

Term 1 2021 guidelines for schools

The Term 1, 2021 guidelines have been updated in line with the advice from NSW Health obtained in January 2021. Many of the restrictions that were in place in November 2020 have been maintained due to the current COVID-19 situation affecting NSW. Schools are reminded to refer to the relevant resources for further details when planning activities in schools.

Staff are reminded to remain vigilant and practise physical distancing and hygiene measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff are maintained.

Check the [latest COVID-19 case locations in NSW](#) and follow the recommended actions if you have been in a location where there have been confirmed cases of COVID-19. Monitor the site and follow the relevant health advice if you have been at any of the locations at the specified dates and times.

Change summary table

The information below is a summary of the changes.

Area of change	Draft changes
Parents and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and carers should be reminded that students must not attend school if they are unwell, even with the mildest of symptoms. Students must return a negative COVID-19 test and be symptom free prior to returning to school. • Parents and carers can enter the school to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ purchase or pick up uniforms from the uniform shop ○ meet with school staff with an appointment ○ drop off students for Preschool, Kindergarten and Years 1, 2 and 7 ○ attend parent orientation meetings for Preschool, Kindergarten or Year 7 and ‘meet the teacher’ meetings with school staff for all year/stage groups. Meetings should be limited to 1 hour where possible. A COVID-19 Safety Plan must be in place. • Gatherings are limited to 30 people indoors and 30 people outdoors for schools within Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong or 100 people outdoors for all other locations. Gatherings should be limited to 1 hour where possible and a COVID-19 Safety Plan must be in place. • P&F meetings can occur after school hours with restrictions. • Community outdoor social events and functions and can proceed after school hours with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place. These are limited to 30 people outdoors for schools within Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong or 100 people outdoors for all other locations.

School activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term 1 school development days can proceed for staff within the same school or local school network with no limits to the number of attendees. • Professional learning can proceed for staff within the same school or local school network and may include local non school based staff with strict adherence with physical distancing and personal hygiene practices. • If schools wish to hold Professional Learning that involves more participants and/or exceeds 1 hour in duration, they will require a COVID-19 Safety Plan for functions and conferences. • Staff residing and working in Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong regions should avoid travel to regional areas where possible. • NSW Health advised that communal water fountains and/or bubblers in NSW schools can now be turned on. Schools should continue to encourage students to bring water bottles from home that they can refill when needed. • Field trips, excursions and camps to VIC, QLD and ACT can continue where interstate border requirements permit. • Swimming and other sporting carnivals can proceed with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place. • Gala days, placement tests, school performances, Schools Spectacular and other major school events can be planned for 2021 with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place. • Students must not attend aged care facilities for school activities.
Face Masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and students are not required to wear masks while at school. Staff and students are permitted to wear their own mask if they choose.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are reminded they must not attend work if they are unwell or have even the mildest of symptoms. Staff must return a negative test and be symptom free prior to returning to school. • Staff in the vulnerable category can resume work as planned. Principals and staff should follow the advice for vulnerable staff in the guidelines for staff returning to work or contact Health & Safety for specialist advice where required. • Staff must maintain physical distancing, good personal hygiene practices and comply with the published procedures and guidelines at all times.

<p>Suspected and Confirmed COVID 19 Case Protocols</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will continue to be supported in managing any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 affecting school operations. • Schools should report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to your Diocesan office (Systemic schools) or Catholic Schools NSW (RI and PJP schools) and contact the local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 to provide details so that the Public Health Unit can follow up as necessary.
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Term 1 2021 guidelines for schools

Advice for staff

Last updated: 18 January 2021

The Term 1 2021 guidelines have been updated in line with the advice from NSW Health obtained in January 2021. Many of the restrictions that were in place in November 2020 have been maintained due to the current COVID-19 situation impacting NSW.

All schools continue to provide full-time on-campus learning for students. Updated health advice and changes to state and national restrictions allow schools to recommence the majority of school-based activities in a COVID safe way.

The following principles underpin these guidelines:

- Schools continue to be safe and their operations are in line with Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and NSW Health guidelines.
- All students should be learning on-campus unless they are unwell or have a medical certificate to support their absence.
- Infection control protocols at schools, and the health and safety measures in place will help maintain the health and safety of students and staff.
- All activities permitted at school are safe and appropriate.
- Schools continue to monitor and plan for any changes in local circumstances that may arise, including changes in health advice or local restrictions.
- Principals need to make decisions based on the information provided and with the safety of students and the school community as the highest priority.

Latest COVID-19 case locations in NSW

Staff are reminded to remain vigilant and practise physical distancing and hygiene measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff are maintained.

Check the [latest COVID-19 case locations in NSW](#) and follow the recommended actions if you have

been in a location where there have been confirmed cases of COVID-19. Monitor the site and follow the relevant health advice if you have been at any of the locations at the specified dates and times.

Planning for continuity of education

Schools should review their plans to support the ongoing delivery of education for students in the event there is a period of time students and staff are unable to attend school. This situation may arise during the year due to a large number of students or staff being required to remain in self-isolation for a period of approximately 14 days or a period where the school is directed under public health advice to only remain operational for children of essential workers if an outbreak of COVID-19 were to arise in the local area.

Schools should review and ensure they have plans in place for the following:

- the recommencement of remote learning and working arrangements at short notice
- provision of learning resources and relevant technology to support educational delivery to minimise disruption to student learning
- communication systems to remain connected to students, staff and parents and carers
- student welfare and learning support services.

Schools will be advised if they are required to transition to remote learning and provided with appropriate support.

Reporting suspected COVID-19 cases

Schools should report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to your Diocesan office (Systemic schools) or Catholic Schools NSW (RI and PJP schools) and contact the local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 to provide details so that the Public Health Unit can follow up as necessary.

All reports received will be reviewed with NSW Health and the school will be advised if any further action is required.

Schools are not required to report when a student or staff member has left the school with flu-like symptoms and requested they not return to school until they have received a negative COVID-19 test and results are pending.

Responding to COVID-19 cases

Catholic Schools NSW has in place response protocols to guide schools through the contact tracing process and communication with the school community. The school may need to be non-operational for a day or two and the school will be thoroughly cleaned prior to on-site learning resuming.

Guidance for community use and visitors to the school

What's changed

Schools can plan for the following to recommence:

- School or community run playgroups can proceed.
- P&F meetings can proceed on school sites after school hours with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in

place.

- Parents and carers can:
 - enter the school to purchase or pick-up uniforms from the uniform shop
 - drop off students for Preschool, Kindergarten, years 1, 2 and Year 7
 - meet with school staff with an appointment
 - attend parent orientation meetings for Preschool, Kindergarten or Year 7 and 'meet the teacher' meetings with school staff for all year/stage groups. Meetings should be limited to 1 hour where possible. A COVID-19 Safety Plan must be in place.
- Community outdoor social events and functions can proceed after school hours with restrictions.

Continue reading for further information.

Visitors to school sites

Non-essential adults are not permitted on school grounds or at school events.

Parents and carers are not allowed on school sites or at an offsite school event held during school hours except for the purposes that follow with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place:

- essential parent and carer meetings with teachers and/or school executives with a scheduled appointment
 - entering a school administration building or another defined location for the purpose of picking up their child if they are unwell or where they have been asked to arrange for a COVID-19 test after their child has displayed flu-like symptoms while at school
 - fulfilling canteen and uniform shop duties or to collect or purchase uniforms. Schools will need to limit the number of adults visiting the uniform shop relevant to the space available to comply with physical distancing requirements. Schools may need to consider additional operating times or arrangements to minimise gatherings of people to collect or purchase uniforms. For example, arrangements may need to be made to pre-order uniforms, or for different cohorts to attend on specific days to manage the number of parents and carers attending
 - volunteering in educational support roles for activities that are essential to the delivery of the curriculum such as reading groups, music and kitchen garden areas. Schools are required to have scheduled programs in place and remind parents and carers that they must not attend school unless it has been previously arranged
 - attending school or community run playgroups.
 - dropping off students for Preschool, Kindergarten and Years 1, 2 and 7
 - attending parent orientation meetings for Preschool, Kindergarten or Year 7 and 'meet the teacher' meetings with school staff for all year/stage groups. Meetings should be limited to 1 hour where possible. A [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) must be in place
 - attending P&F meetings held after school hours with a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#). Gatherings are limited to 30 people indoors and 30 people outdoors for schools within Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong or 100 people outdoors for all other locations
 - attending P&F or community outdoor social events and functions with a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) in place. These are limited to 30 people for schools within Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong or 100 people for all other locations
- for specific events as outlined in the other areas of the guidelines.

