

# SOMERVILLE RISE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## 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.

Somerville Rise 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

Somerville Rise 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 Somerville Rise 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.

- 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 e.g. Breakfast Club, 1:1 reading are cancelled until further notice.
- We ask that any parents/carers wishing to discuss any matters with their child's teacher or another staff member do so via email. If you request a personal conversation with your child's teacher, please request this via email and the teacher will phone you when they are available. Please note that this may not be straight away as the teacher may be conducting face to face teaching.
- If a face-to face meeting is needed, it must meet the physical distancing requirements of 1.5m between adults.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the office via phone or email if they have inquiries. They must only enter the office if absolutely essential or invited to do so. Parents accessing the office must only use the front gate and are not permitted to walk through the school.
- School assemblies, excursions, camps and other non-essential large gatherings will be cancelled for term 2. This includes:
  - All assemblies - cancelled until further notice
  - All interschool sporting events - cancelled until further notice
  - Prep tours and information night - cancelled until further notice
- There is a strong possibility that some events may be postponed or cancelled during Term 3. We will keep you informed of further changes as we continue to follow the restrictions set by the government and guidance of the Department of Education.

### 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:

- We ask staff to observe physical distancing measures by not congregating in any areas inside or around the school e.g.; staffroom, office areas, photocopier, carpark.
- We request that parents only enter the school grounds when essential to do so and to contact the school by phone or email where appropriate instead. We ask parents not to enter the school site at drop off and pick up times and to observe social distancing outside of the school property as they wait for their children.
- Parents that need to pick students up early should contact the office. Students will be escorted to a parent's car on arrival.
- To minimise interaction of students and adults within the school and at entry points we:
  - Ask parents to remain in their car or have a pre-arranged meeting area
  - Ask that parents/carers do not to 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.*

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). Drinking taps will be turned off.

#### **Mobile phones**

- Staff and students are reminded to clean their mobile phones regularly
- Students to clean their phones at home as must remain switched off in their bags.

#### **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:

#### **Playground**

Playgrounds will re-open in week 10 and 11 of Term 2. Students will not be able to access equipment in the morning before school but will have access during the day.

	Juniors	Middle	Seniors
Break 1	Junior School slope and bottom basketball court (Mini goals, Soccer nets)	Top basketball courts and SRC courtyard	Oval, Pit
Break 2	Junior School slope and bottom basketball court (Mini goals, Soccer nets)	Oval, Pit	Top basketball courts and SRC courtyard

#### **Safety indoors**

In relation to putting in measures to prevent the spread of COV19 the advice from the OH&S Advisory Service is;

- Promote fresh air flow indoors and maximize use of outdoor learning areas or environments with enhanced ventilation where possible and as practical depending on weather conditions. If

the weather conditions are poor and it's raining, then windows can be closed for that period of time and you can use heaters.

Heaters will be put on early each morning and during breaks to take the chill off the air and once the room is full of bodies we will be taking the appropriate safety precautions to have adequate air flow in classrooms.

- Ensure that students and staff largely remain in their own classrooms. There will be no gatherings of whole year levels or cross year level activities e.g.; buddies.
- Specialist teachers to take the class in the grade classroom except PE which can be taken in the gym or outside.
- Ask staff to maintain physical distancing as much as practical when working in a classroom together. We generally have one staff member in a classroom at a given time. Where there is another teacher or aide these staff will maintain physical distancing.

### **Canteen**

- Parents should be ordering online for snacks and lunch. Students need to pick up their own lunch order from canteen. Canteen only open two days.

### **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.*

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.
- Ensure physical distancing, parents are asked to avoid coming in to the office and instead communicate with the school via phone call or email.
- Provide staff with additional and dedicated eating areas to ensure physical distancing.
- Ensure that all staff working in offices adhere to physical distancing requirements 1.5 meters apart or an area around them of four square meters.
- Staff should follow physical distancing requirements in regards to staff amenities

### **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](#).
- Provide Hand sanitizer and wipes to staff
- 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.

- Where possible students will bring their devices from home for their personal use.
- We will be practicing 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.*

- Wherever possible, outdoor facilities e.g.; basketball courts will be used for Physical Education and recreational play. Where indoor facilities are used, we will limit the number of students.
- We will encourage non-contact sports at this time. Hand hygiene will be practiced before and after use of any sporting equipment.

### 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 our First Aid 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 practiced before and after performing routine care or first aid.
- Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), e.g.: 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/carers as soon as possible. Urgent medical attention will be sought where needed. Students are 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](#).
- Where students with complex health needs are being supported: In the context of schools supporting students with complex health needs, if the care of an unwell child or young person is to be prolonged (for example, because it will take some hours for a parent to collect a child)

and maintaining distance is not practical when providing direct care, gloves, gown and eye protection will be considered if available.

- Health care plans, where relevant, should be updated to provide additional advice on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell in the first instance we will contact the parent/carer 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.
- 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).

### 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 was last updated on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and will be reviewed weekly until the end of Term 2

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