



# School Operating Guidelines

## Very High Caseload Level 1

### ADVICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS & CARE SERVICES

Effective Term 2

Schools, care services and boarding facilities throughout the State are open and operating within the WA Health guidelines. In line with the latest advice from the Chief Health Officer, WA remains in Very High COVID-19 Caseload settings with all staff and students required to follow the defined testing and isolation protocols in a Very High COVID-19 Caseload environment.



## Definitions

For the purposes of implementing these guidelines, the following definitions apply:

- **Vaccination requirement** means staff to be double dose vaccinated against COVID-19 from 12.01am on 31 January 2022 and have a third dose (booster) vaccine within one month of becoming eligible, unless the staff member has an approved exemption.
  - **Ad hoc basis** means attendance at any Education Facility or Facilities no more than once a week.
    - Note: A person who attends multiple education facilities in a week, but does not visit the same education facility twice, does not attend on an ad hoc basis. For example, a tradesperson who works at school A on Monday and then works at school B on Wednesday of the same week must comply with the vaccination requirements in these directions.
  - Therefore, **regular basis** means more than once per week (either within one site or across multiple school sites).
  - **School sites (education facilities)** include:
    - a school, including CEWA offices e.g. Leederville, Geraldton, Broome and Bunbury;
    - early learning and care, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and long daycare;
    - boarding premises (boarding / residential facilities).
  - **Critical worker** is any person who is employed or contracted to work in a school, care service or boarding/residential facility. Refer to [Critical Worker Operating Guidelines](#), [Critical Worker Factsheet](#) and [Critical Worker Flowchart](#).
- **Close contact:** a close contact is now defined as:
    - A household member or intimate partner of a person with COVID-19 who has had contact with them during their infectious period.
    - Someone who has had close personal interaction with a person with COVID-19 during their infectious period where:
      - they spent greater than 4 hours of cumulative contact with them in any 24-hour period in a residential setting (for instance a home or accommodation facility).
      - where masks have been removed by both people during the period of contact.
    - Someone who is directed by WA Health that they are a close contact.
    - Principals are no longer required to report close contact information on the COVID-19 Reporting Portal.

There is no requirement for parents to report to a school that their child has tested negative to COVID-19, but they are encouraged to do so via the COVID-19 Self-Reporting Portal to further support schools with their management of COVID-19.

Parents/caregivers are instructed to inform the school if their child tests positive and must keep them home until well and free of symptoms. Parents/caregivers must be reminded to also report their child's positive RAT to WA Health.



## Vaccination requirement

All staff working at a school site, and visitors who attend the school or schools on a regular basis, are required to meet the vaccination requirements.



## School attendance

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) encourages all students and staff who are well to attend school, including those with health conditions.

Please refer to previous advice regarding codes for absences.



## Educational Continuity

Consider the following :

- The importance of staff planning ahead and ensuring their planning is easily accessible to others.
- The context of students who are requiring remote learning – those who are in quarantine as household contacts and those in isolation because they are COVID-19 positive.
- The importance of clarity of communication with parents and students.
- Opportunities for students to connect with staff and their peers.
- Ensuring students have access to equipment/ resources they require at home. This includes physical resources (books, manipulatives, art materials) particularly for younger children, digital devices and work packs).
- Ways in which Students With Disability, EAL/D students/families and others who may be vulnerable in the current situation will be supported.
- Being realistic in expectations in terms of the work students may be able to complete independently in a remote context.
- Being realistic with staff expectations as some staff may be ill or in isolation.
- Being creative and flexible with staffing, particularly where there are high levels of staff and student absence.
- Collaborating with other Catholic schools in your region and supporting each other.
- Schools need to provide work for students who need to stay at home due to isolation or close contact quarantine requirements. Schools are not required to provide work to students who are being kept at home by a parent when there is no COVID-19 positive case, or the student is not a close contact.



