

## COVID-19 Return to School Policy

### Purpose

This policy outlines how our school manages risks relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) during key interactions between students, parents and staff during the return to school in Term 2, 2020.

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

### Background

Ashby is following 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 Ashby 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.*

As a result, at Ashby:

- 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
- Parents/carers wishing to discuss any matters with a staff member should first utilise phone call, video call or email. Face-to face meeting if required, must meet physical distancing requirements of 1.5m between adults.
- School assemblies, excursions, camps, and other non-essential large gatherings are 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.*

At Ashby staff and parents/carers are to observe physical distancing measures by not congregating in areas inside or around the school.

To minimise interaction of students and adults within the school and at entry points:

- Waratah St gates (back playground and main entrance) will be open
- Second St gate will be open

## Hygiene

DET advises that:

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

At Ashby:

- 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.
- Hand sanitiser will be available where soap and water are not readily accessible.
- Students must bring their own water bottles to school for use (and refilling). Students are not to drink directly from drinking fountains.
- Staff and students are required to clean their mobile phones and electronic devices regularly.
- Sharing of food is not permitted.

## 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 Ashby:

- Intermingling within the same cohorts of students is reduced wherever possible.
- Windows will be kept open to promote fresh air flow indoors where weather permits.
- The use of outdoor learning areas or environments with enhanced ventilation will be prioritised where weather permits.
- Movement between classrooms will be minimised so that students and staff are not moving from one classroom to another unnecessarily.
- Staff will maintain physical distancing as much as practical at all times.

## 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 Ashby:

- Staff workstations will be distanced as much as possible.
- The number of staff per office will be limited with some desks relocated to other spaces (e.g. library or unused classrooms).
- As per workplaces across Victoria, staff will maintain physical distancing from each other as much as possible in at all times.

## 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.*

For further information see Department information about [Access to cleaning supplies and services](#).

At Ashby:

- Routine environmental cleaning has been extended. This includes progressive cleaning throughout the day, ensuring that risks of transmission are reduced for high-touch services.
- The use of shared items such as computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials and musical instruments will be minimised.
- Where shared items are used, all students and staff will wash hands immediately before and after using the 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.*

At Ashby:

- Playground equipment can be used. However, students will be directed to use hand hygiene before and after use.
- Wherever possible, outdoor facilities will be used for physical education and recreational play. Where indoor facilities are used, student numbers will be limited.
- Non-contact sports will be prioritised at this time. As with any other shared equipment, hands will be washed before and after use of 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 Ashby:

- Standard precautions as per DET [Infectious Diseases 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 Ashby:

- Staff and students experiencing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough or sore throat, will be removed from the classroom and isolated with suitable supervision until collected by a parent/carers.

- Urgent medical attention will be sought where needed. Unwell students will not be permitted to travel home unsupervised.
- If 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](#).
- 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 has concerns about a student's health the student will be removed from the classroom. The school will contact the parent/carer to discuss the student's condition, and we will take a precautionary approach, requesting the parent/carer to collect their child. A trained staff member using appropriate PPE may take the temperature of the student, to support decision-making.
- Staff or students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) should seek the advice of their healthcare professional at the first opportunity.
- 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.
- Surfaces will be immediately cleaned with disinfectant wipes (using appropriate PPE) if a staff member or student sneezes, coughs or vomits on a surface.

## 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.*

The Department of Health and Human Services will be contacted (1300 651 160) to confirm appropriate measures if a student or staff member:

- is confirmed to have Covid-19, or
- has been in close contact with a confirmed case.

An [IRIS incident alert will be lodged with the Department](#).

'Close contact' is defined by DHHS 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 Wednesday May 20 and will be reviewed fortnightly until the end of Term 2.