



Back to School 2022

Information current as at 23 January 2022

Developed in partnership with NSW Health



What we'll cover in this session



- Before term 1 begins
- COVID-smart measures for our school
 - Testing
 - What to do when COVID-19 positive?
 - Vaccinations
 - Ventilation
 - Masks
 - Visitors and activities
 - Minimising the spread
- Digital learning packages
 - Learning from home
- Further information and questions



What you need to know about our return to school in 2022

Our COVID-smart measures have been developed with NSW Health to minimise transmission and keep schools open in 2022.

We're taking every precaution to safeguard our learners and school communities, building on our experiences of the last 2 years.

Back to School is an exciting time, particularly for students starting school for the first time. A layered approach which prioritises safety will help keep schools open, where we know the best learning happens.

Our guidance is evidence-based and will provide additional levels of protection in a way that works for schools.



The graphic features the NSW Government logo in the top right corner. In the center, a white circle contains three blue line-art icons: a COVID-19 vaccine bottle labeled 'COVID-19 VACCINE', a person's ID card, and a surgical face mask. Below the circle, the text 'COVID-safe settings for Term 1 2022' is written in a bold, dark blue font.



What you need to know about our return to school in 2022

This is not a normal start to the year – however, we know that being together in the classroom is the most effective way for students to learn and grow.

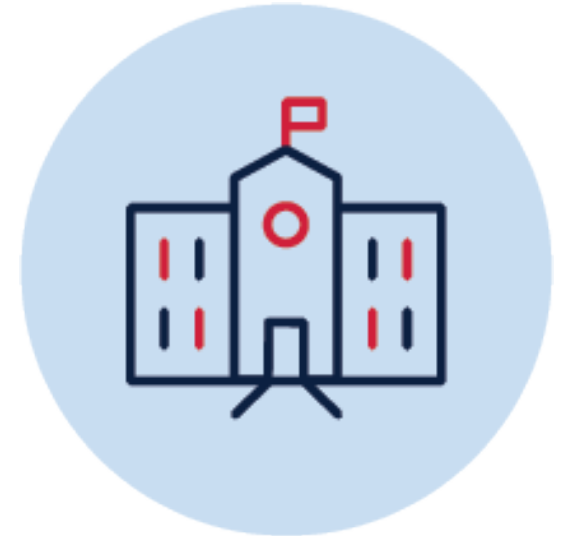
Your child's relationship with their teacher is important, but as we manage any potential disruptions to staffing due to COVID-19, they may get to meet more teachers than normal.



COVID-safe settings
for Term 1 2022

Before Term 1 begins

- Rapid antigen tests (RATs) will be provided to all staff and students through our school.
- Surveillance testing will provide an important additional layer of protection for our students and staff. Use of RAT kits is highly recommended but not mandatory.
- Conduct your child's RATs at home on the morning of school, twice a week on school days and before term starts.
- Participating students and staff are strongly encouraged to confirm a negative rapid antigen test before attending school at the start of Term 1.
- If your child is a household close contact, you must follow [NSW Health advice](#) to stay home and isolate.



Testing

- During the first 4 weeks of term, students and staff are encouraged to do a rapid antigen test (RAT) twice a week on school days in the morning before attending school.
- RATs will be supplied by schools with staggered collection times for parents and carers to avoid congestion.
- The RAT kits will include instructions for use, how to check the results and how to dispose safely.
- Parents and carers can download an instruction sheet for the rapid antigen test through the [Therapeutic Goods Administration \(TGA\) website](#).
- NSW Health also has [videos](#) on how to use RATs, including [translated materials](#).
- RATs can be collected between 10.00am and 4.00pm on Friday 4th February and Monday 7th February at the pick-up area near the school hall. Please contact the school if you need to make an alternative time.



Testing

- If your child has even mild COVID-19 symptoms, get them tested with a RAT or PCR (nose and throat swab) test.
- They must isolate until they receive a negative test result, in line with health protocols.
- If symptoms continue, they should stay at home and take another RAT in 24 hours or have a PCR test. If the second RAT or initial PCR test result is negative or another diagnosis is confirmed such as hay fever, they can return to school.
- Parents and carers must register positive RAT results from students on the [Service NSW website](#) or [Service NSW app](#) and notify the school as soon as possible.
- Report positive PCR test results from students to the school as soon as possible.





What to do when COVID-19 positive?

- Under the new close contact rules, schools are no longer included in contact tracing.
- Positive RAT results must be registered on the service.nsw.gov.au website or Service NSW app. Only positive RAT results will need to be reported via the Service NSW website and app.
- Students who receive a COVID-19 positive RAT or PCR test must tell their school as soon as possible and isolate for 7 days.
- Your principal will inform the school community when there is a positive case at school and advise families on public health advice, including monitoring for symptoms.
- Follow the latest Health advice for guidance on how to manage and treat COVID-19, including when to leave isolation and return to school.



What to do when COVID-19 positive? (continued)

- In NSW, positive COVID-19 cases are provided a Medical Clearance Notice after 7 days and allowed to leave self-isolation as long as they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.
- NSW Health advises that people who have recovered from COVID-19 have a low risk of contracting it again in the following 28 days.
- It is recommended that staff and students that return to school after recovering from COVID-19 do not participate in rapid antigen test surveillance for 28 days (4 weeks after recovery) following release from self-isolation.
- After 28 days (from week 5 after recovery), students and staff may resume participation in RAT surveillance.
- Follow Health advice on [when to leave isolation](#).