Parents and carers should regularly be reminded that they are not permitted on school grounds except for the reasons outlined.

The following visitors are able to attend school sites to deliver specialist services or services essential

to school operations:

- construction and maintenance providers and contractors for asset-related activities
- official visitors and dignitaries in accordance with the protocols
- allied health partners and providers
- Diocesan personnel delivering specialist support services where these services cannot be delivered remotely
- External providers delivering educational services with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.
- All adults visiting a school must comply with COVID safe requirements including personal hygiene, infection control and physical distancing guidelines. All visitors must sign the **external visitors form** each time they visit the school regardless of the frequency and duration of the visit. Further information will be provided to schools regarding the use of QR codes in the coming weeks.

Community use and visitors guidelines

Please familiarise yourself with the Community use and visitor guidelines where you can also download the relevant acknowledgement form and ensure it is signed by each user and visitor.

Community use of school facilities may continue. The organiser remains responsible for compliance with physical distancing and hygiene requirements aligned with the health advice of the day. All community use groups must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place. Principals must ensure that all users of school facilities are aware of the distancing, health and hygiene measures required by the school, and receive written confirmation of this understanding.

Other activities to be noted are:

- Schools as Community Centres must have a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) in place. These centres are to run their programs separate from the school to minimise interaction between adults and other school staff. Records of attendance must be kept via completion of the **visitor acknowledgement form**.
- School or community run playgroups can continue under the same conditions as Schools as Community Centres and limiting the number of adults participating based on the [current restrictions](#).
- For conditions around media and production crews requesting to attend schools, refer to the Guidelines for media and production crews.
- Principals may continue to restrict, limit or prohibit activities if deemed to be contrary to the advice of the day, and should escalate any issues or concerns to their Diocesan Office (systemic schools) or Catholic Schools NSW (RI/PJP schools).

Student and staff testing for COVID-19

Staff must not attend work if they are unwell. This includes even minor flu-like symptoms. If staff become unwell while at school they should leave immediately and not return until they have a negative COVID-19 test and are symptom-free.

Parents and carers must be reminded regularly that students must not come to school if they are unwell. Even with very mild symptoms.

Safety and hygiene

Physical distancing is not required for students

Physical distancing of children in schools is not required by the AHPPC guidelines. Schools should restrict activities to year groups where possible to limit close contacts to those within year groups. Schools should avoid activities where students visit other school sites to the small number of activities detailed within these guidelines.

Physical distancing requirements remain for adults

Schools must strongly and regularly promote to all staff the need to remain vigilant with physical distancing while at school and when in the community to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in our schools. When physical distancing is combined with good personal hygiene, the risk of infection is reduced. Staff should exercise good personal hygiene and cleanliness including around staff spaces and shared usage areas.

Familiarise yourself with Physical distancing guidelines and infection control guidelines.

Wearing face masks and temperature screening

Staff and students are not required to wear a face mask while at school. Anyone who wishes to wear their own masks in schools will not be prevented from doing so.

Students over the age of 12 and staff must comply with the [Public Health \(COVID-19 Mandatory Face Coverings\) Order 2021](#) when travelling to and from school and during school excursions by public transport, or by chartered or private transport services. This applies to staff and students who reside or travel to and from Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong. Refer to the [NSW Government website](#) for more information on wearing face masks.

Wearing a face mask is not mandatory for parents and carers visiting schools provided they are visiting only for the explicit reasons provided and maintain physical distancing and hygiene practices while at school.

Widespread temperature screening is not required and is not recommended in schools. **Hygiene**

measures

Schools must remain vigilant in applying infection control and personal hygiene practices while at school. Schools must continue to promote and encourage regular handwashing; exclusion of any staff and students who are unwell; avoiding the sharing of food and personal items; and cleaning of any shared items such as musical instruments, learning and sporting equipment between uses.

Refer to the Practical infection control guides to help schools implement infection control measures and to maintain safe and healthy work environments.

As of January 2021, NSW Health advised that communal water fountains and/or bubblers in NSW schools can now be turned on. Schools should continue to encourage students to bring water bottles from home that they can refill when needed.

School operations

What's changed

- Field trips, excursions and camps to VIC, QLD and ACT can continue where interstate border requirements permit.
- Swimming and other sporting carnivals can proceed with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.
- Gala days, placement tests, school performances, Schools Spectacular and other major school events can be planned for 2021 with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.
- Staff gatherings including school development days and professional learning activities can continue with restrictions.

Continue reading for further information.

Ongoing safety measures remain in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools during Term 1 2021:

- Where possible, students should stay within their relevant cohort group (i.e. class, year group, or stage) for all learning activities within their school. This applies to all curriculum activities, co-curricular activities approved in these guidelines, arts activities and sport and physical activities. The mixing of students from different cohort groups should be avoided where possible in order to limit close contacts to the relevant student cohort.
- Preschool, Kindergarten and Year 7 orientations can continue. See the relevant advice for further information:
 - Preschool orientation
 - Kindergarten orientation
- Students must not attend aged care facilities for school activities.
- Field trips, excursions and camps to Victoria, Queensland and ACT can continue where interstate border requirements permit. Refer to the updated **guidelines for field trips, excursions and camps** for additional information.
- Swimming and other sporting carnivals can proceed. Schools in border regions can use venues in other states where interstate border requirements permit. They must also:
 - have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place in addition to a risk management plan
 - keep records of students and staff attending the activities. Refer to the practical guide for sports and physical activity.
- Gala days, placement tests, school performances and other major school events can be planned for 2021 with a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) in place. Check for updated closer to the events to ensure arrangements meet the health requirements at that time.

Staff gatherings and professional learning

School development days can proceed for staff within the same school or the same local school network with no limit to the number of staff attending. A [COVID-19 Safety Plan for function and conferences](#) must be in place.

Professional learning can proceed for staff within the school or the same local school network and may include local non-school based staff with strict adherence with physical distancing and personal hygiene practices. Professional learning is limited to 30 people indoors and 30 people outdoors for schools within Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong or 100 people for all other locations. Professional learning that exceeds 1 hour and/or involves more

participants than the recommended limit will require a [COVID-19 Safety Plan for functions and conferences](#).

Staff residing and working in Greater Sydney (including the Blue Mountains), Central Coast and Wollongong regions should avoid travel to regional areas where possible.

Refer to **Physical distancing – practical guide for staff**.

School performances, productions, concerts, speech nights and award presentations

Events may be held on school grounds or at external venues.

Schools must have [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) when planning and conducting these events. The [school graduation ceremonies COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) can be used. Schools must consider the following in their plans:

- Ensure that all attendees, including students, staff and visitors, including parents and carers, are well and free of any flu-like symptoms.
- Schools will need to invite guests based on the total number of people (this includes staff, students, parents and carers and visitors) who are able to be accommodated within the space available.

Audience members over 12 years old should wear a mask if singing or chanting. For further information please refer to the **guidelines for singing, musical activities and creative arts**.

Other school activities

School assemblies

Whole of school assemblies can continue. Where possible, students should remain within their relevant cohort to limit the mixing of students between cohort groups.

School sporting activities

All interschool sport and physical activities, zone carnivals and gala days can continue. This means that schools and students can travel outside of their local community.

Sporting events and activities held outside of the school site during school hours will need to follow the [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) of the venue or organiser.

For more details, refer to:

- practical guide for sport and physical activity
- infection control practical guide for sport and physical activity.

Choirs and performing arts

NSW Health advice is that these activities remain a high risk for transmission and school must comply with the measures outlined in **the infection control practical guide for Performing Arts** the **guidelines for singing, musical activities and creative arts**.

Field trips, excursions, and camps

Field trips, excursions and camps, including overnight activities, can continue provided schools follow the requirements under **Field trips, excursions, camps and offsite activities**.

