment or further education and training.

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

### Attendance on-site during school holidays – all schools

Schools should not schedule practice exams and assessments, revision classes and extra classes for VCE and VCAL students during the Term 3 school holidays. VCE and VCAL (including VET in

secondary schools) students should only return on-site for essential assessments in the week of 5 October and following that for on-site learning from 12 October.

### **Easing coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions and transition back to on-site learning**

Subject to the advice of the Chief Health Officer and as announced by the Victorian Government, Victorian government schools will commence a phased transition back to on-site learning during Term 4.

The *School Operations Guide Term 4* supports schools to make an effective transition back to on-site schooling and continue to manage remote and flexible learning and on-site supervision arrangements, where relevant. The core elements of this approach are:

#### **5 – 9 October (first week of Term 4)**

Remote and flexible learning will continue for all students, except for specialist schools in rural and regional Victoria. Students enrolled in a specialist school in rural and regional Victoria will be able to continue to attend as per arrangements that applied during Term 3. These schools can offer learning materials for students who continue to learn from home.

**VCE and VCAL students can only attend on-site for essential assessments during this week, including the General Achievement Test (GAT) on Wednesday 7 October. This includes Year 10 students studying VCE or VCAL subjects.**

On-site supervision will continue to be provided in limited circumstances consistent with guidelines at Appendix 1.

#### **12 – 16 October (second week of Term 4)**

##### **Schools in metropolitan Melbourne**

Students in Prep to Grade 2 return to full-time on-site schooling. The existing remote learning program will not continue for these year levels.

Students in specialist schools return to full-time on-site schooling. Schools can offer learning materials for students who continue to learn from home. Specialist schools can stagger the return of different groups over the week.

Year 11 and 12 students will attend on-site schooling full-time, and Year 10 students enrolled in a VCE or VCAL program will attend on-site for these classes.

Remote and flexible learning will continue for all students in Grade 3 to Year 10, with on-site supervision available for eligible students consistent with guidelines at Appendix 1.

##### **Schools in rural and regional Victoria**

Specialist schools continue with existing arrangements.

All students (from Prep to Year 12) return to full-time on-site schooling by Friday 16 October. Schools can stagger the return of different year levels as appropriate during this week. This decision can be made by individual schools or networks/clusters of schools.

#### **Date subject to health advice – students in Years 3-10 in metropolitan Melbourne**

All students from Years 3 to 10 in metropolitan Melbourne will continue with remote and flexible learning until further notice. A date for the return of these year levels to on-site learning will be subject to further health advice. For further information about continuing arrangements for remote and flexible learning please see Appendix 2.

### **3 Other school and curriculum settings**

The Victorian School of Languages (and community language schools where practicable) can resume on-site learning for students studying VCE/ VCAL subjects from 12 October, in line with



other government schools, and should continue remote learning for other year levels until further notice.

Further advice will be provided shortly regarding the operations of the following settings. At this stage, these settings should plan to continue to provide remote learning options where possible and remain closed for face-to-face provision in the first three weeks of Term 4 and until advised otherwise. The exception is where VCE and VCAL students need to attend on-site to complete essential assessments.

- MARC/MACC services
- Outdoor education schools and camps, and leadership schools
- Tech schools
- KIOSC and Maths and Science Specialist Centres.

Further advice about arrangements that apply to VCE, VCAL and VET students in TAFEs and other training organisations will be provided shortly.

## 4 Curriculum expectations

### Remote and flexible learning

For year levels continuing to undertake remote and flexible learning, the learning program delivered for those attending on-site supervision will be the same as the learning program delivered to students undertaking remote learning.

The following continue to be the daily minimum guidelines schools are expected to meet for students in Prep to Year 10 for remote learning.

- For students in Prep to Year 2, schools will provide learning programs that include the following:
  - 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 Years 3 to 6 and Years 7 to 10, schools will provide learning programs allocated as follows:
  - Literacy: 45-60 minutes
  - Numeracy: 30-45 minutes
  - Physical activity: 30 minutes
  - Additional curriculum areas: 90 minutes

Where appropriate, for students with disability 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.

### On-site learning

It is important that schools have some increased flexibility in relation to curriculum provision in Term 4 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.