## School activities

- School activities during school hours, offsite and onsite, must promote and practise good hygiene principles.
- In-school indoor events with more than a class size can be held with masks and physical distancing.
  - Particular consideration should be taken for Kindergarten to Year 2 as there is no mask mandate for these students.
  - For choir and orchestra refer to [Guidelines for Music in Schools](#).
- Assemblies are allowed under the following conditions:
  - Limit to a single year group only.
  - Provision should be made for seating of close contacts at assemblies or for their ability to access the assembly in an alternative way e.g. online, where possible.
  - Consider seating arrangements for mask-exempt students e.g. seated apart from each other.
  - Assemblies should be held outdoors or in well ventilated spaces.
  - Parents/caregivers may attend year group assemblies provided they comply with mask wearing and physical distancing requirements.
- Staff meetings, including collaborative planning meetings, can occur with mask wearing and physical distancing in place.
- Online professional learning programs are preferred, however, face to face sessions may proceed where adherence to COVID-19 mitigation strategies are applied.
- Staff should avoid situations where they have masks off for longer than 15 minutes when in close proximity.
- Swimming programs can continue onsite and offsite.
- Compliance with mandatory vaccination requirements is to be adhered to according to the offsite venue and exceptions that may apply (e.g. age of the students).
- Playgrounds and play equipment should be cleaned once a week.
  - Students should be encouraged to wash hands after use of playground/ play equipment.



## Offsite activities

Before approval for offsite activities is made, as part of the excursion risk assessment documents, ensure the business or venue has an up-to-date COVID-19 Safety Plan that it continues to implement.

- Activities must adhere to any additional public health and social measures in place.
- Excursion providers and external staff associated with excursions **are not** required to be vaccinated unless otherwise mandated.
  - Schools should include considerations around COVID-19 in their risk analysis excursion documentation, including but not limited to:
    - hygiene facilities;
    - medical; and
    - planning.
    - venue capacity and density limits:
    - 2sqm rule and capacity limits for hospitality venues, entertainment venues, galleries and museums;
    - 2sqm rule for public venues such as swimming pools and recreation centres;
    - 75% capacity limit for entertainment venues with forward facing seating.
- **Large one off events** may continue provided adherence to mask wearing, physical distancing, venue capacity and density limits, and vaccination requirements, as required. Consideration should be given to student age, cohorting, and length of activity. **Outside of school hours, community venue capacity and density requirements apply to schools.**

Before approval for offsite activities is made, as part of the excursion risk assessment documents, ensure the business or venue has an up to date COVID-19 Safety Plan that it continues to implement.

- Performing arts/musical/band performances with forward-facing seating must comply with the 75% capacity limit.
- School balls can be held offsite.
  - Where school balls are held at a venue which requires persons 16 years or older to be vaccinated, school students are required to comply.
  - Follow and comply with any venue requirements.

- If schools wish to hold their school balls onsite, an exemption will be considered provided the school ensures that all attendees over 16 are fully vaccinated and compliant with any other public health and social measures in place at the time (including mask mandates).
  - Indoor sporting events are permitted, and spectators are allowed but must comply with venue requirements.
  - Outdoor sporting events are permitted, and spectators are allowed but must comply with venue requirements.
  - Other interschool events are permitted, and spectators are allowed but must comply with venue requirements.



## Camps

School camps are permitted from Term 2.

- Staff/ students are required to show evidence (photo) of a negative RAT taken on the morning of the camp for their attendance to be permitted.
- Student permission notices for camps must include:
  - Permission for staff to administer a RAT to any student who has symptoms or meets the close contact definition.
  - Agreement of parent/caregiver to immediately collect their child from camp should they test positive or be identified as a close contact.
  - Agreement of parent/caregiver to be contactable at any time and available to take immediate responsibility for the child in the event that they cannot remain/ return to the camp facility.

A supply of saliva RATs should provided and used wherever possible to allow for the child to self administer.

- If staff must assist a student with their RAT the staff member must
  - wear appropriate PPE; and
  - ensure consent for the RAT has been obtained from the child's parent/caregivers.
- Schools should refer to the School Camp COVID-19 Risk Assessment Checklist 2022 when planning for a camp.
- The School Camp COVID-19 Risk Assessment Checklist 2022 can be used to support coordinating staff while the camp is underway.

- A COVID-19 case/outbreak checklist 2022 has been provided to support coordinating staff in the event of a COVID-19 positive case, while on camp.



