



Tuesday, 19 July 2022

### **Face Masks in Schools**

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is strongly recommended by the Victorian Department of Health that face masks are worn in indoor settings, with face masks mandatory for those aged 8 and over who are household contacts and attending school. This is because the wearing of masks is effective in reducing the transmission of COVID-19.

What does this mean in practice for schools?

It is the Department of Education's expectation that, through to the end of winter, students aged 8 and over and staff will wear masks when in class, except where removing a mask is necessary for clear communication or when a particular activity requires the removal of a mask.

Masks are not required to be worn outdoors but can be worn when physical distancing is not possible.

We understand that parents and carers will play an important role in supporting this expectation. A short letter is available on Page 3, signed by each of the 3 school sectors (government, Catholic and independent), which explains this will be a consistent expectation across all schools in Victoria this winter.

Wearing masks is a simple step we can all take this winter to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases and ensure our schools are as safe as possible.

### **Exemptions for testing and isolation**

The period of time when someone is considered a recently confirmed case and therefore exempt from testing and isolation requirements has been reduced from the previous 12 weeks to 4 weeks.

This means that staff and children who are household contacts of people with COVID-19 are now required to undertake the testing and isolation requirements from 4 weeks after completing isolation with COVID-19. Previously, this exemption period was 12 weeks.

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After the 4-week exemption period, students and staff members who are a household contact of a new COVID-19 case, must follow [the rules for household contacts](#), including reporting this to their school.

As part of this they must take 5 rapid antigen tests (RATs) over 7 days and receive negative test results and wear a face mask (if over 8 years old) in indoor spaces.

Families and staff will also have to report being a household contact to their school after this 4-week period.

Thank you again for your ongoing cooperation and support during this time.

Stay Safe

Tony Cerra  
Principal

Jason Kenny  
Assistant Principal

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Dear parents and carers

We are writing to you as parents/carers of a child or children in government, Catholic and independent schools across Victoria.

The Victorian Department of Health strongly recommends that face masks are worn in indoor settings.

As a result, we are asking all students aged 8 and over and all staff in all schools across Victoria to wear masks when in class (except where removing a mask is necessary for clear communication) from now to the end of winter.

Students won't be required or expected to wear masks when outdoors, and this expectation won't stop student participation in the full range of school activities, including music, sport and performances.

We are asking for your support in explaining to your child or children the importance of this simple step that will help keep our schools as safe as possible.

We also ask that you make sure your child (or children) takes a mask to school (and wears it if they are travelling on public transport) or collects a mask when they arrive at school.

We all appreciate how important it is for students to be back at school. This action will help make sure as many students and staff as possible are protected from COVID and other winter illness.

Thank for your help with this collective effort to keep our communities safe and healthy.

**Dr David Howes**  
Deputy Secretary

Victorian Department of  
Education and Training

**Michelle Green**  
Chief Executive

Independent Schools  
Victoria

**Jim Miles**  
Executive Director

Catholic Education  
Commission of Victoria

**Tony Cerra**  
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