For on-site learning for students in Prep to Year 10, the focus of curriculum planning should therefore be literacy and numeracy together with time allocated to physical activity, with schools 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 expected to attend on-site once their year level has returned to on-site learning. Exceptions may exist for medically vulnerable students. It is recommended that parents/carers of students with complex medical needs, seek advice from the student's medical practitioner to support decision-making about whether on-site education is suitable.

The guide to absence coding during this transition phase is available at:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/policy>.

### 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/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.
- Teachers, and, where relevant, education support staff, will not be expected and should not be requested by parents/carers or students to provide additional advice or support, including for the learning materials provided, to students whose parents/carers make a choice for them not to attend on-site learning and where this decision is not based on medical advice. This includes by email, phone or other forms of digital communication.
- Where students are absent but this is not based on medical advice, those students enrolled in VCE Units 3-4 must attend on-site to complete the GAT, SACs and SATs.
- Schools must take steps to ensure that all vulnerable students are able to attend on-site where the school identifies that 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.

## 6 Term 4 on-site arrangements – school staff

School staff will be required to attend school at times when they are performing duties that require them to be on-site. This includes delivery of on-site learning or supervision, and the allocation of additional classes and any other on-site duties as required, consistent with the current *Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017*. At all other times, school staff should continue to work remotely where possible and feasible, noting that school staff should avoid making multiple trips to and from the school site in the course of a single day and rather seek to attend on-site when

necessary and return home once all duties requiring on-site attendance have concluded for the day.

In implementing such arrangements, the principal, teachers and staff have a joint and shared responsibility, through local consultative arrangements, to ensure that to the fullest extent possible a fair and equitable share of the workload involved in supporting on-site learning is maintained, noting that the principal retains full authority for the management of the school workforce.

It continues to be the principal's responsibility to make the school-based decisions required to deliver Government education objectives in accordance with the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017. When determining the working arrangements that enable the transition back to on-site schooling, the consultative arrangements in place at each school must be used to ensure staff are consulted on, and have input into, the ways that work may be organised and allocated.

### **Pre-service teacher placements**

Schools should continue to receive and accept applications for pre-service placements to ensure pre-service teachers are able to meet graduation requirements. Pre-service teachers can attend on-site in schools in regional Victoria in Term 4. Pre-service teacher attendance on-site in schools in metropolitan Melbourne will be subject to further advice.

For more information, visit the [pre-service teacher placements during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) web page.

### **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 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, prior to the commencement of Term 4. 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. These arrangements should be reviewed regularly at the school level during the course of the Term.
- 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.
- The [Medical Advisory Service](#) is a specialised support service for principals to help them fulfil their responsibilities in relation to employee health.

### **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 Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs) travel and accommodation costs

- To increase the pool of available CRTs in regional schools, the Department of Education and Training (the Department) is trialling a process of reimbursing regional schools for CRT costs of travel/mileage and accommodation. This trial will continue to run until 30 October 2020.
- 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 can be found [here](#). It will not apply to schools within the metropolitan Melbourne area.
- 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, the schools are to lodge the claims via the Schools Targeted Funding Governance (STFG) Portal.

### Health Wellbeing and Inclusion Workforces - Service provision in schools

- Regional Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion Workforces (HWIW) will continue to provide support to schools, students and parents/carers.
- Schools will also continue to have access to a dedicated Regional Health and Wellbeing Key Contact (HWKC) for the rest of the school year.
- For further advice, see the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) — Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion Workforces](#) page in the Policy and Advisory Library.

### Work across multiple sites

- School should minimise the number of staff that are working across multiple sites (including contractors and employees of school councils). Strategies may include:
  - for schools with multiple campuses, limiting the number of staff that work across different campuses;
  - making arrangements with CRTs to reduce the number of different schools that they attend;
  - reducing mixing between different staff cohorts by holding virtual staff meetings or meeting in smaller groups.
- If a school staff member is working at more than one premises, for two or more employers:
  - the staff member must provide a written declaration using the form available [here](#) to each employer of the work they are performing and the details of the other premises that they are performing work at
  - schools must maintain a record of all staff who have disclosed that they are working at another site for a different employer.

## 7 Arrangements for VCE/VCAL assessments/exams

The Victorian Chief Health Officer has endorsed on-site delivery of VCE external assessments in 2020 and associated health and safety controls. Guidance on safely conducting the GAT will be provided to schools directly by the VCAA.

