



# Phase 5 School Operating Guidelines

## ADVICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

31 January 2022

In line with State Government and Department of Health advice, COVID-19 Phase 5 Operating Guidelines for schools are as follows:



### Student attendance

It is compulsory for all students to attend school unless they are unwell or have a medical referral to learn from home. Where a student's pre-existing medical condition is already known to the school no medical evidence is required.

#### If a child is unwell

Staff, students and parents are not to attend schools if they are unwell (symptomatic) or test positive to COVID-19, until permitted under public health requirements. Parents are asked to seek medical advice if their child exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 and are encouraged to notify the school if they have undergone testing. Normal processes for advising the school of a child's absence will apply for any parent who keeps their unwell child home.



### Masks

#### Staff and secondary students

All staff members and students in Years 7 to 12 will be required to wear a mask when there is a public health requirement in place to do so, unless:

- they have a physical, developmental or mental illness, condition or disability which makes wearing a face covering inappropriate.
- they are deaf or hard of hearing and visibility of the mouth is essential for communication.
- they are engaged in physical exercise.
- they are eating, drinking or taking medicine provided that they are seated at the time.
- staff are providing teaching or instructions to students.
- they have a valid medical exemption from wearing a mask.

If a staff member does not have a valid medical reason refuses to wear a mask, please contact your Employment Relations consultant.

Common sense should apply regarding the colour and markings on masks, with staff and students

asked not to wear masks that may contain inappropriate markings and designs.

#### Students Kindergarten to Year 6

Students in Kindergarten to Year 6 are not required to wear a mask, but their teachers and support staff must wear masks in accordance with relevant public health directions for their schools' area.

All primary students can choose to wear a mask and are encouraged to do so when there is an increased number of cases in the community.



### School facilities and activities

#### Physical Environment

Ensure ventilation is optimised in the first instance with cross ventilation through opening doors as well as windows in all areas of the school and where required with air purifiers.

Schools to display appropriate signage regarding expectations and restrictions for all visitors on school sites.

#### Venue Capacity Limits

- the venue capacity rule of two square metres per adult no longer applies
- all events/activities may be held with 100% venue capacity, regardless of attendees' ages
- physical distancing of 1.5 metres between adults from different households, should be maintained, where possible; and
- good hygiene practices should be promoted and maintained.

The following school activities may operate within the limits outlined above:

- Assemblies
- Choir, music concerts and performances
- Examinations



- Major events, over 500 attendees, held **on-site**, outside of school hours and involving the school community, such as school balls, music concerts, performances, award evenings and sporting events, are exempt from the proof of vaccination requirements in place for off-site venues.

Third party/community user – facility access; if third party/community users are working on a school site after school hours, they are not required to be vaccinated. For example, this includes sports groups, language classes, musical groups, scout groups, volunteering groups, dance classes and church groups.

- Major events held at **off-site** venues such as school balls, music concerts, performances, award evenings and sporting events. Liaise with venue providers directly to determine the requirements in place concerning proof of vaccination.

The following school activities may operate with the ongoing promotion and practise of good hygiene principles (see Health, Hygiene and Cleaning section below), anyone who is unwell should stay home and physical distancing of 1.5 metres between adults, where possible:

- Canteen use and service
- Library access and use
- Contact sport and training - equipment may be shared, ensuring equipment is cleaned regularly.
- Interschool activities: held on school sites are exempt from the proof of vaccination requirements in place for off-site venues.
- Incursions and excursions
- Camps: schools should follow CEWA excursion policies and ensure that camp providers supply and comply with WA COVID-19 Health Guidelines.
- Work placements: schools should conduct work placement risk assessments as per usual protocols and ensure employers comply with WA COVID-19 health guidelines. Students on work placement or work experience are required to show proof of vaccination where there is a vaccination mandate in place for the placement site, or as required.
- School, therapy and public swimming pools.
- Visitors and third-party providers on school sites can occur including parent/carer meetings, School Board/Council, CSPWA, staff meetings and Out of School Hours Care.

Regular cleaning of used areas should apply. Visitors on school sites should sign in as per usual protocols.

- Peripatetics, music tutors, casual staff, regular volunteers, regular maintenance and service providers at schools are required to provide evidence of compliance with the Public Health Orders regarding mandatory vaccination. The evidence of compliance to the directions by these providers/staff must be managed by schools.

### School Faults, Maintenance and Building Upgrades

Schools need to ensure that contractors have access to school sites to ensure these activities are undertaken.

Any concerns relating to maintenance or capital works should be directed to the school's Capital Development Consultant.

### Use of SafeWA App

Schools are not required to register staff, students and visitors with the SafeWA App.

However:

- all visitors to school sites must sign in as part of the school's visitor requirements;
- schools must be able to provide contact tracing information if requested by the Department of Health; and
- schools may consider implementing the use of the SafeWA app.



## Health and hygiene

Schools must follow good personal hygiene practices and cleaning regimes based on, and continuously reviewed in line with, advice from the Department of Health:

- Ventilation is maximised in all areas in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Chief Health Officer. This includes keeping windows and doors open; using fans, air conditioners and evaporative coolers or using air purifiers to improve air quality, where required.
- High use areas such as bench tops, desks, doorknobs, taps and hand rails should be cleaned and surfaces disinfected on a regular basis.
- Playgrounds should be open with play equipment being cleaned once per week. Hand hygiene before and after use of equipment should be encouraged.



- Supplies of soap, hand sanitiser and other cleaning agents must be available.
- Students and staff are encouraged to;
  - wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitiser as often as possible;
  - adults maintain 1.5 metres distance from other adults, where possible;
  - staff, students and parents must stay home when sick;
  - avoiding unnecessary physical contact and physical greetings (e.g. handshakes, hugs etc);
  - covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, using a flexed elbow or tissue; and
  - disposing of masks and tissues appropriately.
- Bin waste removal before or after school.
- Computer keyboards and mice, printers, photocopiers and telephones cleaned once a day.
- Hand sanitiser and cleaning kit in each school vehicle, for staff to use.



their families), so they can also be tested. If the Chief Health Officer advises that a school, or part thereof, needs to close the school will enact its Six Step Response Plan.

## Remaining prepared

Catholic schools will continue to review and respond to cleaning and hygiene protocols in line with advice from the Department of Health.

When making decisions on applying this guidance the following should be considered:

- The AHPPC definition of vulnerable populations is based on age and [underlying medical conditions](#) that are limited and considered relatively serious.



## Unwell student or staff member

If a student or staff member shows possible symptoms of COVID-19 at school, they will be sent home and asked to seek testing in accordance with State guidelines. Consider minimising student interaction across year groups, create distinct pick up locations, ensure communication strategy is developed, have a contingency option for students who cannot be collected until after school hours. While the student waits to be picked up, they should be given a N95, or equivalent, mask to wear and be isolated from others. A school nurse or member of staff should be available to supervise the isolated student and must be provided with the following prescribed PPE gear;

- Disposable Gloves
- A Face Shield
- Protective Apron (disposable)
- Contact-Free Thermometer

The student will be provided with support to learn from home while they are waiting for a test result or quarantining. If they test positive for COVID-19, the Department of Health have processes in place to advise close contacts (or