School camps and overnight activities may take place so long as accommodation facilities and overnight event organisers develop and implement a COVID-19 Safety Plan and the school complies with Diocesan and school requirements.

As the COVID-19 situation can change quickly, schools should:

- consider the [border requirements](#) if traveling to another state or territory
- consider the level of community transmission in the local community just before the overnight event is to be held, along with the other risks associated with the event as part of a risk assessment process
- pay particular attention to excluding anyone with symptoms before the event
- consider arrangements for isolating and testing anyone who develops symptoms during the event.

Boarding schools

Boarding schools must review school operational practices to ensure they comply with the **guidelines for boarding schools**. Schools should confirm that students, staff and other persons entering the residential areas of the school have not attended any of the locations listed on the [NSW Government website](#) as a location of concern.

Other recent changes published during Term 4, 2020 which remain in effect include:

- Boarding students may attend local gyms, boxing, water polo and other events in the community after school hours.
- Parents may take students off school grounds for activities to spend time with them.
- Orientation for boarders may proceed, including an opportunity for them to stay in the boarding house.
- Weekly boarders may be introduced back into schools.
- Schools must follow COVID-19 response protocols in responding to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Boarding school staff should review the updated guidelines and amend their risk management practices as appropriate.

Principal endorsed activities for students

Schools can organise events for students and staff such as a picnic at a local park or visit to a recreational venue.

Schools should approach their planning for any activity as they would an excursion. This includes completing a risk assessment and risk management plan in addition to a COVID Safety Plan.

All external venues and providers must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan to ensure health and safety measures are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of students and staff while participating in activities.

Schools must consult with external venues and providers to understand what COVID-safe measures

are in place, including physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning measures, and record keeping requirements. This will assist the school in development of their risk management plan.

Principal endorsed community events

Schools may organise an event for their school community outdoors.

Outdoor events involving community participation (e.g. morning teas, barbeques or picnic events with parents) can proceed with a maximum of 30 people outdoors for schools within Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong or 100 people for all other locations (including staff and parents and carers).

Activities on hold until further notice

International excursions.

Staffing

Guidance on return to work

All school-based staff, including temporary and casual staff, are expected to return to working on-campus, including those who may identify as being at higher risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19.

In line with updated [AHPPC advice](#), a person may be at higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 if they fall into one of the following categories:

- people aged 70 years and over
- have a [chronic health condition](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#) who are aged 50 years and over with a chronic medical condition, weakened immune system or who are aged 70 years and over and people living in remote communities.

Wellbeing

Diocesan and RI and PJP Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) offers a range of support including:

- o General counselling
- o Post-incident support services

Please discuss with your Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) their capacity to provide EAP services remotely. Be assured that these services are still in place and available 24/7.

Early Childhood Education and OOSHC

Early childhood education and care services including out of school hours care, play a vital role in our communities. Preschools on Catholic school sites will remain open, operating within the same guidelines as

public schools.

Border restrictions

All staff and students are able to cross borders to attend school and work. There may be requirements to complete a declaration form in some locations to meet border requirements. See the [relevant border authority](#) for additional information. Schools will be advised when there are changes to any border requirements affecting schools.

Existing COVID-19 advice for schools - Updated 18 January 2021

The following guidelines lists advice for schools that remain unchanged as of 5 November 2020.

COVID-safe school operations

Ongoing safety measures remain in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools.

Where possible, students should stay within their relevant cohort group (i.e. class, year group, or stage) for all learning activities within their school. This applies to all curriculum activities, co-curricular activities approved in these guidelines, arts activities and sport and physical activities. The mixing of students from different cohort groups should be avoided where possible in order to limit close contacts to the relevant student cohort.

School activities

The following activities remain unchanged and can continue following the COVID-safe guidelines as outlined:

- Interschool activities can continue. This means that schools and students may now travel outside of their local community. This applies to all interschool sport and physical activities, curriculum activities, arts activities and extra-curricular activities organised or sponsored by the school.
- NSW Health partnership activities such as Mobile Dental Vans and vaccinations are classed as essential activities and should continue in schools. Facilitators must complete a **visitor acknowledgement form**.
- School Vaccination Program should proceed based on the additional measures that have been implemented to ensure that students can be safely vaccinated during the COVID-19 pandemic including:
 - health screening of nurses before clinics
 - pre-vaccination screening of students
 - physical distancing restrictions at the clinic entrance and observation area
 - ensuring the number of students and nurses at the clinic does not exceed the maximum allowed
 - enhanced hand hygiene by nurses and students
 - enhanced environmental cleaning of all surfaces.
- Library access, ensuring supervisors and staff maintain physical distancing
- Official visitors and dignitaries (consistent with current protocols)
- School photos (Staff photos can be taken where physical distancing is possible)
- White Card training from external providers in line with the external provider guidelines, and only where

essential.

Other school activities

School sporting activities

All interschool sport and physical activities, zone carnivals and gala days can continue. This means that schools and students may travel outside of their local community. Schools in border regions can use venues in other states or territories where interstate border requirements permit.

Sporting events and activities held outside of the school site during school hours will need to follow the COVID-19 Safety Plan of the venue or organiser.

For more details, refer to:

- **practical guide for sport and physical activity**
- **infection control practical guide for sport and physical activity.**

Choirs and performing arts

NSW Health advice is that these activities remain a high risk for transmission and school must comply with the measures outlined in the **infection control practical guide for Performing Arts** and the **guidelines for singing, musical activities and creative arts**.

Activities located at other schools and TAFE

Students can recommence attending classes/activities relating to subjects only available on other campuses. Arrangements need to be in place to ensure they go directly to their class and do not mix with other groups of students at the school. Students may also continue to attend face-to-face learning activities at TAFE.

Preschool, Kindergarten and Year 7 orientation

Preschool, Kindergarten and Year 7 orientations can continue.

Field trips, excursions, and camps

Field trips, excursions and camps, including overnight activities, can continue provided schools follow the requirements under the **Field trips, excursions, camps and offsite activities** guidelines.

Field trips, excursions and camps to VIC, QLD and ACT can continue where interstate border requirements permit.

School camps and overnight activities may take place so long as accommodation facilities and overnight event organisers develop and implement a COVID-19 Safety Plan and the school complies with Diocesan/School requirements.

As the COVID-19 situation can change quickly, schools should:

- consider the level of community transmission in the local community just before the overnight event

is to be held, along with the other risks associated with the event as part of a risk assessment process

- pay particular attention to excluding anyone with symptoms before the event
- consider arrangements for isolating and testing anyone who develops symptoms during the event.

Practicums teaching for tertiary education students

Practicums for teaching or tertiary education students and non-teaching students are permitted.

Undergraduate education research is also permitted.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships

These can proceed subject to the availability of placement and appropriate risk assessments. Employers must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan, which must be indicated in Section 3 of the Training Plan.

VET work placements

These can proceed subject to the availability of placement and appropriate risk assessments. School staff should contact their local work placement service providers to check if the host employer has the required COVID-19 Safety Plan prior to the approval of the placement. For any that can't proceed, refer to [the NESA website](#).

Work experience and community service

Work experience and community service placements can proceed subject to the availability of placement and appropriate risk assessments. School staff must contact the host employer to confirm they have a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

For work experience, school staff should record the employer's response to the Student Placement Record before approving the placement.

Community service activities should avoid direct contact between students and vulnerable groups. Students must not attend aged care facilities for school activities.

COVID-19 attendance and roll marking

The following guidelines will support schools in ensuring that student attendance and roll marking continues in schools.

All students should be either:

- at school
- at home because they are currently unwell
- at home due to self-isolation requirements
- at home because they have a medical certificate which states that they are unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical condition (or in limited cases where a family member has an

ongoing medical condition).

If a student develops flu-like symptoms while at school, they should be sent home and not return to school until they have received a negative COVID-19 test result which is received and sighted by the school. Students should be marked as 'Sick' during this period.

If parents or carers believe that their child has a condition which means it's not safe for them to return to school, they will need to provide a medical certificate. These are likely to be children that are at higher risk of severe illness if they contracted COVID-19.