Schools should provide their cleaning service provider with a detailed schedule of essential assessments planned to be undertaken at school during Term 4. These schedules should be given to service providers with as much notice as possible, including by 18 September for arrangements for the General Achievement Test scheduled for 7 October 2020. The schedule should include the approximate number of students, the areas to be occupied and the timetable.



## 8 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 [here](#).

## 9 Transitions and end of year events and gatherings

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](#).

Further advice regarding orientation and transition days for 2021 Preps and Year 7s, and end-of-year celebrations, assemblies and other events will be provided shortly, noting that schools will need to operate within limits on large gatherings that apply in the broader Victorian community.

## 10 Mental health and wellbeing

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

### 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.
- This Toolkit now includes a *Quick Guide to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources* that highlights the most relevant evidence-based resources for use by 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 aimed at addressing 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 cover a range of relevant topics for the current situation 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.

## 11 COVIDSafe Plan

- The Safety Management Plan for COVID-19 (COVIDSafe Plan) applies to all schools, and outlines the key OHS 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 Department's OHS Advisory Service or local Regional OHS Support Officers 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 eduSafe, which is being proactively monitored by the Department to provide support. Principals can also promote the COVID-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support for Schools page. Contact your local Regional OHS Support Officer 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](#).

- Further advice regarding staff training that supports the COVIDSafe Plan will be made available prior to the commencement of Term 4.

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

- Staff members who are unwell must stay home.
- Any staff member is considered a suspected case if they experience the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of smell or 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 for actions:
  - direct 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 covering and remaining at least 1.5 metres from any other person, until they can travel home.
  - advise the staff member to be tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) as soon as practicable, and to self-isolate whilst awaiting the result of that test;
  - manage the risk posed by the suspected case, including arranging with your current cleaning service provider for additional enhanced cleaning of areas used by the staff member, and other high touch areas. Please see section 12 – Cleaning. If you are experiencing difficulties please contact the VSBA Cleaning team on [cleaning@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:cleaning@education.vic.gov.au)
  - inform all staff (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 for you to send to do this is [here](#). Further information on consulting with your staff is available [here](#).

### **Risk assessment for three or more suspected cases**

If there are three or more suspected cases of staff at your school within a five-day period, contact DET by calling 1800 126 126 to report an IRIS incident alert. The school will be supported to undertake a risk assessment.

## **12 Camps, playgrounds and facilities**

The following apply to all schools until further notice:

- school camps and excursions cannot take place at this time
- playgrounds should not be made available for community use
- community groups are not permitted to use school facilities (indoor or outdoor).

This advice will be reviewed and updated shortly.

## **13 Sport and recreation**

- In line with community advice, reasonable precautions are still advised to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the context of sport and recreation.
- Outdoor facilities are preferred for physical education and recreational play.

- Non-contact sports should be encouraged. Hand hygiene must be practised before and after use of any sporting equipment.
- Further advice on sport and recreation and the use of swimming and aquatic facilities will be provided shortly.

## 14 Visitors to schools, interschool activities and school tours

- Visitors to school grounds must be limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations (e.g. student health and wellbeing services, cleaning and maintenance workers).
- 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.
- Additional staff, including parent volunteers, must not attend school at this time.
- Parent-teacher information sessions and interviews must continue to be replaced with online and video alternatives.
- Activities that involve on-site attendance by students from different educational institutions (e.g. interschool sport or interschool debating) must not take place or be replaced, where possible, with virtual alternatives. The exception to this is for students undertaking essential assessment relating to VCE or VCAL subjects.
- Schools must not conduct on-site school tours for prospective students and their families at this time.
- Visitors to school grounds must comply with physical distancing and face covering advice set out in this document, and practise good hand hygiene.

## 15 Further health and safety measures

### Temperature checks

In order to support community awareness of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and to help identify children displaying symptoms, all schools should undertake temperature screening of students attending on-site. Further advice on these requirements is available [here](#).

### Face coverings in schools

- All school-based staff must wear face coverings at school, and when travelling to and from school.
- Teachers and education support staff are not required to wear face coverings while teaching, but those who wish to do so, can. Teachers should wear face coverings in other areas of the school when not teaching (for example, in the staffroom, on yard duty and when providing first aid or taking temperatures), and when travelling to and from school.
- Health, wellbeing and inclusion staff are required to wear face coverings, unless an exemption applies, including the need for 'clear enunciation or visibility of their mouth' (for example, when undertaking a speech therapy intervention or working with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing).
- Students who attend primary school for on-site supervision, including students in Prep to Year 6 who attend a P-12 school, will not be required to wear a face covering. Students who are aged 12 or over by Year 6 are not required to wear face coverings.

