

Advice for families

Last updated 24 September 2020

We're working closely with the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), NSW Health and other agencies to ensure our schools continue to operate in the safest ways possible during the COVID-19 environment.

On this page

Schools are operating full time while actively following health advice.

Schools continue to be safe, and operations are in line with Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and NSW Health advice. All students should be learning on campus unless they are unwell or have a medical certificate to support their absence.

The activities that are permitted at school will be conducted in a way that is safe and appropriate in the current environment. Those that remain on hold will be reviewed during the term and will recommence when appropriate based on health and other relevant advice.

Latest COVID-19 case locations in NSW

Check the [Latest COVID-19 case locations in NSW](#) and follow the recommended actions if you have been in a location where there have been confirmed cases of COVID-19. We encourage members of the community to monitor this site. Please follow the relevant health advice if you have been at any of the locations at the specified dates and times.

The locations along with the times and dates of when the cases were identified can be found on the [NSW COVID-19 website](#).

School attendance

Students should be at school unless:

- they have a medical certificate which states that they are unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical condition and the expected timeframe
- they are currently unwell.

In accordance with advice from [NSW Health](#), parents and carers are reminded **not** to send children to school if they are unwell, even if they have the mildest flu-like symptoms.

NSW Health have requested that schools encourage anyone who is unwell or has even mild flu-like symptoms, to arrange to be tested through their local medical practitioner or one of the [COVID-19 clinics](#).

Students and staff with flu-like symptoms need to be tested and provide a copy of a negative COVID-19 test result and be symptom free before being permitted to return to school.

Students who do not undertake a COVID-19 test result will not be permitted to return to school for a 10 day period. Additionally they must be symptom-free for at least 3 days before returning to school.

Students who have seasonal allergic rhinitis or another condition that presents similarly to flu-like symptoms are still required to get tested for COVID-19 and return a negative test result. Where their symptoms continue beyond 10 days, students should provide documentation from their GP confirming their symptoms are typical for their condition. If the student develops new or changed symptoms, they should get tested for COVID-19. Find more information about [COVID-19 symptoms](#).

COVID-19 testing for students with complex health or disability may be challenging. In these situations, schools will ask the parent or carer to have their child assessed by their medical practitioner. Where a medical practitioner determines that a COVID-19 test is not required, documentation must be provided to the school to confirm that the student does not have symptoms that warrant a COVID-19 test. The certificate must also indicate that the student is able to return to school.

Schools are not required to conduct widespread temperature screening or mandate the wearing of a mask.

All schools will be vigilant when implementing infection control, physical distancing and personal hygiene protocols to protect the health and safety of students and staff. Schools will promote the need to follow good hygiene practices such as:

- regularly washing hands
- avoiding sharing drinks or food
- coughing or sneezing into your elbow, or a tissue which should be discarded immediately
- filling water bottles from bubblers rather than using the bubbler directly.

All students and staff who reside in or have visited Victoria must have a [permit to enter NSW](#) and are required to comply with health restrictions relevant to their permit which may include the need to complete the 14 day self-isolation period commencing the last day they were in Victoria.

HSC student exam preparations

What's changed

Translated advice for HSC students available in 22 languages
Guidance for schools and HSC students as they prepare for the HSC exams

Continue reading for further information.

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) released the guidelines for schools to conduct a COVID-19 safe examination setting. The department worked closely with NESA and developed further resources to support schools in implementing the guidelines.

The department's resources will require schools to:

- have a contingency plan along with an alternative location for exams in the case where the original location needs to be closed
- have processes in-place to screen students for flu-like symptoms before sitting an exam in accordance with advice from NSW Health
- have processes in-place to notify students of any changes to their exam including relocating to the alternative location if required
- have processes to support students in lodging a [COVID-19 illness and misadventure](#) application in cases where:
 - students are sent home during an exam due to having flu-like symptoms
 - students are unable to sit exams due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 impacting a school including when student are then required to self-isolate as a result.

Schools will communicate directly with HSC students to prepare them for the HSC exams over the next few weeks. The communications will include:

- a detailed timetable with the location of the alternative venue to allow students to plan their travels if the need arises
- advice for students who have ongoing conditions that present similarly to flu-like symptoms to get a medical certificate to present on the exam day
- processes for notifying students when and if needed to activate the school's contingency plans.

Students, parents and carers can access the [HSC advice for students translated in 22 languages](#).