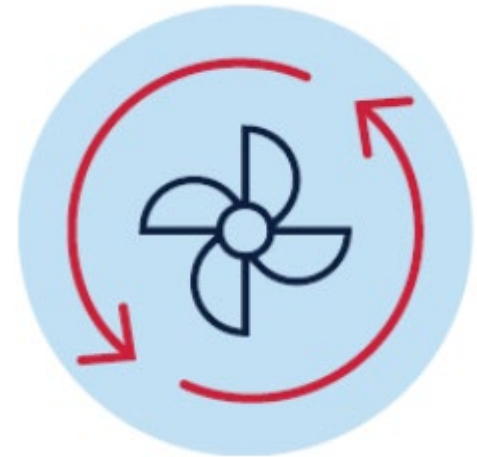
Vaccinations

- All staff on school sites must be fully vaccinated, including having their booster when eligible.
- We strongly recommend all eligible students (and their families) who are 5 years and older get vaccinated.
- COVID-19 vaccination is the best protection against severe illness and also reduces the risk of spreading it to others.
- Visit the [Find a vaccine clinic](#) website to book an appointment near you.



Ventilation

- Natural ventilation is the most effective measure, so we will maximise fresh air flow in learning spaces through opening doors and windows. This approach is strongly supported by expert advice.
- Where natural ventilation is not sufficient, mechanical ventilation and/or air purification will be used and we will continue to use outdoor settings where possible.
- Air purifiers have been provided to schools as a supplementary measure to support common areas in schools and can be deployed at the principal's discretion.
- We'll continue to encourage using outdoor spaces.





Masks



- All primary and secondary school staff will be required to wear surgical masks indoors.
- All staff and visitors must wear surgical masks indoors on school site.
- All students are strongly recommended to wear well-fitted masks indoors. Surgical masks are strongly encouraged.
- A teacher may offer your child a mask.



Masks



- No vented or cloth masks should be worn.
- Surgical masks will be provided by the school if required.

Mask wearing for students



- Surgical masks are strongly encouraged in outdoor settings where you cannot physically distance.

- Your child can remove their mask when eating, exercising and playing a musical instrument.

- For more information, refer to [Masks and face coverings](#).

Fitting a mask on a younger child

Please send your child with a mask and a spare in their bag. We'll have some on site too.

The following graphic from NSW Health shows how to fit a mask properly – please have this conversation with your child.

While masks are not required in the Public Health Order for our primary students, they are strongly recommended by NSW Health. The department has taken the decision that they are required as an important layer of protection for our staff – particularly around younger students who are yet to be vaccinated.

There are some exemptions around mask wearing – such as when eating and exercising. Please review the NSW Government website for the full list of exemptions.

nsw.gov.au/covid-19/rules/changes/face-mask-rules



Fitting a mask to younger children

How to wear a mask 



1/4

1 Ensure the mask covers your nose and mouth and fits snugly under your chin, over the bridge of your nose and against the sides of your face


How to wear a mask 



2/4

2 Make sure the ear loops are firmly in place

How to wear a mask 



3/4

3 Fold the metal strip in the mask around your nose so it stays in place

How to wear a mask 



4/4

4 Try not to touch your face while wearing your mask



Visitors and activities



- Until further notice, no visitors will be allowed on school grounds except two parents or carers to support Kindergarten students or students starting at a new school.
- No visitors are allowed on school sites until further notice except for fully vaccinated:
 - workers or volunteers operating uniform shops and canteens
 - visitors supporting school operations and curriculum delivery
 - allied health partners for student wellbeing purposes.

Visitors and activities (continued)



- The department has [provided guidance](#) to schools on assessing higher risk activities and applying appropriate safeguards.
- We will seek parental consent for participation in any extracurricular, outside of school hours or off-site activities – with appropriate safeguards in place.
- Sports and PDHPE activities like swimming carnivals may proceed provided COVID-19 guidelines are followed, such as:
 - being held in a well-ventilated outdoor area
 - reduced visitors
 - non-contact adaptations (including avoiding high-fives/handshakes)
 - maintaining student cohorts.



Minimising the spread



- We will aim to minimise opportunities for COVID-19 to spread by reducing interaction between students.
- Students and staff experiencing even the mildest COVID-like symptoms must stay at home (even if they have a negative rapid antigen test).
- Students will be kept in their year groups on school grounds, with staggered drop-off and pick-ups, break times, playground and canteen access.



Minimising the spread (continued)



- Students will be in year cohorts in classrooms and on the playground.
- We will continue to use best practice hygiene processes on school site.
- Our enhanced cleaning practices will focus on 'high-touch' areas that students and staff move through regularly.
- We will continue to highlight physical distancing, maintaining 1.5 metres distance wherever possible.
- All staff and essential visitors will continue to use the school's QR code check-in.



Digital learning packages

- If face-to-face learning is not possible, our school will be supported to start home learning through digital learning packages for short periods.
- Online learning and lessons have been developed by the department and will be shared online.
- Schools will have ongoing support for learning from home activities if required, and we will let you know when we can return to face-to-face learning through the Skoolbag App.





Preschool and outside of school hours care



Outside of school hours care, vacation care settings and preschools operating on school sites will follow similar COVID-smart guidelines as public schools including:

- Twice weekly RAT testing for staff is encouraged
- All staff are required to be fully vaccinated including having their booster when eligible.

Further information and questions

Where possible, we expect all of our students to be back at school for Day 1, Term 1.

Advice for families

Find updated information on the department's Advice for families page to support students who are anxious about returning to school – or get in touch with us directly.

education.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/advice-for-families

Guidelines if your child is exposed to COVID-19

Visit the NSW Health website for the latest guidance if your child/guardian is a household close contact.

health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/people-exposed-to-covid

Managing COVID-19 at home

Advice for managing COVID-19 at home, including when to leave isolation.

health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/advice-for-confirmed



Thank you

Please contact the school if you have any questions.