- Some students and staff are exempt from these requirements. This includes students who are over the age of 12 and are unable to wear a face covering 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.
- Parents/carers will be required to wear face coverings whenever they leave the house, including for school drop off and pick up. If they are travelling in a car alone, or only with members of their household, they do not need to wear a mask.
- 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.
- Schools should display information and signage at school entrances and in communal areas such as staff rooms as reminders for staff to wear face coverings when not teaching. Posters are available in the [communications support pack](#).
- Schools should ensure that staff wear face coverings when required to as set out above.

### Other hygiene measures

- Hand sanitiser should be made available at entry points to classrooms and education will be provided on hand hygiene.
- Playground equipment can be used by students. However, students should practise hand hygiene before and after use.
- Schools should consider the necessity of using shared equipment at this time. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use. There is no requirement for books to be placed aside for a given period after use or if loaned to students.
- Students should bring their own water bottle for use at school as students should not drink directly from drinking fountains at this time. Taps may be used to refill water bottles.
- The Department's Students Using Mobile Phones Policy remains in place. Remind staff and students to clean their phones regularly. Phones can be turned on with the COVID SAFE app activated immediately before and after school. Schools are managed environments that include records of student, staff and visitor attendance, which can support contact tracing.

### Further advice regarding health and safety measures

Further advice on health and safety measures will be provided shortly, including in relation to:

- Physical distancing
- Ventilation
- Managing safe school arrival and departure.

In addition, the above measures will be regularly reviewed in line with the changing context of COVID-19 in Victoria. As Term 4 proceeds, based on health advice some measures may no longer be required and/ or new measures may be introduced.

## 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 will be 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](mailto:cleaning@education.vic.gov.au).

### Personal hygiene products

- For the procurement of personal hygiene products (soap, toilet paper, 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](mailto: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.

### Infectious cleaning

- In the event of a positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19) at your school that requires an 'Infectious clean', the VSBA will arrange and pay for the clean. This includes all government schools both metropolitan and regional. Once advised of the need to clean, the VSBA will contact the principal as soon as possible to make arrangements,
- The clean is conducted in accordance with guidelines that have been developed with the Department of Health and Human Services.
- 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.

## 17 School buses and transport

- In rural and regional Victoria, the School Bus Program will continue to operate as normal.
- "School specials" operated by Public Transport Victoria will continue to operate as normal.
- The Students with Disabilities Transport Program (SDTP) will continue to operate state-wide for students with a disability. Enhanced cleaning and physical distancing for adults (driver and other attendants) will continue where practical. Usual timetables will apply.
- Bus operators across all services will ensure that high-touch surfaces are regularly disinfected (handrails and seating areas).
- The Department of Transport continues 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 public transport to school.



- Students should practise hand hygiene before and after catching school transport (i.e. prior to leaving home and at the end of the school day) and practise physical distancing at bus stops and train stations and interchange locations for other shared transport services where practical.
- Physical distancing should be exercised by parents and school staff at bus stops, interchanges and school bus loading areas.

## 18 Maintenance, construction and building upgrades

Updated advice will be provided shortly.

## 19 Outside School Hours Care and Vacation Care

During the staged return, outside school hours care (OSHC) will be available to students attending for on-site supervision and progressively for the relevant year levels returning to on-site learning.

Vacation care should continue to operate during the school holidays for students who were eligible for on-site supervision at school in Term 3. Eligible students are able to attend vacation care at a school site that is different to their own school if vacation care is not available at their own school.

The OSHC or vacation care provider is responsible for ensuring that students attending are eligible. Schools are able to share information with providers that assists them in confirming students' eligibility.

For further information please see [here](#).

For all other queries, schools are advised to contact DET's dedicated coronavirus (COVID-19) phone advice line during business hours on 1800 338 663.

