



Narrabri West Public School

...opportunities and challenges for our children

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Dear Parent / Carer,

I would like to update you on important information about our school's COVID-safe plans onsite. This is in place to help keep our students, staff and wider school community COVID-safe especially as there is growing concerns around COVID-19 transmission in our area. Please read through the information below and get in touch if you have any questions.

Our school's COVID-safe measures

Our school is continuing our strong focus on keeping our school COVID-safe by following the NSW Department of Education and NSW Health's hygiene and safety recommendations. To name a few, the measures we have in place includes the following:

- No visitors on school sites.
- No assemblies.
- Keeping our students in their class/year/stage groups to minimise mixing of students.
- Keeping our classrooms well ventilated by opening doors and windows, and taking advantage of our outside settings when we can.
- Wearing masks indoors unless we're exercising or eating.
- Twice daily cleaning in line with health guidelines.
- From 8 November, all our school workforce and any visitors on site will be fully vaccinated, giving added protection to themselves and those around them who can't yet be vaccinated

While we are doing our very best to ensure our school stays operational and COVID-safe, there are things that you can do to help reduce the risk of catching and spreading COVID-19.

- Keep students at home if they are sick and get tested immediately when they have even the mildest of [COVID-19 symptoms External link](#).
- Get vaccinated as soon as you can [and – for students aged 12 and above - encourage your children to do so too if they are eligible].
- Support your children to wear their mask at school and wear your mask in the community when social distancing is not possible
- Avoid gatherings such as birthday parties and sleepovers. If possible, delay birthday parties for a few weeks.
- Avoid using the school bus for the next few weeks, avoid contact with others and wear a mask when you drop off your children at school.

Information about close contacts, self-isolating and COVID-19 cases at school

The department has updated its pages with detailed guidance for parents and carers about what will happen should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19 at school and students are identified as a close or casual contact.

All schools have COVID-safe plans and are taking precautions to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission on-site. This includes enhanced cleaning two times a day in all schools in line with the latest advice from NSW Health and SafeWork Australia.

Contact tracing

NSW Health will notify the school if there is a positive COVID-19 case who has been infectious while at school and we will in turn notify parents and carers. Contact tracing will be undertaken as it is in all other venues. The action we take will, in relation to the operation of the school, depend on how many people the person has been in contact with. In some cases, this may mean that the school may need to be made temporarily non-operational. Some staff and students may be asked to self-isolate as a precaution while contact tracing is completed.

Self-isolation

NSW Health have made changes to self-isolation requirements for people who are identified as close contacts who are fully vaccinated.

- Close contacts who are fully vaccinated must self-isolate for 7 days (and limit their movements for the next 7 days). Close contacts who are not vaccinated must isolate for 14 days.
- Casual contacts need to get tested and self-isolate until they get a negative test result - even if they are vaccinated.

A reminder that anyone who has the mildest of COVID-19 symptoms must get tested immediately and self-isolate until they get a negative result - even if they're vaccinated.

Please visit the [COVID-19 response protocols page](#) for factsheets on close and casual contacts, isolation guidelines for children and to answer your questions.

Vaccination requirements for staff and students

I want to let you that we are following the NSW Public Health Order's mandate for all school-based staff to be fully vaccinated by 8 November 2021.

There may be some staff members who are not yet fully vaccinated or who have an approved medical exemption to not be vaccinated that we are still undertaking a risk assessment around. For this reason some classes may be covered by another teacher. We appreciate your understanding and the need to ensure staff privacy is protected.

COVID-19 vaccination is the best protection against severe illness and also reduces the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others. Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 now will help to protect both you, your family and our school community.

NSW Health are urging all students 12 and over to get vaccinated with the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible before returning to school. Bookings can be made via the [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#)^{External link}. Depending on location, bookings are available within the next few days.

Updated mask requirements

To reflect the changes in community settings mask wearing requirements have been updated for schools.

When students and staff return to school, the following requirements are in place:

- masks are required for all staff and students in Year 7 and above in all indoor settings
- masks are strongly recommended indoors for primary students.

Masks are mandatory on public transport. This applies to students aged 12 years and over, and staff when travelling to and from school and during school excursions by public transport or by chartered or private transport services.

Ventilation in schools

Ventilation is an important component of COVID-safe operations alongside vaccinations, mask wearing, reducing mingling across year groups and good cleaning and hygiene. The department's ventilation recommendations are informed by NSW Health advice, expert advice from the Doherty Institute and the World Health Organisation.

This advice tells us that maximising natural ventilation in our learning spaces by opening doors and windows is the most effective method for minimising the spread of COVID-19. This is a very effective way to disperse particles in the air.

The department also conducted a state-wide review of all windows, fans and ventilation systems to ensure schools can operate them as intended.

If you'd like more information, refer to the department's [Ventilation page](#).

Wellbeing resources for students and families

Please take some time to check out our [wellbeing resources for students and families](#). You'll find useful tools for mental health and wellbeing. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can do anything to help you and your children to prepare for the return to face-to-face learning or if you have any concerns about the return to school.

Thank you again for your continued support during what has already been a fast-moving school term.

Best wishes

Tania Nichols

Principal