Schools should encourage these families to speak with their doctor or health care provider to develop COVID-19 Action Plan to support decision-making about their activities, including attendance at school. Where there are only a few cases in the local community, the actual risk of getting COVID-19 is low. Further information is available from the Australian Department of Health resource Living Well in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students in a higher risk group can return to school with the written support of their health care provider.

Please note, students who are residing with a family member who is identified as being at higher risk should attend school unless a medical practitioner advises otherwise. The parent or carer should provide written confirmation from the treating health professional that the student is unable to attend school and for what period of time.

If students are away from school because they are unwell, there is no expectation that they complete school work. It is important that unwell students rest.

If students cannot attend school due to a long term illness or underlying health condition, as is current practice, schools may continue to be responsible for providing work for students for the period they are prevented from being at school.

Individual schools should work with parents to determine how to best meet student's needs in these circumstances.

If a student falls ill while at school, the current first aid and infection control procedures apply including contacting the student's parent or carer or emergency contact, to collect the student. Schools should work with families to ensure all emergency contacts are up to date.

Recording absences, medical certificates and case management

If a student is absent for more than three days without a medical certificate, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and followed up by the school.

In relation to medical certificates, if there is an ongoing pattern of poor attendance and major concerns, under chapter 16a of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1999, the principal can contact the student's GP to discuss the matter. Principals will need to provide evidence of their concern.

If students have not returned to school, a compassionate and common sense approach should be used. Schools should work with the student and their parent or carer to put a plan in place to support their return to school.

COVID-19 enhanced cleaning

Cleaning is to be delivered in line with the AHPPC guidelines and advice from NSW Health. An enhanced hygienic cleaning process in schools has been implemented in addition to the standard daily clean.

Target areas include high-touch areas and other hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and movement areas. Enhanced cleaning is delivered as part of the daily cleaning of schools.

This includes cleaning frequently touched areas in bathrooms after recess, as well as replenishing supplies such as soap and hand towels that are provided by the school. High touch surfaces such as balustrades and handrails in the playground and stairwells are also wiped with disinfectant.

As per normal operational restrictions, a cleaner cannot enter a classroom during school hours and while students are in the classroom. During the day, teachers should encourage students to use disinfectant products to wipe down their own learning spaces after each lesson or learning period.

Guidelines for boarding schools

Catholic Schools NSW continues to work closely with NSW Health and other key government agencies in planning and managing school operations in line with the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) advice for reducing the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission in boarding schools.

These guidelines have been updated on 18 November 2020 based on advice from NSW Health and comply with the published AHPPC [advice on risk management for boarding schools and school-based residential colleges](#).

NSW Health have reviewed these guidelines as developed by the Department of Education in consultation with Catholic Schools NSW and the Association of Independent Schools and support this advice. NSW Health recommends all schools comply with this advice.

The following guidelines incorporate the updated health advice and provide information to support ongoing risk mitigation specific to boarding facilities.

All boarding schools must review these guidelines and implement measures consistent with the advice to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and promote good health, hygiene and physical distancing.

Additional measures for Term 1 2021

In accordance with recent NSW Health advice, boarding schools confirm with visitors, staff and students of the school they have reviewed the [latest COVID-19 locations](#) (in NSW and interstate) and have not been in a location listed.

Schools must check the locations list regularly particularly when planning interschool sporting activities, excursions, overnight camps and entry to boarding facilities.

Arrangements for residential areas

Residential area management

Schools must remain vigilant in implementing the **infection control and physical distancing guidelines** which are consistent with NSW Health advice and the AHPPC Guidelines for schools.

Where possible, students should be kept in year groups or relevant cohorts to minimise interaction or mixing of students from separate dormitories or residential buildings while in the residential area of the school.

Consider the following strategies to limit the risk in this environment:

- Reduce numbers of students in sleeping arrangements to:
 - one student per room where practicable
 - the number of students being accommodated in dormitory accommodation relative to the size of the room – in accordance with NSW Health [guidance](#) on the square meter rules
 - measures to maximize physical space per student, such as using barriers to isolate or separate students from each other's living space.
- Minimise the use of shared bathroom facilities where possible. Where shared bathrooms are required, consider rostering and allocating specific boarders to these shared facilities and additional cleaning.
- Implement measures to reduce group numbers and maintain physical distancing in recreational areas and when engaging in activities outside of school hours.
- Stagger mealtimes in dining areas to reduce group numbers and implement cleaning between meal sessions.

Reducing interaction between year groups or established student cohorts will minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission while in school residential areas and will make it easier to perform contact tracing if a student were to test positive.

Personal hygiene

Students should be reminded regularly on the importance of adopting appropriate personal hygiene practices. Information should include:

- washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water at regular intervals throughout the day, particularly before and after eating and after going to the toilet
- regular and appropriate use of hand sanitiser throughout the day
- respiratory hygiene – covering a cough or sneeze and then hand washing
- advising staff immediately if they feel unwell or have any flu-like symptoms
- placing used tissues and other personal hygiene items straight into a bin and then hand washing
- avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth
- not sharing food or drink
- not sharing personal items such as mobile phones, pens and pencils etc.
- wiping down shared surfaces before and after use (e.g. where students study and in recreational areas) or when sharing equipment in common areas or in shared room arrangements
- measures to maximise physical distance and reduce contact with other students and staff

Environmental hygiene

The school must ensure that cleaning takes place in residential areas including:

- cleaning arrangements including an additional focus on high-touch surfaces in common areas and

recreational spaces

- daily cleaning of all residential rooms
- vigilant cleaning and personal hygiene practices in all canteen and food preparation areas
- cleaning of bathrooms and shower areas during the day, at least after lunch and recess
- sufficient soap and hand sanitiser available at all times.

Physical distancing

Boarding schools should maintain a strong focus on physical distancing measures in residential areas of the school to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Physical distancing for students

Although students are not required to maintain physical distancing at school, reducing close physical contact and maintaining physical distancing between students in residential areas of the school is recommended.

Where possible:

- Minimise social interaction between year groups or established cohorts to reduce the risk of transmission and support contact tracing if there was a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Restrict access to residential areas for any person other than boarders and staff required to work in the residential areas.
- Limit assemblies and staff briefings in residential areas to year groups or established cohorts and be limited to 15 minutes.
- Restrict recreation areas and activities to year groups or established student cohorts where possible. This may require a school to establish a schedule to minimise interaction between groups.
- Maximise physical distancing, for example, use of physical barriers and stagger the use of recreational areas.
- Display posters to promote physical distancing and hygiene requirements.
- Restrict boarders from entering any residential area other than their own. Do not allow visitors access to the residential areas.

Schools may continue to:

- allow boarding students to attend local gyms, boxing and water polo and other events in the community after school hours
- include weekly boarders at school
- allow parents to take students off school grounds to participate in activities and spend time with students
- hold orientation for new boarders which may include an opportunity for them to stay in the boarding house.

Physical distancing requirements for staff

- Restrict staff living arrangements to one person per room.
- Limit the number of staff in staff rooms and other common use areas at any time, taking into account the 1.5m distancing requirements
- Remind staff regularly of the need to remain at least 1.5m from one another at all times.
- Keep staff meetings and gatherings to small numbers or hold them in large spaces to allow for

distancing requirements. Where possible, use videoconference.

Other distancing considerations

- Continue to restrict parents, carers and other non-essential visitors from visiting the school, particularly the residential area.
- Identify specific locations for deliveries and entry for essential visitors to the school to minimise unnecessary contact with staff and students at the school.
- All staff, non-boarding students and contractors must not attend school if they have any signs or symptoms of flu or any other illness.
- Weekly boarders may recommence boarding but should be monitored closely for sign or symptoms of illness.

