



Catholic  
Education  
Tasmania

## **COVID-19 Safety Plan**

**Version 15**

**Term 3**

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## Principals' Summary

- Apply the stay away if unwell rule.
- All school activities are permitted including assemblies and travel.
- Parents and carers can enter schools
- Positive cases are still required to isolate for at least 7 days.
- Close contacts are still required to follow close contact rules for 7 days including testing daily if leaving their home and wearing a mask (all persons 12 years and older) in indoor settings when outside their home.
- Work colleagues of a confirmed case who was in a CET workplace whilst infectious are not deemed to be close contacts.
- COVID leave has been withdrawn. Staff are to utilise personal leave if required to isolate.
- Face masks are no longer required to be worn in schools, early childhood centres or on public transport unless the person is a close contact.
- Public Health strongly encourages people to wear a face mask indoors where they cannot physically distance themselves, where they work in a public-facing role, or if they are at a higher risk of respiratory illness like COVID-19 and influenza.
- Students and staff who choose to wear a face mask are to be supported.
- Schools are no longer required to notify families on a case-by-case basis. Nor are schools required to request classroom contacts of confirmed cases to undertake testing unless directed by TCEO or Public Health.
- The reinfection exclusion period has been reduced from 12 weeks to 28 days. People who have symptoms of COVID-19 within 28 days following their release from isolation do not need to test and isolate for 7 days.

## Confirmed cases

Should a student or member of staff test positive for COVID-19 they must:

- Isolate for a minimum of 7 days, provided outside the 28-day reinfection exclusion period.
- Isolate for a further 3 days if they still have symptoms on day 7.
- If test positive using a rapid antigen test, register the result with Public Health using their online declaration form or phone the Public Health Hotline 1800 671 738.
- Notify household close contacts of the need to observe close contact requirements when leaving their homes.

## Confirmed case reporting

CET is required to report confirmed case numbers to Public Health on a weekly basis. The TCEO WHS team has developed a spreadsheet for schools to record confirmed case numbers per grade per week. **Please use this spreadsheet to report all staff and student COVID-19 cases by midday Friday.**

## Close contacts

Household close contacts of a confirmed case are no longer required to isolate at home. For a close contact to leave home they must:

- Not be symptomatic (must remain at home if they are)
- Return a negative test each day before leaving home for the 7 days following their last contact with the confirmed case.
- Wear a face mask in all indoor settings when outside the home unless an exception applies ( e.g. need to drink) or subject to an exemption.
- Notify their employer of their close contact status – inform workplace manager e.g. Principal
- Immediately return to their home if they become symptomatic whilst in the workplace.
- Colleagues of a confirmed case who was in a CET workplace whilst infectious are not deemed to be close contacts.

Note: a person is not a close contact if they have been released from isolation within the last 28 days.

### **COVID-19 testing**

- If staff or students have symptoms, they should stay home and test for COVID-19.  
If it is less than 28 days since they had COVID-19, they do not need to get tested but should still stay at home if unwell.
- If the test is positive and the person has not had a COVID-19 infection within 28 days, the person is considered a confirmed case.
- If the initial test result is negative and symptoms continue, students and staff with ongoing symptoms are advised to take a second test the following day.
- If the second test remains negative, this is sufficient to enable a return to work or school.
- If a person has returned 2 successive negative rapid antigen tests and still feels unwell consider taking a PCR test.
- Positive rapid antigen tests must be registered on the Tasmanian Government COVID-19 website by the confirmed case or their parent/carer.

### **Colds and flu**

Students/staff with cold or flu symptoms are required to stay home and test for two consecutive days.

If the person has twice tested negative on successive days for COVID-19 and their symptoms are mild e.g. a runny nose, there is no coughing or sneezing and, if a student they have indicated when asked that they feel well, then the person is permitted at school /workplace.

The wearing of a face mask by an adult with mild symptoms is encouraged.