Prioritising HSC students

COVID-19 test results for HSC students will be prioritised by NSW Health to minimise any impact on HSC preparations. When HSC students are getting tested, they need to advise the GP or testing clinic that they are currently doing their HSC so their test results can be prioritised.

School activities and school site usage

What's changed

The following activities can now proceed for Term 4:

- Saturday School for Community Languages will return to face-to-face learning.
- Interschool activities where this is a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place
- Singing and chanting with strict restrictions
- Playing wind instruments with strict restrictions
- School formals, dances and graduations with a COVID-19 Safety Plan
- Excursions and day camps with strict restrictions
- Kindergarten orientation
- Year 7 transition to high school.

Continue reading for further information.

NSW Health has published [updated advice for schools](#) as we commence Term 4.

The following principles underpin these measures:

- Where possible, students will stay within their relevant cohort group (i.e. class, year group, or stage) for all learning activities within their school in order to limit close contacts to the relevant student cohort.
- Interschool activities can now occur where there is a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.
- Only providers that are essential to the delivery of curriculum can continue to provide services and programs until further notice.
- Parents and carers and other non-essential visitors are not allowed on the school site.
- Singing and other chanting activities can take place as a solo or in a small group as long as participants are 5 metres away from other people and 1.5 metres away from one another. Groups of up to 5 people can include students from different year groups.
- Musical instruments activities can proceed provided students playing non-reeded woodwind instruments are 3 metres apart and all other performers playing musical instruments are 1.5 metres apart.

- Singing and band rehearsals and performances should take place outside or in well ventilated indoor spaces.
- School formals, dances, graduation or other social events are permitted provided they meet strict [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) requirements.
- The [Saturday School of Community Languages](#) will return to face-to-face-learning in Term 4.
- The [Community Languages Schools Program](#) will return to face-to-face learning from Term 4. Contact your community languages teacher for more information.

Activities and site usage that can take place

- Students can use the school library.
- Students can engage in sporting activities.
- School sporting events and activities held within the school site during school hours must not involve spectators including parents and carers. The only exception is when there is an explicit request from the school to support the delivery of curriculum.
- School sporting events and activities held outside of the school site during hours will need to follow the [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) of the venue or organiser.
- Canteens and uniform shops can open at the principal's discretion.
- All VET work placement, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and work experience for students can proceed subject of availability of placement, appropriate risk assessments and an employer [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#). For any VET work placements that can't proceed please see [the NESA website](#).
- School-based apprenticeships and traineeships can recommence once the relevant workplaces are back in operation and a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) is in place.
- Trade Training Centres can operate on school sites with a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) in place.
- School assemblies must be limited to 15 minutes with no external visitors.
- Students may attend other schools for essential curriculum-related reasons or placements (e.g. auditions or placement tests).
- Hydrotherapy pools can be used.
- Incursions or external providers can provide activities that support delivery of curriculum (e.g. music tutors, sport skills development programs, science demonstrations, drama tutors, Healthy Harold).
- Essential activities such as NSW Health partnerships including mobile dental vans and vaccinations can proceed.
- Excursions and day field trips within NSW (e.g. DoE Environmental Education Centres and sport and recreation facilities, trips to the local river to collect water samples) can occur from Term 4.
- Overnight activities can occur from Term 4 in accordance with strict COVID safe requirements.

- Kindergarten orientation in Term 4
- Year 7 transition to high school in Term 4 after 12 November.
- TAFE students can attend face to face (refer to the [TAFE website](#) for further information).
- School photos can continue.
- Department of Community and Justice services and programs can continue.
- School or community run playgroups
- Community use agreements involving adult attendance must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.
- SRE/SEE lessons can occur within restrictions.
- Work experience for students can occur with a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) in place.
- P&C meetings and events must be on-line only.
- Parent/teacher meetings will be online unless involving serious matters that require face to face discussion.

Year 12 formals and graduations

On Friday 11 September 2020, NSW Health released COVID-19 Safety Plans which allows Year 12 formals and graduations at the conclusion of the HSC exams, Thursday 12 November 2020.

The following guidelines will apply for these special one-off events specified below from Thursday 12 November 2020. This is subject to change depending on the NSW Health advice of the day.

Other events such as awards ceremonies and orientations or transitions are subject to current advice.

Year 12 formals

Non-school organised Year 12 formals

Many Year 12 formals are organised by students and/or parents and are hosted outside of the school site. Organisers will need to follow NSW Health and department advice which includes:

- School staff are not to attend.
- The organisers will need to have a [Year 12 formal COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) and comply with the requirements within the plan specified for the event.