Managing staff and student illnesses

Schools are experienced in managing student injury and illness including those who reside at the school during the school term. There are appropriate nursing staff and clinics in place. If a student develops flu-like symptoms, refer the following:

- Take the student to the sick bay, clinic or other appropriate area to be assessed and isolated immediately.
- Comply with appropriate **infection control procedures**, including the use of personal protective equipment.
- The usual assessment of the student's condition and determine whether the student requires urgent medical assistance. If so, call an ambulance immediately.
- If the student has flu-like symptoms, even if mild, the student should remain in the clinic or other suitable location, isolated from all other staff and students. Arrange for a COVID-19 test to be conducted.
- Flu-like symptoms include the following:
 - aches and pains
 - dry cough
 - shortness of breath
 - sore/scratchy throat
 - fever
 - loss of taste or smell
 - fatigue
 - diarrhoea
 - headache.
- Where possible the person conducting the test should come to the school to avoid unnecessary transportation of the student. Each school should have an established process in place either through the local Public Health Unit or external service providers to conduct on-site testing if required.
- Deliver meals to the student in isolation using disposable plates and cutlery.
- Notify the student's parents or carers that the student is unwell and that they will be tested for COVID-19. The parents or carers may choose to collect the student from school immediately or wait for the outcome of the test prior to deciding whether to come and collect the student from school.

Negative test for COVID-19

- If the test is negative, the school will follow existing processes around supporting students while they recover from illness which would include personal hygiene arrangements to minimise the risk of others becoming unwell at the school.
- Staff who are unwell should remain at home isolated and not attend or engage in activities at school including residential areas. Staff should make their own arrangements to be tested for COVID-19 and not return until they have a negative test result and are symptom free.

Positive test for COVID-19

There are Confirmed Case Protocols in place with NSW Health. These protocols include specific actions required to respond to a confirmed cases(s) in a boarding school.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, the following actions would be taken with support from Catholic Schools NSW and the Public Health Unit:

- Schools should report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to your Diocesan office (Systemic schools) or Catholic Schools NSW (RI and PJP schools) and contact the local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 to provide details so that the Public Health Unit can follow up as necessary.
- The school should not communicate the result to other members of staff or the parent community until further advice from NSW Health and Catholic Schools is obtained.
- Catholic Schools will seek to obtain the results in consultation with NSW Health as soon as possible and will confirm test results. Schools will be advised through this process of any additional actions which may need to be taken by the school.
- Catholic Schools will contact the Diocesan executive director and RI/PJP Principals and make urgent arrangements to set up a teleconference with the executive director, educational leadership and school principal to discuss relevant actions.
 - Discussions will include:
 - contacting the parent/carer and making the necessary arrangements for the student to return home or to hospital or other appropriate health care arrangement to ensure they are able to receive the required and necessary treatment and support until they have recovered from the illness
 - guidance to support the school in identifying close contacts and appropriate support required to return students home where appropriate
 - advising testing of staff and students that the confirmed case may have been in contact with
 - cleaning the school and residential facilities
 - communicating with staff, parents and the broader community to notify of the confirmed case, disruption to school operations and keep them informed
 - managing local needs and issues as required.

Where students need to isolate in quarantine hotels, the supervising parent or carer will also need to quarantine for the required duration.

A person with COVID-19 must not return to school until the school has been advised by the Public Health Unit they are no longer infectious and arrangements are in place to support their return to school.

Students identified as close contacts

Where a student is identified as a close contact and is returning to isolate in a regional area, it is important for the school to work with the parent or carer and the local Public Health Unit to assess:

- The location of the student's home and determine if it is appropriate for the student to return.
- If the student is able to isolate appropriately from their family at home or if the family can isolate together.

- Local COVID testing clinics and services where the parents can seek testing for their child.

In the event that a student travels home to self-isolate, schools should advise the parents or carers of the following:

- The student must be tested and receive a test result before departing for home.
- The student must isolate as much as possible from other people within their home. They should have their own room, and where possible, their own bathroom. They must avoid communal living areas and shared spaces (e.g. kitchen) during their quarantine period.
- The travel home should be via a direct route, taking no extra passengers. Keep stops to a minimum and avoid contact with others. The student should wear a mask and sit as far from the driver as possible. Have hand sanitiser in the car and use it frequently, particularly after touching shared surfaces such as door handles.
- The student must be tested for COVID-19 and receive a negative result before returning to school. This test should happen at least 12 days after the student's last contact with the person with COVID-19.
- If the student has a positive test or develops symptoms, family members must isolate pending assessment from the local Public Health Unit.

Further information will be provided to the school and is available from the Public Health Unit who will work closely with the school. Schools may choose to refer to and provide families a copy of the [close contact isolation guidelines](#).

Field trips, excursions, camps and offsite activities

Schools can conduct field trips, excursions and overnight activities within NSW, Victoria, Queensland and in the ACT. International excursions are on hold until further notice. School activities that would normally occur across the border, such as school swimming programs, can continue subject to border requirements. Visit the [relevant border authority](#) to ensure compliance.

All external providers and venues accessed during any off-site school activity must have a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) to ensure that measures are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of students and staff.

Schools must consult with external venues and providers to understand what COVID-safe measures are in place, including physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning measures, and record keeping requirements. This will assist the school in development of their risk management plan for the excursion.

School staff and students should follow current [NSW Health advice](#) regarding wearing a mask when travelling to and from school and on public transport, or by chartered/private transport services. This applies to staff and students who reside or travel to and from Greater Sydney (including the Blue Mountains), Central Coast and Wollongong.

When planning school excursions and camps, it remains advisable that schools consider a 'best and worst case plan' should there be changes to the rules and restrictions in place to keep the community safe.

Schools should also consider costs and cancellation policies. Often deposits are non refundable if events need to be cancelled closer to the date. Discuss these options with the providers at the time of booking.

Students, parents and carers should be made aware of any potential changes to plans including costs that may be incurred if an event is not able to proceed.

Field trips

Day field trips remain an approved activity in our schools.

Field trips commonly include activities that take place in:

- Environmental Education Centres
- sport and recreational facilities
- the local community to supplement and inform educational activities (for example, a field trip to a local waterway to collect water samples or observe environmental stimulus).

When planning field trips, schools must continue to meet the guidelines, including health and hygiene requirements. A risk assessment must be conducted to support planning for a field trip.

School excursions

School excursions can continue.

School excursions are structured learning experiences provided by, or under the auspices of, the school and are conducted external to the school site. Schools need to continue to follow the current excursion policy in addition to the following guidelines.

All providers and venues must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan to ensure health and safety measures are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of students and staff whilst participating in excursion activities.

Schools will need to consult with external venues and providers to understand what COVID safe measures are in place, including physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning measures and record keeping requirements. This will assist the school in the development of their risk management plan for the excursion.

International school excursions remain on hold.

Overnight school activities

Overnight school activities, such as school camps, can continue.

NSW Health advice is that overnight accommodation settings where facilities are shared by people from different households and require additional adult supervision and interactions, such as camps, have an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission should someone attending be infected.

Schools must ensure that accommodation facilities and overnight event organisers have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place to minimise risks to students and staff. NSW Health requires organisers have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place relevant to their business. Businesses should use the COVID-19 Safety Plan for [Caravan parks and camping grounds](#) or [hotels and accommodation](#).

Schools need to consult with event organisers to understand what COVID safe measures (such as physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning standards and record keeping requirements) are in place and

what measures the school is required to follow while participating in the overnight event. This will assist the school in the development of their risk management plan. Refer to the information on risk management considerations below.

Schools must ensure they meet the guidelines for school staff in addition to any safety measures in place with an external venue or provider.

Overnight events held at the school site

Schools hosting an overnight event such as a camp on the school site must have a [COVID-19 Safety Plan for hotels and accommodation](#) in place.

Schools are required to have a risk management plan in place for activities conducted during the event. See further information on risk management considerations below.

A small number of parent volunteers can participate. The **external visitors form** must be signed by any parent supporting the overnight event. Physical distancing and personal hygiene requirements must be adhered to at all times.

Risk management considerations

Schools are required to develop a risk management plan for all excursions and off-site school activities. When developing their risk management plan for excursions and overnight events, schools must comply with existing policy and procedure requirements, and include where relevant the following measures to ensure these events are conducted in a COVID safe way:

- As the COVID-19 situation can change quickly, schools should consider the level of community transmission in the local community just before the excursion or overnight activity is held, along with other risks associated with the event, as part of their normal risk assessment process.
- Ensure the venue and/or provider is compliant with, and are following public health requirements.
 - Exclude staff, students and others who are unwell from attending.
 - Develop strategies for responding to a person becoming unwell, including ways to isolate students who develop flu-like symptoms, and arrangements for parents to collect a child who is unwell. This is particularly important for events conducted interstate.
 - Ensure personal hygiene requirements in accordance with the infection control procedures.
 - Follow physical distancing requirements for all staff, facilitators and supervisors.
 - Understand and follow current [Public Health advice](#) regarding wearing a mask while outside of school grounds unless a person is under the age of 12 or has a valid exemption.
 - Implement measures to minimise interaction with other members of the public or other school groups - for example, have strategies to minimise the mixing of other students and staff with other schools or groups or the general public at the venue or facility.
 - Have measures to minimise the mixing of student cohort groups where possible, particularly during overnight events such as camps.

