



# COVID 19 RETURN TO SCHOOL POLICY

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline how our school will be managing risk relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) during key interactions between students, parents and staff during the return to school in Term 2, 2020.

Mountain Gate Primary School is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for our students and staff. We ask for the whole school community to follow this policy to enable us to provide the safest possible environment during this time. We all have a role to play in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in Victoria.

## BACKGROUND

Mountain Gate Primary School is following the advice from the Department of Education and Training including, [Health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the context of COVID-19](#) which can be found on the Department's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#).

## SCOPE

This policy applies to everyone in the Mountain Gate Primary School community. This includes all members of staff (principals, teachers and education support staff), all parents/carers who interact with the school and all students. It also includes visitors to the school.

## REQUIREMENTS

### Attendance on-site

***The Department of Education and Training (DET) advises that:***

***Perhaps the most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), is to ensure that any unwell staff, children and young people remain at home.***

***While the risk of transmission of the virus is very low, staff or students most at risk of severe illness should individually assess appropriateness for onsite attendance at this time with support from their medical practitioner.***

***As the main risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school environment is between adults, it is important that visitors to school grounds are limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations.***

### This means that at our school:

- All unwell staff and students **must** stay home.
- Parents/carers of students with complex medical needs (including those with compromised immune systems), should seek advice from the student's medical practitioner to support decision-making about whether on-site education is suitable, noting that this advice may change depending on the status of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Victoria. This is in line with the [DET Health Care Needs](#) policy.



# COVID 19 RETURN TO SCHOOL POLICY

- Visitors to school grounds will be limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations (e.g. student health and wellbeing services, specialist curriculum programs, maintenance workers).
- Additional staff, including parent volunteers, are discouraged from attending school at this time. Activities dependent on and involving parents eg reading helpers program are cancelled until further notice.
- We ask that any parents/carers wishing to discuss any matters with a staff member to first use the options of either a phone call, or email].
- If deemed urgent and after gaining permission from the Principal or Principal's delegate, a face-to face meeting may be arranged. This must meet the physical distancing requirements of 1.5m between adults and at a mutually agreed time and place designated by the school.
- All interschool activities that involve onsite attendance by students from other schools eg interschool sports or GATEWays] will either take place virtually or will be cancelled.
- School assemblies, excursions, camps and other non-essential large gatherings will be postponed. School arrival and departure

## ***DET advises that:***

***As the main risk of introducing coronavirus (COVID-19) to the school environment is from adults, close proximity between adult members of the school community should be avoided, particularly during school drop-off and pick-up.***

## **This means that at our school:**

Parents will be advised to only enter the school grounds when essential to do so and to contact the school by phone or email where appropriate instead]

- We ask staff and parents/carers to observe physical distancing measures by not congregating in areas inside eg playgrounds, seats etc or around the school eg footpaths and nature strip
- To minimise interaction of students and adults within the school and at entry points we:
  - Have a staggered start and finish to the day with students from May 26<sup>th</sup>
  - Foundation, Grade 1 and Grade 2 arriving between 8.45 and 9.00am
  - Foundation, Grade 1 and Grade 2 will finish at 3.15pm
  - When commencing onsite -
  - Grades 3, 4, 5 & 6 arriving between 9.00 and 9.15.
  - Grades 3, 4, 5 & 6 will finish at 3.30pm
  - GATEDS WILL BE COLOUR CODED AND STUDENTS /FAMILIES CAN ONLY USE ONE GATE ALL THE TIME.
  - PARENTS WILL BE INFORMED OF TIMES AND PROCESSES.
  - Markers will be on path to encourage social distancing.
  - Families will be encouraged to abide by Government guidelines and laws.
  - [Parents/carers will be asked to not linger while picking up or dropping off students.

## **Hygiene**

### ***DET advises that:***

***Everyone can protect themselves and prevent the spread of coronavirus by continuing effective hand hygiene.***



# COVID 19 RETURN TO SCHOOL POLICY

## At our school:

- All staff and students will undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet. This will be directed or supervised by staff where required.
- Where soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser will be made available.
- Students must bring their own water bottles to school for use (and refilling). It is recommended that students do not drink directly from drinking fountains at this time.
- Staff and students are reminded to clean their mobile phones regularly. The Mountain Gate Primary School Mobile Phone Policy remains in place so students will not be handling their mobile phones during the school day.
- Sharing of food is not permitted.
- Drink taps cannot be used.

## Specific arrangements for teaching and learning environments and break times

### ***DET advises that:***

***Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not always be practical in education settings. Physical distancing is most important between adults.***

***Reducing mixing between different cohorts (either classes or year levels) is recommended as a precautionary measure to minimise risk of spread of transmission and aid containment in the rare event of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) on site.***

## At our school we will:

- Separate different classes or year levels when outdoors]
- Keep windows and doors open to promote fresh air flow indoors]
- Maximise use of outdoor learning areas or environments with enhanced ventilation where possible and as practical depending on weather conditions]
- Students and staff will largely remain in the same classroom areas where possible rather than moving for particular classes from room to room]
- To commence, Specialist subjects will be taken in classrooms,
- Staff will maintain physical distancing as much as practical when working in a classroom together and alternative staff rooms/staff spaces will be set up to allow for social distancing.

