



RETURN TO FACE TO FACE LEARNING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Updated 21 May 2020

INTRODUCTION

Schools are safe and are opening for face to face learning for all students. Our Catholic schools are preparing to welcome back all students and your school will advise you of their scheduled return to school date. Rest assured that all school activities and operations will be in line with Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and NSW Health guidelines.

Our Catholic School Communities are committed to:

- Ensuring a safe environment for our staff and students; including extra levels of hygiene and cleaning.
- Maximising learning outcomes and recovering, to the extent possible, any lost learning.
- Providing support for our principals, teachers and all school staff.
- Providing support for our families, especially those under financial stress.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND GOOD HYGIENE

School students do not need to follow strict adult physical distancing guidelines, but should follow good hygiene practices like:

- regularly washing hands;
- avoiding sharing drinks or food; and
- coughing or sneezing into your elbow, or a tissue which should be discarded immediately.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Catholic schools follow the advice of Catholic Schools NSW. All students should attend full time face to face learning from the date advised by their school, unless:

- they are currently unwell; or
- they have a medical certificate/letter which states that they are unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical condition or that a member of the household has a compromised immune system and/or is considered vulnerable and the student needs to practice physical isolation.

If your child is unwell, please do not send them to school. If your child is unwell at school you or your nominated emergency contact will need to collect them immediately. Please make sure your contact details are up to date.

If you need any support to get your child back to school, please contact your school.

Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions section of this document for further information about attendance.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

Communicating Concerns to School

Supporting your child's mental health and wellbeing continues to be our priority. As students return to school please contact the school regarding any learning or wellbeing concerns, to ensure the appropriate support can be put into place.

Directory of Services

A Directory of Services to support child and family mental health and wellbeing can be accessed on the [COVID Parent Hub](#). Further resources to support your family can be accessed via on the [Wellbeing at Home - COVID Parent Hub](#).

REPORTING AND ASSESSMENT

Your child has been assessed during the learning from home period and will receive additional assessment on their return to school. Your school will advise you about when you will receive your child's semester 1 report. You are encouraged to contact your teacher/school if you require an update on your child's progress or if you have any concerns you wish to raise.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Teachers will continue to follow the same school curriculum with the exception of some activities that can't go ahead for now.

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

- Reconnect with students and staff to rebuild a sense of belonging and connection to school.
- Engage in their learning and seek feedback from their teacher(s) on their academic progress.
- Catch up on learning if required.
- Use the school library.
- Seek learning and wellbeing support as required.
- Engage in some modified sporting activities.

WHAT STUDENTS CAN'T DO

- School assemblies (unless for critical information).
- School incursions and excursions including camps.
- Work experience.
- Inter-school activities (debating, inter-school sport).
- In-school activities requiring parent or other volunteers.
- Drink from a water bubbler – bring a water bottle instead.
- Students cannot attend TAFE for study but may continue to learn online.

SCHOOL CLEANING AND HYGIENE SUPPLIES

Your school will 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 topping up of supplies like soap.

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

SCHOOL GROUNDS

There should be no visitors to school sites, **including parents**, unless they are essential. Your school can provide guidance as to who is considered essential.

Your school will provide advice on drop off and pick up procedures.

Canteens and uniform shops can open at the discretion of the principal.

Out of school hours care providers can continue to operate.

Wherever possible, P&F and parent/carer/teacher meetings should be conducted online.

Community use of school facilities will recommence only for uses that are necessary for continuation of education and with the principal's approval.

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 in a timely manner if a situation arises.

TRANSPORT

Transport for NSW continues to support physical distancing where possible, however **this will not apply to dedicated school services, as no school student will be turned away**. For travel advice to and from school refer to the NSW [public transport service](#) and refer to school advice updates.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

GENERAL QUESTIONS

How will the rest of Term 2 unfold?

We all recognise that the situation is fluid and not easy to predict. We will monitor and review the situation proactively and take advice from the Government and public health advisory bodies.

Why does every school seem to have a different approach to the return to face-to-face lessons?

Catholic and other non-government schools have freedom to make these decisions. While we discuss our approach with other Catholic systems, and we consider the approach of the State and independent schools, we try to find the best way forward for each particular school. Each school has specific concerns and constraints from large secondary schools on small sites, to smaller primary schools with large open areas.

What are the opening days/hours for the school canteen and uniform shop?

Check your school information updates. In regard to the uniform shop please remember parents are not permitted on site and so only students will be allowed to attend the uniform shop. Orders will need to be made via phone or online.

What if a parent needs financial assistance towards fees?

Financial Assistance will be provided to all families in need. All fee relief enquiries should be directed to the CSO's Fee Liaison Unit. Phone 9847 0728, email schoolfees@dbb.org.au or visit [Fee Relief during Covid-19](#) on the CSO website.

Will our schools have face to face meetings between parents and staff?

Parent/teacher meetings, or any other required contact with staff should be conducted by phone or through electronic communication or video conferencing. If it is deemed essential by the principal to meet face to face then staff and parents must follow the physical distancing guidelines and NSW Public Health orders on schools premises. Generally, parents should not be on school premises unless there are pressing reasons for this.

ATTENDANCE AND LEARNING SUPPORT

What support will be provided to students who are not attending school?

With the return to full-time school the delivery of home-based learning will not be able to continue as it had been implemented. There may be students however who need to engage in learning from home through the provision of some work because of extended absences. If students are away from school on a short-term basis because they are unwell, there is no expectation that they complete schoolwork.

If a child is unable to attend school for an extended period of time because of a valid reason then the school can assist the student and the parents/carers to maintain connections with the school and ensure continuity of learning through learning from home. Maintaining connections with the school and looking after the social and emotional wellbeing of students who are unable to physically attend is important. Schools will work with parents to determine how to best meet the student's needs in these circumstances.

The school can assist by:

- providing a modified learning program for use at home - not home-based learning;
- maintaining a relationship with the student and their family;
- supporting engagement with the school; and
- supporting the student's return to school.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Will our schools be checking students' temperature?

Based on AHPPC advice to schools, good hygiene practices and environmental cleaning are more important for reducing risk. AHPPC advice is that schools should not conduct wide-scale temperature checking of students as there is limited evidence to demonstrate the value of such checks. Students who are sick or have a temperature, must not attend school.

Will students and staff be required to wear face masks to school?

No. Advice from the [Commonwealth Department of Health](#), [NSW Health](#), and the [AHPPC](#) is that face masks are not recommended for general use in the community or in schools.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

How are schools managing physical distancing requirements?

The greatest risk of transmission in the school environment is between adults. Staff and parents alike will be required to maintain physical distancing. Generally, parents should not be on school premises unless prior approval has been sought to enter the site.

How is physical distancing being managed for students?

Students will be required and reminded to practise physical distancing;

- avoid close-proximity queueing (on entering and leaving classrooms);
- space out in classrooms as much as possible from other people;
- maintain 1.5m physical distancing from teaching and support staff;
- maintain physical distancing when moving between classrooms or activities;
- limit the use of shared equipment or resources;
- limit physical contact during activities; and
- submit work electronically for feedback where possible.