### **Transmission prevention**

- If possible, use well ventilated spaces for large gatherings such as assemblies.
- Deploy signage to encourage appropriate COVID safe behaviour by adults.
- Undertake daily cleaning of surfaces touched at high frequency by both staff and students.
  - Clean at least daily shared electronic equipment. Refer to manufacturer's recommendations or if no manufacturer's recommendations use isopropyl alcohol-based preparations with non-electrostatic wipes suitable for electronic equipment.

- Clean + disinfect at least daily frequently used high-touch surfaces such as benchtops, doorknobs, taps, and handrails with a detergent solution or detergent/disinfectant wipes.
- Clean toilets at least daily.
- Promote personal hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.
  - Ensure adequate supplies and distribution of hand sanitiser.
  - Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser, when entering school, and at regular intervals throughout the day:
    - particularly before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
    - for younger students, this may include having a regular handwashing schedule
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with one's elbow or a tissue.
  - Avoid touching one's eyes, nose and mouth.
- Ensure:
  - Whenever possible there is natural ventilation in classrooms / workspaces.
  - Minimum time is spent in a poorly ventilated workspace.
- Encourage staff who have health conditions that increase their vulnerability to COVID-19 illness to minimise prolonged contact with colleagues unless:
  - They are fully vaccinated.
  - They are wearing a mask.
  - The meeting space or workspace is well ventilated.
  - Able to maintain social distancing.
- Mitigate the risk to staff by:
  - Conducting Zoom meetings where feasible.
  - Meeting outside rather than indoors.
- Seat / separate visitors, parents and carers from staff and students during indoor events.

## **Camps**

Camps are permissible, provided:

- Single or small size group sleeping arrangements where possible.
- Students are advised not to attend if they have symptoms.
- Students classified as close contacts do not go on camp unless they are able to effectively self-test and wear a mask when in doors.
- Students who test positive on camp or who have a rapid onset of symptoms can be promptly and safely quarantined whilst awaiting parent/carer transport home.
- An adequate supply of RATs is taken by the school.
- Teachers are not permitted to test students under any circumstances.

## **Rapid antigen tests**

Schools and the TCEO will allocate rapid antigen tests to CET personnel (staff and students only) as per the following schedule:

- Provide one (1) test when requested due to the person being symptomatic.
- Provide five (5) tests when requested due to the person having household close contact status.

Schools are required to maintain an adequate stockpile of rapid antigen tests, ideally 3 per person. Schools must contact the TCEO when they require resupply of rapid antigen tests.

## **Outbreak management**

Outbreak management has moved from an outbreak management model to a symptoms-based model.

Public Health and the TCEO will liaise on an individual school by school basis when there is concern about significant transmission e.g. 30% of a year level, within a school.

## **COVID leave**

COVID leave has been withdrawn

Staff who are required to isolate for 7 days due to being a confirmed case will need to access personal leave.

## **Vulnerable persons**

There is no formal requirement for students who are subject to chronic health conditions to obtain a medical clearance. Schools are encouraged to work with parents/carers to ensure that appropriate support is provided to meet the students' needs, taking into account the medical advice that has been provided.

It is expected that staff who are at higher risk will continue to attend their CET workplace(s) to undertake their duties.

Vulnerable staff are encouraged to take personal responsibility for the application of pertinent COVID-19 safety measures such as vaccination, mask wearing and physical distancing.

## **Vaccination**

Vaccination is recommended for staff and students over the age of 5 years.

People at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and should their winter booster as soon as possible. Those at risk include people aged 65 years and older, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 50 years and older, people aged 16 years and older who are immunocompromised.

## **Working from home**

If deemed to be a close contact, working from home will only be available where staff absence:

- will not jeopardise operational capability.
- will not require use of relief resources.
- meaningful work can be undertaken at home.
- The working from home checklist has been completed and approved by the relevant workplace manager

If a confirmed case, working from home can be offered if a person expresses a wish to undertake work and meaningful work can be undertaken at home.

A staff member with cold or flu-like symptoms, who has not returned either a positive PCR result or a positive rapid antigen test, can discuss with your manager/principal the possibility of working from home until symptom free.

To effectively support staff working from home, all permissions are to be managed in accordance with CET's Working from Home Guideline.