- The organisers must ensure that the venue has a COVID-19 Safety Plan and that they follow their plan which may include limits to the number of attendees and catering requirements.
- Schools will not promote or sanction social activities organised by others before 12 November and where the COVID-19 Safety Plan has not been followed.

School organised Year 12 formals

Year 12 students will need to be aware of the following guidelines for school organised Year 12 formals held on a school site or at an external venue. In these instances, schools must follow these guidelines:

- Follow the latest NSW Health advice including any updates to the Year 12 formal COVID-19 Safety Plan and comply with the requirements within the plan specified for the event.
- Limit attendance to Year 12 students and supervising staff only.
- If the venue has the capacity, the school can decide to allow the attendance of external visitors such as partners, DJs, and photographers. The school will need to consider and follow the current safety guidelines which includes:
 - signing in with an external visitors form
 - ensuring the venue has the capacity to maintain the 4 square metre rule for each attendee.
- Ensure there is no self-serve or buffet-style food service. If hospitality staff are engaged to serve food or take orders it is recommended that these staff wear a mask.
- Alcohol is not permitted.
- Maximum of 10 attendees per table.
- Students and/or guests will not be allowed to congregate or crown in groups including when arriving or leaving the event.
- Dance floors are allowed and should be held outside if possible. If a dance floor is indoors, ensure it is well ventilated. Additional advice includes:
 - Dancing with partners from outside the school community is allowed only if partners are from the same local community and have an established relationship and normally socialises with the student cohort.
 - There must be sufficient room for 1.5 metres physical distancing.

Singing and chanting during the event is allowed with strict guidelines. The guidelines include:

- A solo singer is distanced at least 5 metres away from other people and not directly above the audience
- A small group of 5 people may sing together if all singers face forwards and not towards each other, are situated 1.5 metres apart from each other, and are 5 metres from all other people in front of them (such as the audience and conductor).

- Small group singing should only take place in a large, well-ventilated setting – preferably an outdoor setting.

Avoid playing woodwind instruments where possible, particularly in groups and in indoor or confined spaces. Persons involved in playing woodwind instruments as part of an instrumental group should maintain a physical distance of at least 3 metres from each other. Performers (especially flute and piccolo players) should avoid pointing the air flow from their instruments towards others. Anyone near these performers should maintain a distance of at least 3 metres from them (e.g. conductor, audience, other performers).

Year 12 graduation ceremonies

Year 12 graduations are momentous occasions for students, parents and carers and school staff. Schools will have the option to host this event from 12 November within the school, at an external venue or with the combination of online platforms to cater for those who are not physically able to be there. Some conditions will apply.

Graduations within the school

Year 12 students and their parents and carers will need to be aware that schools will need to plan and implement the following guidelines to ensure a COVID-safe environment for all attendees:

- Ensure the school has a [Year 12 graduation ceremonies COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) and comply with the requirements within the plan specified for the event.
- Maintain a record of names and contact details for all attendees including school staff and contractors for at least 28 days after the event. This record will only be used for the purposes of contact tracing for COVID-19 infections and are stored confidentially and securely.
- All attendees including students and staff are well and free of any flu-like symptoms.
- External visitors attending will be limited to 2 members from their immediate family or household and they must sign the external visitors form supplied by the school.
- Attendance at the ceremony will be subject to the capacity of the school venue to follow the 4 square metre rule for each external visitor. For seating arrangements, the school will need to:
 - ensure there is enough space for distancing of 1.5 metres between non-household members
 - ensure there is a maximum of 10 attendees per table if seated.
- External visitors will need to remain seated as much as possible to minimise mingling outside of non-household groups or close friend groups.

- Singing and chanting during the event will not be allowed. The only COVID-safe singing permitted is for a solo singer distanced at least 5 metres away from other people and not directly above the audience.
- Avoid playing woodwind instruments where possible, particularly in groups and in indoor or confined spaces. Persons involved in playing woodwind instruments as part of an instrumental group should maintain a physical distance of at least 3 metres from each other. Performers (especially flute and piccolo players) should avoid pointing the air flow from their instruments towards others. Anyone near these performers should maintain a distance of at least 3 metres from them (e.g. conductor, audience, other performers).
- Students will need to bring their own pens if they wish to sign yearbooks.
- External visitors will not be allowed access to areas outside of the designated event venue and should leave promptly at the conclusion of the event.
- Ensure there is no self-serve or buffet-style food service. If hospitality staff are engaged to serve food or take orders it is recommended that these staff wear a mask.