- Coordinate transport and travel times to avoid crowding on public transport and other strategies to minimise COVID-19 risks associated with transport, such as the promotion of use of personal facemasks for high school students whilst on public transport. Alternatively, consider using bus or school transport to and from activities. Where practical, negotiate with the bus company to implement cleaning protocols before student travel.
- Have measures to avoid gatherings/crowding - for example, pre-booking tickets/seats to events that may attract crowding (such as animal shows or exhibits) and identifying suitable locations for meal breaks or rest areas in outdoor areas such as parks.
- Ensure food preparation and catering arrangements include individual serves and not buffet style.
- Maintain a list of all persons attending including contact details in case it is required for contact tracing.

Physical distancing - practical guide for staff

There are some simple and practical measures that can be implemented and maintained in our daily practices to minimise the risk of the spread of infection and illness to maintain a healthy working and learning environment.

For all staff

- **Stay at home when unwell.** Staff are expected to stay away from school when unwell or if they become unwell during the day.
 - Notify your line manager if you become unwell during the day and need to go home.
 - If you do have symptoms, get tested and stay at home.
 - Only return to work when you have fully recovered.
 - Get a flu shot. By getting vaccinated against influenza, you can also help protect other people, especially people who are too sick or too young to be vaccinated. The more people who are vaccinated in your community, the less likely the disease will spread.
- **Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly.** The most important action you can take is to practice good hand hygiene.
 - Maintaining good personal hand hygiene is the single most effective way to reduce the risk of transmission.
 - Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser frequently throughout the day. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Encourage your colleagues to implement hand hygiene practices at regular intervals throughout the day.

- **Maintain respiratory hygiene.** Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue, and then dispose of tissues into a bin immediately. Always wash your hands after you have coughed, sneezed or blown your nose.
- **Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** where there is a risk of exposure to bodily fluids - for example when providing first aid.

Physical distancing

Physical distancing is the requirement for people to distance themselves from others. The more space between you and another adult, the harder it is for the virus to spread. All staff must maintain a physical distance from one another. It also includes physical distancing between staff and other visitors to the workplace where relevant.

The following information provides guidance to staff on ways to implement physical distancing in their everyday work practices to maintain a healthy work environment.

General guidance

Some general physical distance practices all staff can implement include:

- Combine physical distancing with good personal hygiene practices.
- Maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres from other adults at all times.

- Encourage non-contact greetings. Don't shake hands or hug to greet colleagues or visitors to the workplace.

- Minimise the number of adults in any area at any one time to only those that are required to be there.

- Establish alternative methods of communication across the business area for essential meetings and discussions. Alternatively, use digital forms of communication such virtual technology for meetings and discussions.

- Limit the length of time staff are in an enclosed space (including face-to-face meetings in enclosed areas) to a maximum of 1 hour.

- Do not host meetings with large numbers of staff. If larger numbers are required to gather, use outdoor locations or large rooms where a distance of 1.5 meters between staff can be maintained and limit meeting times to 1 hour.

- Regularly remind staff of the importance of physical distancing as a means to reduce the risk of illness and infection. Place signage about physical distancing around the workplace, particularly in higher density staff areas.

- All staff should follow current [NSW Health advice](#) when travelling, meeting and socialising outside of the school premises. This includes compliance with wearing a [face mask in locations identified by NSW Health](#) including while on public transport. Children under the age of 12 or those with a medical exemption are not required to wear a mask.

- Do not go out for coffee, lunch, dinners or drinks in large numbers or in crowded indoor and outdoor locations. When attending external premises and venues, consider whether physical distancing and

other hygiene requirements are being practised and choose an alternative location if you do not believe you can maintain personal hygiene and physical distancing requirements.

- Ensure you sign in to all external venue locations so you can be contacted if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 identified and contact tracing is required. Ask to have your information recorded by the venue if it is not requested as part of the entry requirements.

Physical distancing in office areas/staffrooms

Consider the following:

- Use all available working and learning areas within the floor or building where possible to minimise the number of staff in one location.
- Assign staff to a specific workstation. Where shared equipment is used, the work area should be wiped down between each use.
- Situate workstations 1.5 metres apart.
- Consider implementing a roster system for staff working in the office and compliment with flexible working arrangements for staff where possible.
- Maintain personal cleanliness and hygiene in your work environment - wipe down your work area and any high touch services, shared equipment and other items.
- Communicate these arrangements across your workplace.

Physical distancing in common areas

- Implement a roster system for access to common areas.
- Stagger lunch and other break times across teams to avoid overcrowding in kitchens, shared spaces and entrances areas including lifts.
- Do not share personal items, such as mugs and cutlery. Wash your own items immediately after use and store them appropriately.

Physical distancing at entrance points

- Keep 1.5 metres from other colleagues and visitors in reception areas, lobbies, lift well areas.
- Do not enter a crowded lift. Please be patient and wait for another elevator when necessary or use the stairs.
- Review regular deliveries, request contactless payments and invoicing where possible.

Physical distancing in meeting areas

- Do not overcrowd meetings rooms. Some small meetings rooms need to be used for individuals only.
- Place signage in meeting rooms to guide maximum numbers within the room taking into account the

physical distancing requirements.

Physical distancing in the canteen and uniform shops

- All adults working in these environments must maintain a physical distance of 1.5metres from one another.
- Limit the number of people working in the space and organise activities that allow those working to maintain a physical distance of 1.5metres from each other. • Communicate with those working at the school the expectation they will comply with the 1.5metre physical distancing requirements.
- Limit the number of parents accessing the school uniform shop to comply with the relevant square metre rules. Implement strategies to reduce crowding and contact between parents collecting uniforms. For example, allow parents to pre-order uniforms and collect at a designated time, additional operating times to minimise gatherings of parents or arrange for different cohorts to attend on specific days.

Physical distancing and external visitors

Where possible, remove or minimise the need for external visitors to enter a workplace and use remote options such as zoom or skype. If visitors, are required onsite, the following need to be considered:

- The room / workspace is the appropriate size for the amount of people involved.
- The time spent in a meeting room or space with the same people needs to be minimised.

Physical distancing when providing routine care

- Staff should continue to provide routine care and support to students such as feeding, toileting and administration of health care procedures according to the school's regular routines. Staff should adopt physical distancing where possible.
- Where more than one staff member is required for the support of students such as assisted walking and moving a student using a hoist, staff should maintain physical distancing between each other where possible.
- The appropriate use of personal protective equipment when administering medication is required in instances where there is a risk of exposure to bodily fluids.

Physical distancing when providing first aid

- Staff should continue to provide first aid according to the school's regular routines and first aid arrangements, including use of appropriate PPE.
- Make arrangements for staff and students who become unwell during the day to leave the school and return to their homes.
- Maintain physical distancing with parents and carers as the student is collected and maintain procedures for the signing out of students online where possible.

Physical distancing at school drop off and pick up times

- Maintain a physical distance from other staff and from adults such as parents and carers at school pick up and drop off times.
- Identify areas where students can be safely dropped off and picked up under appropriate supervision avoiding the need for parents or carers to enter the school where possible.

- Communicate these arrangements across your school community.

Professional learning, meetings and planning activities

School development days can proceed for staff within the same school or the same local school network with a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) [COVID-19 Safety Plan for function and conferences](#) in place.

Professional learning can proceed for staff within the school or the same local school network and may include local non-school based staff with strict adherence with physical distancing and personal hygiene practices.

Professional learning is limited to 30 people indoors and 30 people outdoors for schools within Greater Sydney (including the Blue Mountains), Central Coast and Wollongong or 100 people for all other locations.

