

Term 2, 2020

Operating guidelines for Queensland state schools – effective 25 May 2020



Return to school

Following two weeks of continued low transmission rates, state schools will return to school for all students on 25 May 2020.

These guidelines provide advice on school operations.

Below is a summary of key changes in this version of the operating guidelines.

Key changes

- all year levels return to school
- school-directed and supported learning at home only provided to students learning at home due to medical reasons
- state school-operated residential boarding facilities are able to open for Year 11 and Year 12 students subject to endorsement of all risk assessments and other documentation
- advice on returning to ‘business-as-usual’ roll marking procedures
- considerations for external providers (eg. TAFE and universities) wishing to deliver materials online to students
- links to resources regarding vulnerable staff working from home
- advice regarding school-based and itinerant teaching and support staff resuming usual duties
- advice regarding playgroups and ECDPs.




Students

From Monday 25 May 2020, students in all year levels will return to schools, including special schools.

Where parents elect to keep their child at home, the parent or carer is responsible for the student’s safety at home or elsewhere.





Curriculum and supervision

Students in all year levels will return to school and participate in classroom learning from Monday 25 May 2020.

From this date, teachers will be teaching face-to-face within the classroom environment. Teachers will not be expected to lead dual (face-to-face and home-based) modes of teaching and learning.

[Assessment and reporting for Term 2 and Semester 1](#) will reflect the nature of learning over this time.

Students learning at home due to medical reasons

Students who are unable to return to school due to medical reasons should be supported by their school, just as they would in the case of any extended student medical absence. Schools can determine the most appropriate approach, taking into account the expected duration of absence, the student's learning needs, available tools and resources, and the school's established approach to supporting continuity of learning.

Student absence due to parent/carer choice

In this situation, both supervision and continuity of learning are the responsibility of the parent or carer.

Schools should offer advice about appropriate learning activities that can be undertaken, and they may choose to offer additional support based on the circumstances, but the classroom teacher is not responsible for providing a home-based learning program for these students.

The [learning@home](#) website will remain available and continue to be updated throughout Term 2 with new resources for Prep – Year 10. Schools may wish to direct parents and students to the relevant year-level units of work. Students will also be able to view quality curriculum-based television programs on three different stations — [program information](#) can be found on the [learning@home](#) site.



Advice from the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA)

As schools with senior secondary students would be aware, the QCAA Board has decided that one of the three internal assessments would be removed from the summative assessment requirements for all General and Applied subjects.

The QCAA has published [Principles and advice for P-10 during COVID-19 disruptions](#), addressing common curriculum questions, teaching and learning, assessment and reporting.

The QCAA will continue to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 on senior secondary schooling including any changes that might be required to external assessment.

Subject-specific advice was provided to school on 31 March 2020 by QCAA about the nature and timing of the next internal assessment to support teachers to review their assessment programs.

The [QCAA website](#) has responses to frequently asked question for parents and students about the removal of an internal assessment and to clarify that this will not impact the calculation of students' ATARs.

The department will continue to work with QCAA and provide schools with advice regarding Years 11 and 12.



Boarding school students

Advice issued by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) on 1 May 2020 requires individual boarding facilities to develop a facility-specific, systematic risk assessment, analysis and mitigation process to manage the risk posed by COVID-19 prior to reopening. **Guidelines**, based on the AHPPC advice, have been developed to support state school operated residential boarding facilities to reopen.

After risk assessments and all other documentation are completed and endorsed by the Regional Director, state school-operated residential boarding facilities can open for Year 11 and 12 students from 25 May 2020.

State school operated residential boarding facilities may consider students in Years 7 – 10 returning from 8 June 2020, if all processes and practices outlined in the Department of Education guidelines and AHPPC advice, including adopting advice relating to the living arrangements for students, have been successfully implemented.

Decisions for students to return to state school operated residential boarding facilities must be made in conjunction with parents/carers and take into consideration biosecurity measures that may be in place for some communities.

Boarding students (state, Catholic or independent) who reside in designated Indigenous communities and have not yet returned to their boarding facility, will continue to have their learning program provided by the school at which they are usually enrolled. These student's may continue to access their local school where there is a documented agreement signed by both principals.



Attendance and roll marking

From 25 May 2020, schools will return to 'business-as-usual' roll marking arrangements.

Schools will need to ensure they reconfigure roll marking in OneSchool to match their preferred method of roll marking – manual, electronic or third party. Guidance on reconfiguring will be provided on OneSchool to support staff to undertake these changes.