Graduations outside of the school site

For graduations held outside of the school site, the organisers must follow the venue's COVID-19 Safety Plan along with NSW Health advice of the day.

Year 6 formals and graduations

Primary schools can plan for Year 6 formals or farewells and graduations provided they occur in a COVID-safe way.

Virtual celebrations toolkit

Schools will also have the option to have online gatherings through the [Virtual Celebrations Toolkit](#). This toolkit has been developed to support schools in planning events and celebrations that do not require all participants, including parents and carers to be on the school site. These events can be planned now.

Schools will also have the option and are encouraged to live-stream these events held within the school to selected families and friends as a way of sharing their major milestone.

End of Year celebrations

Further information will be provided in Term 4 about end of year school celebrations.

Activities on hold

The following events will continue to be reconsidered in Term 4. For now, these events must remain on hold.

- Interstate excursions
- International excursions (cancelled until further notice)
- Face-to-face professional learning for staff
- Parent and carer attendance at assemblies and other school events
- School-based activities that involve large gathering of adults. These include parent/community gatherings such as parent functions, working bees, fundraisers, school barbecues, large parent information evenings and large on-site cultural events.

Activities that are cancelled

Certain large arts and sports events are cancelled or delayed because they require feeder activities and have long lead time organisational arrangements. Please speak to your schools if you would like to know more.

Opportunity Class test update

Opportunity class testings for 2021 has been rescheduled to 18 November 2020. Refer to the [OC updates page](#) for the latest information.

Physical distancing

Physical distancing of students in schools is not required under the AHPPC guidelines.

All teachers, support staff and parents must maintain physical distance from each other (1.5 metres).

Parents should ensure school pick up and drop off arrangements enable them to physically distance from one another and from staff.

Tightened NSW-Victoria border restrictions

What's changed

As of 4 September, the NSW-Victoria border restrictions will have a single border region.

Continue reading for further information.

The Public Health Order amendments that will commence from Friday 4 September will have changes for students and staff travelling across the NSW-Victorian border.

From **12.01am Friday, 4 September 2020** there will be a **single border region** and there will no longer be a border zone.

A new border region resident permit will allow a Victorian border region resident, including a border region resident in certain remote communities, to enter NSW:

- to get necessary goods or services
- for care or other compassionate reasons
- to attend work or education (where it is not possible to do from home)
- to permanently move homes into NSW.

A NSW border region resident can use the permit to enter Victoria for the same reasons and then return home to NSW.

If you have a border zone resident permit or a critical service – border region permit that is current at 12.01am Friday, 4 September it will:

- be considered a new border region resident permit, with the new conditions
- continue to be valid until the permit's date of expiry.

What has changed

Any student or staff member in the new [border region](#) will be able to continue crossing the border to attend school or work as long as they stay within the border region and have a valid permit.

The changes under the updated Public Health Order are:

- Staff and students residing within the Victorian border region and travelling to attend a school within the NSW border region will be able to do so with a Border Region Resident Permit.
- Year 11 and 12 students and HSC teachers can continue to cross the border with their authority to travel letter.
- Students attending a School for Specific Purposes will be eligible for a special permit through the [NSW Government website](#). This permit does not apply to students with support needs attending a mainstream NSW school.
- Other Victorian residents living outside the border region will not be able to cross the border to attend school without an exemption.
- Students and staff who are unable to attend school due to the border restrictions will be supported to [learn and work from home](#).

- Any student or staff member who has been in a [Victorian restricted area](#) or in a [COVID-19 area of concern](#) in the last 14 days will not be allowed to enter NSW.

Please note that Victorian residents who reside outside of the border region will not be able to enter NSW to attend school unless they obtain an exemption.

Any student or staff member currently residing inside the [border region](#) will be able to continue crossing the border to attend school or work as long as they stay within the border region.

All students and staff not eligible for a border permit will be supported with remote learning and working through the [online learning hub](#) until they are able to return to work or learn on campus.

All border region residents must self-isolate for 14 days if they have travelled outside the border region upon re-entering NSW unless their border permit specifies otherwise. If they entered Victoria other than for a permitted purpose, they must also self-isolate.

