

## Return to full-time face-to-face learning guidelines

### This guide provides advice on how NSW schools will operate from 25 May 2020

Information has been updated as at 19 May 2020.

### Schools are safe and open for full time face to face learning

All schools are returning to full on-campus learning from Monday 25 May. All school activities and operations will be in line with [AHPPC guidelines](#) and NSW Health advice, as applicable.

We ask that principals and staff help us to communicate the following key messages to their community:

- The best outcome for students is that they are back at school.
- Schools continue to be safe and operations are in line with AHPPC guidelines.
- All students are expected back at school unless they are unwell or have a medical certificate to support their absence.

## Curriculum and student management

### ***Schools are continuing with NESA approved curriculum***

Schools will be continuing with NESA approved curriculum with the exception of some activities which are not able to resume at this time (see School Activities section below).

The revised Higher School Certificate (HSC) timetable is available on the [NESA website](#).

### ***Attendance and roll marking***

All students are expected to attend school unless they are unwell.

If parents believe that their child has a condition which means it is not safe for them to return to school, they will need to obtain a medical certificate. These are likely to be children with suppressed immune systems or undergoing treatment like chemotherapy.

This means students are either:

- at school;
- at home because they are currently unwell;
- at home because they have a medical certificate which states that they are unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical condition.

Please note, students who are residing with a family member in one of the categories identified as being at increased risk, should attend school unless a medical practitioner advises otherwise. The parent or carer should provide written confirmation from the treating health professional that the student is unable to attend school.

If students are away from school because they are unwell, there is no expectation that they complete school work. It is important that unwell students rest.

At this time, in the event of students having a medical certificate to not attend school due to a long term illness or underlying health condition, as is current practice, schools will continue to be responsible for providing work for students for the period they are prevented from being at school.

Individual schools should work with parents to determine how to best meet student's needs in these circumstances. Additional support and advice can be found here on the [Learning from Home hub](#).

Enrolment in Distance Education is not seen as an option for now.

If a student is absent for more than three days without a medical certificate, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and followed up by the school in line with [normal practice](#).

School learning support teams, school services learning and wellbeing staff and school based itinerant staff will be available to provide targeted assistance for schools who need additional support to re-engage students. Relevant contacts can be found through the [School Services Contact list](#).

If a student falls ill while at school, the department's current [first aid procedures](#) apply including contacting the student's parent or carer or emergency contact, to collect the student. Schools should work with families to ensure all emergency contacts are up to date.

### ***Reporting for Semester 1***

Reporting for Semester 1, 2020 will occur but with some [amendments to the policy](#).

In summary:

Schools may provide a simplified written report to parents/carers about students' learning in Semester 1. Principals will be able to modify their existing report templates/software or develop a new simplified report to accommodate this change.

Reporting to parents/carers should focus on the learning that has taken place so far this year. This will include student's progress and achievements, as well as areas for development.

The grading of students using the five point A-E scale is not required. Word descriptors of the five-point achievement scale may be used through teacher comments to provide a consistent language for reporting progress and achievement on the learning students have undertaken.

We encourage schools to engage with parents/carers about students learning as part of the assessment and reporting process.

The deadline for reports to be provided to parents has been extended to 30 August 2020 (end of Week 6, Term 3).

### ***Assessing students' progress***

Schools have been provided with a range of assessment tools in recent weeks, particularly in relation to science and reading. More short assessments are being developed in literacy and numeracy and will be released soon on the [learning from home hub](#). These provide short, sharp insights into learning progress, to inform teaching plans for students.

## **Staffing**

### ***Guidance on return to work***

All school-based staff, including temporary and casual staff, are expected to [return to working on-campus](#) unless they fall into one of the following categories in line with AHPPC guidelines:

- people aged 70 years and over
- all people with compromised immune systems
- people aged 65 years and over only with chronic medical conditions
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50 with chronic medical conditions.

Normal leave management arrangements will apply. Staff will need to submit the appropriate leave application and supporting documents.

Principals or supervisors will need to consider individual circumstances and school operational needs when approving leave.

Staff members who are pregnant or individuals who live with people in one of the above categories, are expected to return to their usual on-campus workplace, or apply for appropriate leave.

To be supported to work remotely staff will need to provide written confirmation of their circumstances to their Principal or workplace manager and agree what work can be performed that will support teaching and learning. If staff are not able to perform work remotely that will support teaching and learning, they may be required to take special leave at a maximum of 20 days in 2020.

If staff fall within any of the above categories and wish to return to work, they may do so at any time with the written support of their medical practitioner.

### ***Meeting your casual staff requirements***

The [Employment Guarantee for Casual Teachers](#) was designed to provide certainty of employment to casual and temporary employees. To be eligible for the support package, casual or temporary staff must have had regular employment during Term 1, 2020, and be available to support on-campus operations in Term 2.

Schools requiring additional casuals should make the usual arrangements – these casuals will be costed to the school and should be allocated to the statewide internal order 2004000460 COVID-19 Schools for Term 2.

## **School activities**

### ***What you can do***

- School assemblies should not be conducted unless there is no other option to deliver critical communications. If conducted they should be short, sharp and preferably outside.
- Provide [library access](#) in a managed way ensuring supervisors/staff maintain physical distancing.
- School sporting activities will recommence in stages. In this first stage schools can recommence activities where there is no contact with others. A practical guide is [available here](#).
- Schools can recommence the use of external sporting grounds where they are available.
- Year 11 and 12 students may attend classes/activities relating to subjects only available on other campuses.
- VET work placement for Year 12 students will commence 1 June 2020. Subject to the availability of placement and appropriate risk assessments, all other VET work placements may commence from Term 3 2020. For any that can't proceed, please see [additional information here](#).
- School based apprenticeships and traineeships can recommence once the relevant workplaces are back in operation.
- Trade Training Centres can operate on school sites.