Schools will continue to use Code F to record the status of children remaining at home. This includes children:

- with compromised immunity or other medical advice to remain at home
- whose parent or carer chooses to keep them at home.

If the parent or carer is supervising their child's learning, failure to attend processes will not be initiated.



On-site health and safety measures

With an increased number of students attending school it is essential schools continue to implement strict hygiene measures such as:

- regular handwashing and hand sanitising, particularly before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- increased cleaning of school classrooms, particularly high frequency touch points including water fountains or bubblers
- regular cleaning of play equipment and materials.

Queensland Health **advises** it is safe to use water fountains or bubblers. However, schools may wish to encourage students to bring water bottles for personal use.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be used for specialised health procedures as outlined in the [Special schools/special education program and health support at schools Term 2 Operating Guidelines](#).

Schools should actively monitor cleaning and hygiene supplies and reorder in advance of needing access to additional materials. If schools are having any difficulty obtaining cleaning chemicals, hygiene products (such as soap, sanitiser or Personal Protective Equipment (required to perform specialised health procedures) please contact Procurement Services on 1300 366 612 or by [email](#).

Schools should continue to follow the latest the [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\) advice on reducing the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools](#).

While physical distancing measures remain an important consideration for schools to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and should occur where practicable, AHPPC provides guidance that physical distancing (i.e. 4m² per adult in an enclosed space and 1.5m distancing otherwise) is not required for students during classroom activities.

Schools may consider using alternative spaces for learning and adjusting their school day to decrease contact between classes and year levels, to minimise gathering points and to maximise airflow (with due respect to weather conditions and other safety factors) in teaching and learning spaces.

Schools must not conduct assemblies, interschool activities, camps, excursions, sports or arts events including concerts and performances.

Schools may conduct classes in their existing on-site facilities such as gymnasiums and performing art centres if appropriate physical distancing and hygiene measures are in place. Activities should follow the advice of the AHPPC including:

- reducing use of common areas and the mixing of classes/year levels
- ceasing use of “high-touch” equipment
- where possible, conducting lessons in outdoor environments with enhanced ventilation
- conducting physical education outdoors, or in large covered areas.

Based on advice from Queensland’s Chief Health Officer, school swimming pools can reopen for use by one class at a time.

Unwell students are not to attend the school site and the school must ask parents/carers to collect their child from school if they are unwell.

Physical distancing measures for adults remain in place. This includes the requirement that adults should maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres from each other to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Schools should encourage staff and parents to observe physical distancing measures by not congregating in areas inside or around the school. For example, it is important that parents do not gather before or after school, in the car park, at drop off and pick up time, outside classrooms or at the school gate.

Local school arrangements to practise physical distancing and minimise interaction of students and adults within the school and at school entry points may include:

- restricting visitor and parent access to school grounds
- staggered start, break and lunch times
- supervision at school gates, including during drop off and pick up times and supervised movements between the school gate and classrooms.

Staff should follow these guidelines:

- avoid sharing small office spaces
- adhere to physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres, including in staff rooms and other shared spaces
- continue to practise good hand washing and cough-sneeze hygiene
- unwell staff members must remain or return home
- open windows to promote air flow where possible and environmental conditions such as cold weather, allow
- take appropriate security measures if working in isolated areas of school sites.

School cleaning should continue to prioritise areas most in use by students and staff, with extra attention to high frequency touch point surfaces such as door handles, light switches, desks, toilets, taps and sinks.

All suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases will be escalated (via the Public Health Unit) and any measures such as self-quarantine/contact tracing will be reported through existing reporting channels. As per our usual protocols and in accordance with health authority advice, schools may be closed for a short time if there is a confirmed case. This time will be used to support contact tracing and specialist cleaning as required.



Principals

Principals should continue to engage additional relief staff trained in their school's learning approach to help support any teaching staff absence, and to assist with additional supervision needs that may be required due to vulnerable staff working off-site.

Options for providing additional support and relief include:

- reassigning teachers to other year levels
- altering school timetables and break times
- employing additional teachers using school funding.

If an employee is absent and on leave they should be replaced as usual.

Temporary staff employed using school funds, including Investing for Success funding, should have their employment continued (in accordance with government policy) as if their employment would have continued, but for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Schools should use available staff and funding to support the return to regular school-based teaching and learning and to support staff workload management and wellbeing.