## School offices and staff facilities

### ***DET advises that:***

***As the greatest risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school environment is between adults, close proximity between staff will be avoided where possible and especially in offices and staff rooms.***



# COVID 19 RETURN TO SCHOOL POLICY

## At our school we will:

- Spread staff workstations out as much as possible and limit the number of staff in offices, re-locating staff to other spaces (e.g. library or unused classrooms)].
- In line with other workplaces across Victoria, we will remind staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as possible in the reception, staff room and offices.

## Cleaning and facilities management

***DET advises that:***

***Environmental cleaning, coupled with regular hand hygiene, remains important to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission.***

## At our school we will:

- Continue extension of routine environmental cleaning, including progressive cleaning throughout the day to ensure that risks of transmission are reduced for high-touch services. See Department information about [Access to cleaning supplies and services](#).
- Use own items whenever practicable.
- Carefully consider the necessity of using shared items or equipment e.g.: shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, musical instruments etc at this time.
- We will be practising hand hygiene immediately before and after use of shared equipment

## Sport and recreation

***DET advises that:***

***In line with community advice, reasonable precautions are still advised to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the context of sport and recreation.***

- Playground equipment can be used. However, students will be directed to practise hand hygiene before and after use.
- Wherever possible, outdoor facilities will be used for physical education and recreational play. Where indoor facilities are used, we will limit the number of students.
- Swimming and aquatic facilities will not be used.
- We will encourage non-contact sports at this time. Hand hygiene will be practised before and after use of any sporting equipment.



# COVID 19 RETURN TO SCHOOL POLICY

## Provision of routine care and first aid

**DET advises that:**

***Physical distancing is not practical when providing direct care. In this situation standard precautions, including hand hygiene, are important for infection control.***

## At our school:

- Standard precautions as per DET [Infectious Diseases policy](#) and First Aid Policy and Medications Policy] will be followed when providing first aid. For example, we will use gloves and an apron when dealing with blood or body fluids/substances.
- Hand hygiene will be practised before and after performing routine care or first aid.
- Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), for example face masks, is not required to provide routine care or first aid for students who are well, unless such precautions are usually adopted in the routine care of an individual student.

## Management of an unwell student or staff member

**DET advises that:**

***It is important that any staff member or student who becomes unwell while at school returns home. While it is unlikely that a staff member or student who is unwell with flu-like symptoms will have coronavirus (COVID-19) there are some sensible steps schools can take while a student awaits collection by a parent or carer as a precaution.***

## This means that at our school:

- Staff and students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough or sore throat, will be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible. Urgent medical attention will be sought where needed. Unwell students will not be permitted to travel home unsupervised.
- Where staff or students are experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus, we will ensure hand hygiene, physical distancing and (where possible) use of a face mask. See DET [guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).
- If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell in the first instance we will contact the sickbay to discuss any concerns about the health status of the student, and we will take a precautionary approach, requesting the parent/carer to collect their child if concerns remain.
- A trained staff member may take the temperature of the student, where appropriate, to support decision-making. Gloves will be worn for the purpose of taking a temperature.



# COVID 19 RETURN TO SCHOOL POLICY

- Staff or students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) should be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps. A medical certificate is not required to return to school after a period of illness, however staff and students should not return until symptoms resolve.
- If a student spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), surfaces will be immediately cleaned with disinfectant wipes (and using gloves) - as much as is practicably possible.

## Managing a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

*DET has comprehensive procedures in place with the Department of Health and Human Services to manage suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools.*

- We will contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 to discuss what to do next if a student or staff member:
  - is a confirmed case
  - has been in close contact with a confirmed case
- We will inform the Department by making an [IRIS incident alert](#).

DHHS defines 'close contact' as someone who has either:

- had at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- shared a closed space for more than two hours with someone who is a confirmed case.

### Further information and resources

- [DET Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website:](#)
  - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/coronavirus-advice-schools.aspx>
- [DHHS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website:](#)
  - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- [DET Infectious Diseases Policy:](#)
  - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/infectiousdiseases.aspx>
- [DET Health Care Needs Policy](#)
  - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/healthcareneeds.aspx>
- [Talking to your child about COVID-19:](#)
  - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/covid-19/talking-to-your-child-during-coronavirus.docx>
- Department of Education and Training COVID-19 Advice Line – 1800 338 663
- Department of Health and Human Services Coronavirus hotline – 1800 675 398 (24 hours, 7 days a week)

### Review

This policy will be reviewed weekly in conjunction with updated DET Operations Guidelines