### ***What you can't do***

- School incursions and excursions are on hold.
- Work experience is not to occur. The department will reassess in Term 3 2020.
- Students cannot attend TAFE for study but may continue to learn online.
- No inter-school activities (debating, inter-school sport).
- No in-school activities requiring volunteers (eg SRE, reading support etc).
- No hydrotherapy pools.
- No school camps.

## **Cleaning and supplies**

### ***Enhanced cleaning***

The department requires cleaning to be delivered in line with the AHPPC guidelines and advice from NSW Health. Public Works Advisory manages the whole-of-government cleaning contract and has implemented an enhanced hygienic cleaning process in schools in addition to the standard daily clean.

Target areas include high-touch areas and other hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and movement areas. Enhanced cleaning is delivered as part of the daily cleaning of schools.

Schools are now also receiving an additional clean during the day in line with AHPPC guidance. This includes cleaning frequently touched areas in bathrooms after recess, as well as replenishing supplies such as soap and hand towels that are provided by the school. High touch surfaces such as balustrades and handrails in the playground and stairwells are also wiped with disinfectant.

As per normal operational restrictions, a cleaner cannot enter a classroom during school hours and while students are in the classroom. During the day, teachers should encourage students to use disinfectant products to wipe down their own learning spaces after each lesson or learning period.

Schools should contact their local Asset Management team to discuss any issues that arise with cleaning.

### ***Essential health supplies***

As always, schools are responsible for sourcing necessary products using existing processes, but due to high demand and supply constraints, the department is sending critical supplies to schools that are running low. The department has dispatched a range of products, including soap, hand sanitiser, toilet paper, paper towels, disinfectant wipes and personal protective equipment.

We're also delivering regular packages of supplementary supplies to help ensure all schools have what they need to keep their learning community safe.

Schools can continue to source hygiene products through EdBuy or locally using Pcards. If schools are getting low on supplies, they should contact the Asset Management team immediately or email [COVID-19@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:COVID-19@det.nsw.edu.au).

## Safety and hygiene

### ***No physical distancing requirements for students***

Physical distancing of children in schools is not required by the latest AHPPC guidelines. Research has shown limited transmission risk associated with school children in the school environment.

### ***Physical distancing requirements remain for adults.***

All adults must maintain physical distance from each other (1.5m) including teachers and support staff, and parents.

Schools should limit the number of staff in common staffrooms or in large staff meetings, and avoid shared items as much as possible.

Staff should exercise good hygiene and cleanliness around staff spaces and shared usage areas.

Schools should ensure school pick up and drop off arrangements enable parents to physically distance from one another and from staff.

Some schools already run split recess and lunch breaks. Schools may wish to adopt this practice as it will help manage staff access to facilities such as canteens, staff rooms and toilets.

### ***Hygiene measures***

Normal [infection control](#) and hygiene measures should be followed. These include encouraging regular washing of hands and cleaning of musical instruments, learning and sporting equipment between uses.

Students should continue to bring water bottles from home to fill at water bubblers rather than drink by mouth.

### ***Reporting suspected COVID-19 cases***

All suspected and confirmed cases should be reported to the department's Incident Report and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523. The school will be provided with advice and support relevant to the circumstances.

### ***Responding to COVID-19 cases***

The department has in place protocols to guide schools through the contact tracing process and communication with the school community. The school may need to be non-operational for a day or two and the school will be thoroughly cleaned prior to on-site learning resuming.

If a school becomes non-operational, the School Infrastructure Asset Management team monitors the cleaning team on site to ensure the clean is thorough. At the end of the clean the Asset Management Director provides the Principal and Director, Educational Leadership with a clearance certificate.

### ***School site visitors and school usage***

There should be no visitors to school sites unless they are essential. Preference should be given to virtual meetings wherever possible.

Essential visits to school sites should occur only when the school can assure adherence to social distancing requirements, enhanced cleaning of used areas and minimise contact with the broader school population. Essential visitors may include:

- departmental staff (Directors Educational Leadership, Executive Directors School Performance, school services and itinerant support staff),
- allied health providers, wellbeing and case management professionals,
- maintenance providers,
- final year teaching practicum students.

Wherever possible P&C and parent/carer/teacher meetings should be conducted virtually or at an alternative venue.

Canteens and uniform shops can open at the discretion of the principal. Out of school hours care can continue to operate.

Community use operators can only recommence for uses that are necessary for continuity of education, by exception with approval by the principal. The organisations must comply with current NSW Health and AHPPC guidelines and public health orders. Principals must have assurance from the community use operator of their ability to comply with these guidelines, including a written commitment. Principals should consult their Director, Educational Leadership in making this decision.

### ***Boarding schools***

[Additional guidelines](#) have been developed to support residential arrangements in boarding schools. The guidelines are aligned with advice from NSW Health and AHPPC recommendations.

## **Well-being**

The department has a range of services and programs to support the physical and psychological wellbeing of staff on the Being Well intranet page.

In addition, the department's [Employee Assistance Program – Supporting You](#) is available for confidential counselling services on 1800 060 650 for permanent staff, and for temporary and casual staff until 30 June.