## Health and hygiene

Arrangements to continue to reduce direct contact, enhance personal hygiene practices, and strengthen cleaning regimes in schools and care services, are to be encouraged.

Each person has a responsibility to protect themselves and others. This is achieved through the ongoing promotion of the following good hygiene principles and practices:

- staff, students and parents must stay home when sick or symptomatic.
- adults maintain physical distancing from other adults, where possible;
- avoiding unnecessary physical contact and physical greetings (e.g. handshakes, hugs);
- covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, using a flexed elbow or tissue;
- disposing of tissues appropriately;
- washing hands regularly for 20 seconds with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitiser, including prior to meal breaks; and
- posters and visible messaging regarding handwashing and cough-sneeze hygiene should be displayed.



## Professional Learning

Face-to-face professional learning, including events that involve staff from multiple schools/sites, can proceed.

- Venue density & capacity limits must be adhered to.
- Physical distancing employed in accordance with venue requirements, or minimum 1.5m if held on a school campus.
- If hosting professional learning sessions, self-service catering practices should be avoided.
- Masks must be worn at all times and conference spaces should be well ventilated.



## Travel

### Intrastate & interstate travel

- Travel locally and nationally is unrestricted for CEWA staff during their prescribed holiday periods.
- Where travel is required for school purposes, contact must be made with the Deputy Executive Director/ Executive Director for discussion.

### International travel

- International travel for CEWA Staff is permitted during their prescribed holiday periods.
- International travel for school business is not permitted.



## Masks

Masks must be worn by those outlined in the [COVID Transition \(Face Covering\) Directions \(No 5\)](#).

- Staff and students from Year 3 and above must wear a mask at all times, unless:
  - the person has a medical certificate confirming a physical, developmental or mental illness, condition or disability which makes wearing a face covering inappropriate;
  - communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, and visibility of the mouth is essential for communication;
  - the person is engaged in physical activity, including physical education classes and organised sport;
  - the person is consuming food, drink or medicine; and/or
  - staff are providing teaching or instructions to students; however staff are encouraged to wear masks even when teaching, where possible.
- Students in Years 3 and above who are asymptomatic non-household close contacts and are attending school, are required to wear a mask at all times, unless one of



## School canteens

School canteens can open, and parents and community volunteers can continue to assist in school canteens.

- Regular cleaning undertaken.
- Schools should review and update as needed their school risk assessment procedures to include COVID-safe principles.
- School canteens may continue to be an exception from the requirement for a COVID Safety Plan.
- Mandatory requirement that all education facilities confirm and record non-employee (such as contractor or regular volunteer) compliance of COVID-19 vaccination status.



the above exceptions applies, during their modified quarantine arrangements. This includes both indoors and outdoors when on school site.

- Adults, including parents and carergivers, must wear a mask indoors at all times. Masks must be worn outdoors when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Exemptions and exceptions continue to apply.
- Masks are encouraged but not required for Kindergarten to Year 2 based on advice from the Chief Health Officer.



## Ventilation

- Use fresh air and well-ventilated spaces where possible.



## Cleaning for all schools and care services

- Cleaning guidelines are based on, and continuously reviewed in line with, advice from WA Health.
- Cleaning of high-touch surfaces, including classrooms, meeting rooms and washroom/toilets should be maintained on a daily basis.
- Playgrounds and play equipment should be cleaned once a week.
  - Hand hygiene before and after use of equipment should be encouraged.
- Schools and care services are to ensure water bubblers have good water pressure, handles are cleaned daily and students do not make contact with the water bubblers with their mouths or water bottles.
- Bin waste removal after school daily.
- Computer keyboards and mice, printers, photocopiers and telephones cleaned once a day.
- High-use equipment (e.g. sporting gear) to be cleaned after use.



## Visitors on school and care services sites

All visitors must comply with the health and hygiene conditions previously outlined for staff.

- All visitors will sign in, according to the school's protocol.
- Schools will maintain a contact register for all visitors and are encouraged to use the ServiceWA /SafeWA app.

- All visitors must follow mask wearing requirements where mandated, as outlined above.