## 20 Access to devices

- For students who do not have access to digital technologies, government schools should continue to loan existing devices and support internet access to students where possible.
- Schools should ask that loaned devices are brought to school each day to support on-site learning where required and then allow students to take devices home each day. It is important that families understand that devices remain the school's property and that devices support the school's learning program. These arrangements should apply until further notice. All school owned devices should be returned to the school at the end of the year or on the student's last day of school for those cohorts finishing early.
- 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 School site closures

The Department of Education and Training (DET) works closely with individual schools and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to manage and respond to reported cases of COVID19 that may include exposure to the virus at a school site. DET'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 COVID-19 having attended that site. The decision to close can occur quickly and after students and staff have left for the day.

If a site closure is required, you will be informed by your Regional Director and will be provided with full support by the DET 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 1-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'. This clean is arranged and paid for by the Victorian Schools Building Authority and this applies to all 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.

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, tidy and file important documents before they leave each day
- take personal belongings home each day (e.g. jackets, shoes, hats, gloves and masks)
- do not leave food containers out in the open (e.g. tea bags, biscuits, fruit)
- store away unused shared/loose items (e.g. toys, musical instruments, sporting equipment)
- keep personal cutlery in a sealed container and not leave it out on their 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 (Seesaw, Google Classrooms etc.) at schools should also 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 you are required to close it is likely that you 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 that activity.

## **22 Key contacts**

- Schools should contact their SEIL to discuss any queries
- Local consultation should continue with staff, Health and Safety Representatives and OHS Committees (if applicable). For further advice and support phone 1300 074 715 or email [safety@education.vic.gov.au](mailto: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 on all matters. This operates from 8am to 6pm seven days a week.
- **Staff health and safety:** Further advice and support in phone 1300 074 715 or email [safety@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:safety@education.vic.gov.au)
- **International students (both onshore students and offshore students engaging in remote learning):** [international@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:international@education.vic.gov.au) or (03) 7022 1000
- **Finance:** School Financial Management Support Unit: [schools.finance.support@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:schools.finance.support@education.vic.gov.au) or (03) 7022 2222
- **Cleaning:** [cleaning@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:cleaning@education.vic.gov.au)
- **OSHC and other early childhood:** the Department's dedicated coronavirus (COVID-19) phone advice line during business hours on 1800 338 663. This operates from 8am to 6pm seven days a week.
- **Student transport:** [student.transport@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.transport@education.vic.gov.au) or 7022 2247

# APPENDIX 1 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR ON-SITE SUPERVISION DURING STAGED RETURN TO ON-SITE LEARNING

## Metropolitan Melbourne

On-site supervision will continue to be available in Term 4 for students in the following categories, where the student's year level has not yet returned to on-site learning:

- Children whose parents and carers are permitted workers who cannot work from home and where no other arrangements can be made.
  - Where there are two parents/ carers, both must be permitted workers, working outside the home in order for their children to be eligible for on-site provision.
  - For single parents/ carers, the permitted worker must be working outside the home in order for their children to be eligible for on-site provision.
- Vulnerable children, including:
  - children in out-of-home care
  - children deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family or family violence service, and is assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home;
  - children identified by a school 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);
  - children with a disability and the family is experiencing severe stress.

### Severe family stress

Principals will contact parents/carers to discuss appropriate arrangements where the family is experiencing severe stress due to the functional impact of the child's disability on providing care and supervision for remote and flexible learning (including via referral from external agency, mental health or other health service).

In these instances, school/s will take a collaborative family-centred approach to determine appropriate on-site attendance arrangements for children with disability.

## Regional Victoria

On-site supervision will continue to be available for students in the following categories, where the student's year level has not yet returned to on-site learning:

- Children whose parents and carers cannot work from home and where no other arrangements can be made
  - Where there are two parents/ carers, both must be working outside the home for their children to be eligible for on-site provision.
  - Single parents/ carers must be working outside the home for their children to be eligible for on-site provision.
- Vulnerable children, including:
  - children in out-of-home care
  - children deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family or family violence service, and is assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home; or
  - children identified by a school 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); or
  - any child with a disability.

## School staff access to on-site supervision during the staged return

During the staged return period, school staff working on-site are able to have their children attend their usual school for those days they are working on-site, where their children are not in a cohort that has returned to on-site learning yet and they are either single parents/ carers or both parents cannot work from home and no other arrangements can be made.



## APPENDIX 2 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING AT HOME

The parent or carer is 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 a disability, students in out-of-home care and Koorie students, schools and the parents/ carer 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 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](#).