When determining the working arrangements for the return to school-based learning, coordination, communication and consultation mechanisms are important to ensure staff have input into the ways that work is organised and allocated — while ensuring appropriate physical distancing between adults is applied.

Principals should also plan to provide supervision and direction at entry points to the school to ensure physical distancing is maintained during student drop off and pick up and to ensure parents/adults do not unnecessarily enter school grounds.

It will be important to clearly communicate expectations and protocols to parents/carers, including the times and processes used by which teachers and support staff will be available to students or parents/carers.

It is important for principals and leadership teams to actively support and manage arrangements for vulnerable staff. These arrangements need to include a [work plan](#) that outlines responsibilities for teachers who are not teaching their normal classes.

The arrangements should be reviewed weekly. Regions will continue to case manage school staffing requirements.

External parties, for example those delivering TAFE courses or University units of work, may have an increased component of the course delivered online after students return to school from 25 May.

To ensure student safety remains a paramount priority, principals are reminded to ensure adults working with students, either face-to-face or in an online environment, comply with the requirements set out in the department's [Working with Children Check – Blue cards](#) procedure.

Non-departmental employees and visitors are also required to complete student protection training as deemed appropriate by the principal. At a minimum, this may include provision of the [Student protection fact sheet](#). Further information about student protection training requirements is available in the department's [Student Protection Guidelines](#).

To assist school leaders in managing the return to school, a [planning considerations](#) template has been developed. School leaders are asked to use this document in their planning. Schools should contact their regional office to discuss any staffing needs.

Staff

Continued staff commitment and flexibility is key to supporting the return to school-based learning.

Staff who are vulnerable or live with a vulnerable person should not be in the workplace and should discuss options with their principal to allow working from home.

The current AHPPC advice defines vulnerable people as:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- people 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions. The most current definition of 'chronic medical condition' is on the Department of Health website
- people 70 years and older
- people with compromised immune systems (see [Department of Health](#) website).

Other staff who may be medically vulnerable, including those with chronic health conditions, should seek their own medical advice and provide this to their principal so appropriate arrangements can be put in place.

Staff working from home are required to develop a [work plan](#) with their supervisor that outlines their responsibilities and duties. Vulnerable staff members wishing to voluntarily return to work can access the [Vulnerable worker assessment form](#).

Schools will need to make alternative arrangements and/or engage additional staff using school funds to support teaching and learning across the school including the classes of vulnerable workers who are not able to attend work.

Staff hours of work will be consistent with the attendance arrangements already in place at each school and determined in accordance with the school's local arrangements and industrial agreements.

Specialist staff and itinerant teachers, including local and district relieving teachers have resumed circuit responsibilities.

Cleaners and grounds care staff will continue to support on-site operations of schools, with a particular focus on health and hygiene measures around the school.

Business managers, administrative staff, science operations officers, agricultural assistants, teacher aides and other support staff will continue to perform their roles to ensure the effective functioning of the school while practising physical distancing measures.



Outside school hours care

In alignment with national directions for early childhood education and care services, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and vacation care services on school sites will continue to be delivered.

In April, the Premier announced that rent relief will be provided to businesses that rent premises from the State Government. This means that schools will not levy facility hire fees on OSHC or vacation care providers until further notice. More information is available about [rent relief](#).



Playgroups and ECDPs

From 25 May programs such as playgroups, early childhood development programs (ECDPs) and KindyLinQ that involve parents on school sites should be limited to 10 adults in attendance as per [Queensland's Roadmap to easing restrictions](#). Physical distancing requirements for adults will remain in place.

From 12 June, and subject to the Stage 2 health advice, these programs may move to 20 adults in attendance appropriate physical distancing. Local school decisions around these programs are best made by the principal on a case-by-case basis to ensure any updates to health and physical distancing requirements are met.

Please continue to encourage families to visit the [Playgroup Queensland website](#) and earlylearning@home for ideas, activities and resources they can use with their children at home.



School transport

Transport arrangements will continue to operate for students.

Physical distancing requirements are exempt for public transport (including buses) however, physical distancing guidelines should be followed at bus interchange locations pick-ups and drop-off and, at/on other shared transport services.

Transport operators will ensure that buses and surface touch points are cleaned according to [COVID-19 cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

Due to the customised nature of delivery, specialist school transport (minibus, taxi or supported bus travel) requires:

- parents/carers to directly inform operators if students are not travelling
- school leadership teams to have electronic and hard copies of student travel arrangements for quick access
- school-provided, individual escort arrangements to continue being supported.