In addition, regular contractors, volunteers and third-party providers including therapists are allowed on school sites, as follows:

- In accordance with the Disability Standards for Education 2005, schools are required to take reasonable steps to facilitate the provision of support services, such as therapy.
- Schools can continue to make local decisions regarding the provision of services, on their site/s.
- When considering use of school facilities and resources, principals consider their duty of care of students and staff. These considerations continue alongside COVID-19 practices such as:
  - suitability of, and access to, the facilities to be used;
  - alternatives to face-to-face meetings, such as the use of technology, where practicable and appropriate;
  - cleaning of all facilities used for meetings
  - cleaning of equipment used for the purposes of therapy; and
  - physical distancing, use of PPE and good hygiene practices.
- Where modifications are required to the existing provision of services, schools must consult with parents about these modifications and limit the disruption caused by the modification.
- Principals should continue to liaise with providers to ensure understanding of, and compliance with, school and department policies and processes.
- Families may be referred to the NDIS COVID support line on 1800 800 110.
- There is a mandatory requirement that all Catholic schools confirm and record non-employees (such as contractors and regular volunteers) compliance of COVID-19 vaccination.
- Display appropriate signage regarding expectations and restrictions for all visitors at school and care services sites.
- **Third Party user - facility access**
  - Groups using school facilities under a third party agreement including community and non-community use, outside of school hours care, school uniform shop and



canteen, and playgroups are included in this category and can continue to operate on school sites.

- Third party users can use school premises in accordance with public and social health measures relating to capacity and density limits.



## Parents/caregivers on school and care services sites

Must comply with the health and hygiene conditions previously outlined and follow mask wearing requirements, outlined above.

Parents/caregivers are only allowed on school sites for the following purposes:

- outdoor drop-off/pick up of their child
- assemblies (limited to year group)
- parent/teacher meetings
- to volunteer in roles outside of the classroom that are essential for the operations of the school, including the canteen and uniform shop
- Infrequent special events in line with community venue capacity and density limits, and mask wearing requirements.

Parents/caregivers attending school sites must adhere to physical distancing requirements where possible.



## Work placement

- Schools should conduct work placement risk assessments to ensure employers comply with WA COVID-19 Health guidelines.
- Continue to confirm that work environments have COVID-19 Safety Plans in place.
- Students are not required to be vaccinated, unless they are on a work placement where they will need to comply with the requirements of that workplace.
- Student work placements, simulated work placements and work experience will be required to follow any public health restrictions applicable to their work placement site.

Note: Students who are asymptomatic non-household close contacts are not permitted to leave school grounds to undertake work placement.



## Medically vulnerable and immunocompromised

### Students

- Ensure individual care plans for vulnerable students continue to be managed in accordance with their needs.
- School staff can access support from the students with disability team. For students who cannot attend school due to a family or they themselves having an immune compromised medical condition during COVID-19.
- Vulnerable school students will be supported remotely if school attendance is not possible, through the school in which they are enrolled.

### Staff

- Employees who are medically vulnerable or immunocompromised should develop with their medical practitioner a COVID-19 action plan outlining the required controls for their safe return to work.
- If it is unsafe to return to work, alternative arrangements may be supported. Consultation with Employee Relations should take place in this circumstance.



## Travel to remote Aboriginal communities

Under the WA Government's [Remote Aboriginal Communities Directions](#), the only people who can enter a remote Aboriginal community are residents of those communities and those who are:

- providing essential services and supplies
- going to work or school there
- entering for family or cultural reasons
- delivering a community program or activity
- entering in an emergency.

These people cannot enter a community if they have COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19, or if they are waiting for a test result or have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.

For more information visit: <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-coronavirus-remote-aboriginal-communities-travel>



## School bus services

- School buses are unable to transport students in the following circumstances (including during the school day):



- any student who is notified as a close contact
- any student who develops symptoms during the school day
- any student who is supposed to be isolating
- Schools should encourage families to consider alternative travel arrangements for their children in the event of their being unable to catch a school bus.

## Sources of authority

[Education Worker \(Restrictions on Access\) Directions \(No. 5\)](#)

[Booster Vaccination \(Restrictions on Access\) Directions \(No. 2\)](#)

[Proof of Vaccination Directions \(No. 5\)](#)