The NSW border changes will also require all people entering NSW from Victoria who do not reside in the border region to arrive through Sydney Airport. Staff members will be subject to mandatory hotel quarantine. The following requirements will apply to students:

- They will be required to enter through Sydney Airport.
- Students will need to be collected by a parent or carer at Sydney Airport.
- They must travel directly to their usual residence in NSW using private transport.
- They must complete a 14 day quarantine period at home.
- If they start to feel unwell or have flu-like symptoms, NSW Health advised that they arrange to be tested through their local medical practitioner or one of the COVID-19 clinics.
- They will be subject to regular follow-up and will be required to provide a signed self-isolation declaration and return a negative COVID-19 test result prior to leaving self-isolation.

Details of the current advice for people who have recently visited Victoria can be found on the [NSW Government website](#).

Schools will communicate with families and will facilitate learning continuity relevant to student needs.

We encourage parents to monitor local circumstances regularly as things may change in the coming days or weeks.

For more details about the border region restrictions, refer to the NSW Government's [Apply for a COVID-19 NSW border entry](#) page.

Schools affected by the NSW-Victoria border restrictions

The schools affected by the Victoria to NSW border conditions are:

School code	School name
8101	Albury High School
3922	Albury North Public School
1017	Albury Public School
1019	Albury West Public School
8461	Barham High School
1135	Barham Public School
1139	Barrooga Public School
1207	Berrigan Public School
8503	Billabong High School
8486	Bombala High School
1288	Bombala Public School
1688	Buronga Public School
8494	Coomealla High School
8308	Corowa High School
1659	Corowa South Public School
1658	Corowa Public School
1732	Dareton Public School
1745	Delegate Public School
8218	Deniliquin High School
4281	Deniliquin North Public School
4112	Deniliquin South Public School
8487	Eden Marine High School
1885	Euston Public School
8360	Finley High School
4468	Glenroy Public School
2027	Gol Gol Public School

School code	School name
2170	Holbrook Public School
2186	Howlong Public School
4407	Hume Public School
8266	James Fallon High School
2239	Jindera Public School
5744	Kandeer School
4270	Khancoban Public School
2378	Lavington Public School
4168	Lavington East Public School
2500	Mathoura Public School
2584	Moama Public School
2632	Moulamein Public School
2667	Mulwala Public School
8505	Murray High School
3912	Palinyewah Public School
2893	Pomona Public School
2895	Pooncarie Public School
3041	Savernake Public School
4523	Springdale Heights Public School
3534	Table Top Public School
3208	Thurgoona Public School
3225	Tocumwal Public School
3235	Tooleybuc Central School
8450	Tumbarumba High School
3275	Tumbarumba Public School
3421	Wentworth Public School
5653	Wewak Street Public School
8144	Yanco Agricultural High School
3556	Yerong Creek Public School

If you're a parent or carer of students returning to one of these schools, check your school website for further information.

School cleaning and hygiene supplies

Your school will continue to receive additional cleaning in line with the AHPPC guidelines and advice from NSW Health. Target areas include high-touch areas and other hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and movement areas. There will also be additional cleaning of toilets and bubblers and topping up of supplies like soap.

Your school has received supplies of soap, hand sanitiser, toilet paper, paper towels, disinfectant wipes and personal protective equipment. The school is able to order more as needed.

Essential hygiene supplies

To support NSW schools during COVID-19 and help keep them safe, we've secured and dispatched a range of products including soap, hand sanitiser, toilet paper, disinfectant wipes and personal protective equipment.

Standard packs of hygiene products continue to be dispatched to schools. The packs include liquid soap, hand sanitiser, paper towels, surface spray, disinfectant wipes. Quantities are calculated on the number of habitable spaces at each school. Schools can continue to request supplies through the School Supplies email address.

Reporting and assessment

Further information on reporting and assessment for semester 2 will be updated soon.

Responding to COVID-19 cases

There is a clear plan in place for schools to respond to any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our schools. We are working closely with NSW Health and will communicate with parents if a situation arises. Read more about our [Response protocols for COVID-19 cases](#).

Boarding schools

The following requirements will apply to students returning to reside at a NSW boarding school:

- Students returning to reside in a NSW public school from Victoria must self-isolate for a period of 14 days in suitable accommodation separate from the boarding school or college.
- They must have a negative COVID-19 test at day 10 of isolation.

- Prior to the school accepting the student back within the boarding facility, parents and carers will need to provide written confirmation to the school that their child has self-isolated for the 14 day period since they were last in Victoria and returned a negative test result before leaving self-isolation.

Transport

Bus services to and from schools are scheduled to run as normal. For travel advice to and from school, refer to [Transport for NSW](#).