Professional learning that involves more participants will require a [COVID-19 Safety Plan for functions and conferences](#).

- When face-to-face professional learning activities are to take place, the following guidelines are to be given consideration: Interactions between cohorts of staff from within a business unit must be avoided or minimised where possible. For school based staff, participation should be limited to staff from the same school or from the local network.
- Professional learning is limited to 30 people indoors and 50 people outdoors and is subject to the 4 square metre rule. Staff residing and working in Greater Sydney (including the Blue Mountains), Central Coast and Wollongong regions must avoid travel to regional areas. Interactions between staff from different business units or groups must be avoided. For example:
 - Allocation of specific seating for staff from the same business unit/faculty/school.
 - Allocation of staff to topic streams where multiple learning sessions are run concurrently.
 - Staggered start and finish times of different sessions to minimise crowding around the venue or at meal times.
- The number of participants in any activity or gathering should be minimised and group work must be avoided.
- The length of time staff are in an enclosed space must be limited to no more than 1 hour where possible.
- Physical distancing and personal hygiene requirements must be adhered to at all times.
- A list of all people participating (including both staff and other adults) must be maintained including contact details in case they are required for contact tracing.
- Suitable learning spaces should be used to accommodate the physical distancing requirements as per the [relevant square metre rules](#).
- Staff should remain seated as much as possible during learning activities. There should be no more than 30 people at each table and seats must be separated by 1.5m so physical distancing is maintained. If using an external venue or provider, the venue and/or the provider will need to confirm they have reviewed the current NSW Public Health requirements and adhere to relevant industry COVID-19 Safety Plan requirements. (Note: Managers should ensure they meet the requirements as outlined above for professional learning, meetings and planning activities in addition to any safety measures in place with an external venue or provider).

Compliance training

Compliance training that involves face-to-face participation can continue and be attended by staff. For example, mandatory face-to-face CPR and anaphylaxis training.

Consideration must be given to the following requirements:

- Participants should be restricted to those within the school or local network.
- The number of participants in any activity or gathering should be limited to the minimum number of people required to achieve the education outcome and group work must be avoided.
- The length of time staff are in an enclosed space should be limited as much as possible.
- Physical distancing and personal hygiene requirements must be adhered to at all times.
- A list of all people participating (including both staff and other adults) must be maintained including contact details in case they are required for contact tracing.
- If using an external venue or provider/facilitator, the venue and/or the provider/facilitator must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan and adhere to relevant industry requirements. (NOTE: Schools should ensure they meet the requirements for professional learning, meetings and planning activities in addition to any safety measures in place with an external venue or provider).

Physical distancing for emergency drills

Schools should schedule and conduct their evacuation drills in accordance with their emergency management requirements. There are no restrictions in place for conducting the drill.

Any staff professional learning activities, including those delivered by Diocesan personnel need to comply with the above requirements.

Guidelines for singing, musical activities and creative arts

Updated 18 January 2021

In line with NSW Health advice, singing and musical group performances remain a high risk activity for COVID-19 transmission, should someone involved be infected. These activities can continue while following the strict requirements listed below. Interschool activities are also permitted.

Schools must comply with the school and community activities guidelines when conducting these activities.

All creative arts activities, including singing, musical activities, dance and drama, must follow safe health practices.

External providers can continue to deliver educational services where they are essential for curriculum delivery. Co-curricular music programs support the attainment of performance outcomes in the Creative Arts K-6 and Stages 4-6 Music syllabuses. They can continue as long as they adhere to the requirements set out below.

Where schools are engaging external providers, they must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan and the school must obtain a signed copy of the **external visitors form** upon arrival.

Solo singing, chanting and rapping (5 metres in front rule)

Solo singing, chanting and rapping (by a student or staff member) is permitted with a distance of 5 metres to be maintained between the performer, and any person in front of them (including staff, students and audience).

Instructors, teachers and adult support persons must position themselves 1.5m to the side of the singer/chanter/rapper and not within 5 metres in front of them during the rehearsal or performance.

Solo singing and rapping should only take place in large, well-ventilated settings.

Group singing, chanting and rapping

Group singing, chanting and rapping is permitted when following the COVID Safe requirements below:

- Group singing, chanting and rapping is permitted up to a maximum of 5 singers/rappers when conducted in an indoor setting.
- All singers should face forwards with a distance of 5 metres to be maintained between the group of singers and any person in front of them (including staff, students and audience).
- All singers are to be positioned 1.5 metres apart from each other and from other performers. Instructors, teachers and adult support persons must position themselves 1.5m to the side of the singer/chanter/rapper and not within 5 metres in front of them during the rehearsal or performance. Where possible, students should stay within their relevant cohort group in order to limit close contacts. Group singing, chanting or rapping should only take place in large, well-ventilated settings.
- There is no limit on the number of performers singing together outdoors.
- Audience members may sing outdoors, however anyone over the age of 12 must wear a mask.
- Audience members must not sing when indoors.

Musical groups (including bands and ensembles)

Musical instrument ensembles can continue.

Performers in musical groups should ensure the 5 metres in front rule (as above) is maintained throughout the performance. To achieve this, the vocal performer(s) should be positioned in front of all other members of the musical group.

Players of non-reeded woodwind instruments (such as flutes and recorders) should be positioned so that they can maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres from all persons (including other members of the musical group). They must also maintain a minimum 3 metres space between the direction of airflow from their instruments and other performers.

All other members of musical groups should be arranged so that they are 1.5 metres away from one another and behind all singers/rappers, and players of non-reeded woodwind instruments.

Where possible, students should stay within their relevant cohort group in order to limit close contacts.

Musical group members should be familiar with their positioning before entering the practice or performance area to perform.

All musical groups should rehearse and perform in large, well-ventilated settings. Spatial awareness should be a strong consideration when practising or performing. Infection control hygiene practices must follow safe health practices.

Singing, chanting and recitation activities for in-class educational activities

In a primary school and preschool setting, in-class educational activities such as group repetition, chanting, recitation, or singing activities are permitted provided these activities take place outdoors or in large, well-ventilated settings.

These activities are permitted due to their importance to children's education and development, and the lower risk of transmission between primary school students.

Dance and drama

External providers for dance and drama activities require a risk assessment as well as a COVID-19 Safety Plan. The plan should include measures which avoid physical contact for correction techniques in dance, where possible, and take into account personal hygiene considerations. High-touch areas and used equipment must be wiped down regularly. Approach spaces should be used to minimise contact with other students, wherever possible. Consider safe distance practice during planning, and discuss it with students to avoid injury.

Group work in drama may be completed, but should be limited to year groups, where possible.

All Stage 6 creative arts teachers should be familiar with [NESA's HSC advice for Stage 6 Creative Arts](#).

School performances, productions, concerts, speech nights and award presentations

Events may be held on school grounds or at external venues.

Schools must have COVID-19 Safety Plan when planning and conducting these events. Schools can use the [school graduation ceremonies COVID-19 Safety Plan](#). Schools must consider the following in their plans:

- Ensure that all attendees, including students, staff, visitors, parents and carers, are well and free of any flu-like symptoms.
- Schools will need to invite guests based on the total number of people (this includes staff, students, parents and carers and visitors) who are able to be accommodated within the space available.
- Schools may need to consider holding multiple events across year groups or stage group cohorts in order to comply with the relevant rule(s).
- For seating arrangements:
 - Ensure there is enough space for distancing of 1.5 metres between non household members.

- Ensure there is a maximum of 30 attendees per table if seated.
- Ensure all visitors sign the **external visitors form**. Further information will be provided to schools regarding the use of QR codes in the coming weeks.
- Ensure people remain seated as much as possible to minimise mingling outside of household or close friend groups.
- Ensure there is no self-serve or buffet-style food service. If hospitality staff are engaged to serve food or take orders, it is recommended that these staff wear a mask.
- Reduce crowding where possible and promote physical distancing with markers on the floor in areas where people are asked to queue, such as students waiting to come on stage to receive their certificate.
- Consider how awards and certificates are distributed or handed to the recipients in a COVID-safe way.
- Special guests such as the Local Member of Parliament, one videographer or photographer may attend events. Special guests must be kept to a minimum and be included in the maximum number of participants.
- Adopt and promote good hygiene practices. Make sure that bathrooms are well stocked with hand soap and paper towels or hand dryers. Have hand sanitisers at key points around the venue such as entry and exit points.
- Schools are required to maintain a record of names and contact details for all attendees including school staff and visitors for at least 28 days after the event. This record must only be used for the purposes of contact tracing for COVID-19 infections and be stored confidentially and securely. If possible, create and maintain a record of the seating plan to support contact tracing.
- External visitors should not be allowed access to areas outside of the designated event venue and should leave promptly at the conclusion of the event.

When holding events at external venues, all external venues and providers must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan to ensure health and safety measures are in place. Schools must consult with external venues and providers to understand what COVID safe measures are in place, including physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning measures, and record keeping requirements.

Schools must meet the guidelines for school staff in addition to any safety measures in place with an external venue or provider.

Practical guide for sport and physical activity

From Term 4 2020, updated health advice on minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission in NSW school communities and during community sports activities came into effect. This advice continues in Term 1 2021.

The following applies

- Interschool sport and physical activity can recommence. This means that schools and students may now travel outside their local community.

- Zone carnivals (swimming, cross country, athletics), round robins and gala days involving more than one school, can also recommence.
- Limit the number of participants involved in interschool sport and physical activities in a facility to ensure compliance with external venue restrictions.
- Students from different schools are permitted to mix while participating in events, but avoid mixing of student groups when not participating.
- Students participating in weekly sport and physical activities, including recreational activities, where possible, are to remain within their regular cohort to limit the mixing of students between cohort groups.
- Selection trials for representative pathway events or school placement (e.g. sport high school enrolment) may now recommence.
- No parents, carers or other spectators are permitted to attend activities held on school sites during school hours.
- External providers can be used for sport and physical activity programs provided they have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.

What remains unchanged

Contact sports, semi-contact and non-contact sports can continue within the school sport program.

Whole school carnivals (swimming, cross country, athletics) are permitted.

Schools can continue to use local external sporting grounds, swimming pools (including hydrotherapy pools), recreational facilities and community facilities where schools have exclusive use of the facilities or a designated area. This includes border school communities using interstate venues where border requirements permit. Visit the [relevant border authority](#) to find out more.

Avoid contact with the general public. Schools will need to negotiate with these venues regarding any external venue restrictions - for example, there may be a maximum number of people permitted to use a facility or join a class.

Pool operators should close the pool and spectator area to the general public while a school carnival is taking place unless there is clear delineation across separate areas of the facility.

When using any external facility or venue, schools must consider whether hygiene requirements are being practised. If there are any concerns that hygiene and safety requirements are not being met or adhered to at the location or venue, schools should choose an alternative location or venue.

Schools do not need to provide a list of attendees to the venue. Details of a contact person from the school who holds the attendance records for the event will suffice. Refer to contact tracing information that follows.

Bus or school transport to and from activities is permitted. Students should sanitise their hands before and after travelling on the bus. Where practical, schools are advised to negotiate with the bus company to implement cleaning protocols prior to student travel.

Students over the age of 12 and staff must comply with the [Public Health \(COVID-19 Mandatory Face Coverings\) Order 2021](#) when travelling to and from school and during school excursions by public transport, or by chartered or private transport services. This applies to staff and students who reside or travel to and from Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong. Refer to the [NSW Government website](#) for more information on wearing face masks.

Spectators, including parents and carers, are not permitted within school grounds for events or activities held during school hours. Sporting events and activities held outside of the school site during school hours will need to follow the COVID-19 Safety Plan of the venue or organiser.

Staff supervising sport and physical activities should continue to practise physical distancing between staff and other adults.

Sharing of sporting and physical activity equipment, such as fitness equipment and weights, are permitted. Schools should follow safe health practice guidelines including cleaning of equipment at the end of each session.

Avoid public change rooms wherever possible. On sports days, students should come to school wearing their sports uniform and appropriate footwear where possible.

External providers can be used for the delivery of sport and physical activity programs where they are essential for curriculum delivery. These providers must have a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#). Where schools are engaging external providers, the school must obtain a signed copy of the **external visitors form** upon arrival.

Contact tracing requirements

For school sport and physical activities, as an alternative to providing the names and contact details of school children and teachers to local venue operators, schools can provide the details of one contact person at the school. This is considered preferable to providing venue operators with names and contact details for school children. Schools must retain a list of all students and staff participating in the event or activity for at least 28 days in accordance with contact tracing requirements.

Schools that have gyms and fitness/dance studios

Schools must ensure that a member of staff is available to supervise gym or fitness sessions at all times. Where there are more than 20 students in the gym at one time, staff must ensure that infection control guidelines are implemented. Where practical, schools should also consider implementation of measures that reduce crowding and maximise the available space, particularly for high-intensity fitness classes.

Community use and visitor guidelines

Updated 18 January 2021

Community use of school facilities (by external operators) is by exception only, requiring written approval by the principal and written acknowledgement by the operator.

Considerations for school principals or site managers for community use

Community user groups seeking to operate on a school site must adhere to Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and NSW Health requirements.

Community use can resume when a commitment has been received in writing and signed by the organisation that they will comply with current relevant NSW Health and AHPPC guidelines, along with any other relevant requirements under the existing agreement.

All community user groups must have a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#). There are COVID-19 Safety Plans available for many specific industries or the general plan can be used.

The following advice is provided to help principals understand how the school site can be used safely by community user groups and the measures community users must put in place to maintain the health and safety of the school site. This information must be shared with the relevant site user and they should sign the form below.

Where there is concern about the ability of the community user to meet these requirements, principals should consult with their Diocesan office (systemic school) or Catholic Schools NSW (RI/PJP schools) prior to allowing the community user group to commence activities on the school site.

Principals should familiarise themselves with the site expectations and user requirements outlined in the acknowledgement form.

Required acknowledgement from community use external operators

All operators must sign the Community use operators on school sites acknowledgement form.

External visitors, contractors and volunteers to the school site (during school hours)

Visitors delivering specialist services or services essential to school operations and external providers delivering educational services are permitted in schools provided they have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.

The following visitors are able to attend school sites to deliver specialist services or services essential to school operations:

- Construction and maintenance providers and contractors for asset-related activities.
- Official visitors and dignitaries in accordance with the protocols.
- Allied health partners and providers.
- Diocesan personnel delivering specialist support services where these services cannot be delivered remotely.
- External providers delivering educational services can continue with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.

All visitors to a school site are required to sign the **external visitors to the school site form** each time they visit.

This form acts as evidence that the visitor is aware of, and will abide by their obligations to comply with the health advice of the day, including hygiene and distancing requirements.

All businesses and organisations that visit the school site, for example external providers that are essential to the delivery of services and programs within our schools, must have a COVID-19 Safety

Plan.

See the **guidelines for official visitors and dignitaries**.

The visitor must provide personal contact information to the school to be used in an emergency or when performing contact tracing if required. The form must be kept securely and confidentially for a period of 4 weeks.

Required acknowledgement from all visitors providing a service to the school during school hours

All visitors must sign the **external visitors to the school site form**.

Further information will be provided to schools regarding the use of QR codes in the coming weeks.

School Masses

- Stage, Grade or Whole School Masses / liturgies can occur but numbers cannot exceed the total capacity of the church (2 square m rule). Staff and students who are unwell need to be reminded to remain at home. Staff must observe physical distancing. Small schools may have whole school masses subject to meeting the numbers requirement. **Parents are currently unable to attend any school masses / liturgies.**
- The school should work with the Parish Priest to consider risk management in determining whether masses liturgies are best held in classrooms / school hall or in the Parish Church.
- The following hygiene and safety practices must be followed:
 - a. Sanitisation of hands before entering the church, hall, prayer room, etc.
 - b. Wiping down of pews and common areas at conclusion of Mass or gathering.
 - c. Priest and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to purify hands with sanitiser before and after offering Holy Communion
 - d. Anyone distributing communion should be wearing a face mask.
 - e. Communion is to be distributed in the hand only.
 - f. No touching at the sign of peace
 - g. No offertory procession
 - h. No congregational singing although lead choirs of up to 5 people are permitted following appropriate guidelines