

Myrtleford P12 College

COVID-19 Policy for Term 1, 2021

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline to parents, carers and students how our school will be managing risk and other operational matters relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) during Term 1, 2021.

Myrtleford P12 College is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for our students and staff. We ask for all members of the school community to follow this policy to enable us to provide the safest possible environment during this time. We all have a role to play in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in Victoria.

Background

Myrtleford P12 College is following the advice from the Department of Education and Training which can be found on the Department's website at: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Scope

This policy applies to everyone in the Myrtleford P12 College community. This includes all members of staff (principals, teachers and education support staff), all parents/carers who interact with the school and all students. It also includes visitors to the school. Information specific to staff only and not relevant to students and their families is not included in this policy.

Details

We are pleased to advise that all students have returned to full-time on-site learning. Information on changes to on-site learning will be provided to parents via the school newsletter, Compass and Skoolbag App.

Term 1 priorities

We will continue to have in place strong measures to protect the health and safety of students, staff, families and the community. In addition to the health and safety measures outlined in this policy, we will be focused on three key priorities in Term 1:

Mental health and wellbeing

Our highest priority will be the wellbeing, particularly the mental health, of every student and member of staff. This means effectively mobilising all available resources to support our most vulnerable students and enabling staff to access the relevant support services.

Learning and excellence

Some of our students have thrived in the remote and flexible learning environment, others have maintained their learning progress, and some have fallen behind, despite their best efforts and those of their families and teachers. Our priority will be supporting both those who need it to catch up and those who have progressed to continue to extend their learning.

Transitions

We will make every effort to ensure successful transitions for children moving from kindergarten into Prep, the Grade 6s moving into Year 7, the Year 12s moving into employment or further education and training.

Health and safety at school

Our school follows the Department and Victorian Chief Health Officer's advice and requirements in relation to health and safety. The health and safety measures relating to students are outlined below. These health and safety measures are regularly reviewed in line with the changing context of COVID-19 in Victoria. As a result, as Term 1 proceeds, some measures may no longer be required and/or new measures may be introduced. This means:

Unwell students (including students who have been tested)

- Unwell students **must** stay home.
- Where students have been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) they are required to isolate at home and must not attend school even if they meet the exception categories outlined above.

Managing unwell students at school

- Students engaging in on-site learning experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough or sore throat, will be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible. Urgent medical attention will be sought where needed. Unwell students will not be permitted to travel home unsupervised.
- Where staff or students are experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus, we will ensure hand hygiene, physical distancing and use of a face covering. See DET [guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).
- [Where students with complex health needs are being supported: In the context of schools supporting students with complex health needs, if the care of an unwell child or young person is to be prolonged (for example, because it will take some hours for a parent to collect a child) and maintaining distance is not practical when providing direct care, gloves, gown and eye protection will be considered if available].
- Health care plans, where relevant, should be updated to provide additional advice on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell in the first instance we will contact the parent/carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the student, and we will take a precautionary approach, requesting the parent/carer to collect their child if concerns remain. A trained staff member may take the temperature of the student, where appropriate, to support decision-making. Gloves will be worn for the purpose of taking a temperature.
- Parent/carers of students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) will be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps. Students should not return until symptoms resolve.
- If a student spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), surfaces will be immediately cleaned.

Managing a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

The Department has comprehensive procedures in place with the Department of Health and Human Services to manage suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools. In accordance with these procedures:

- We will contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 to seek advice if a student or staff member:
 - is a confirmed case
 - has been in close contact with a confirmed case
- We will inform the Department's Incident Support and Operations Centre who will support the school to make an [IRIS incident alert](#).

DHHS defines 'close contact' as someone who has either:

- had at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- shared a closed space for more than two hours with someone who is a confirmed case.

Face coverings

- Face coverings are no longer mandatory, but all school staff are required to carry a mask, and will be encouraged to wear a mask where social distancing of 1.5m is not possible.
- All students over the age of 12 in Years 7 – 12 must carry a face covering and will be encouraged to wear the mask when social distancing of 1.5m is not possible, though this is not mandatory. Students in Prep to Year 6 are not required to wear face coverings regardless of whether or not they are aged 12 or over, but may choose to do so.
- Parents are also required to wear face coverings whenever they cannot social distance.

Physical distancing

- Wherever possible we will encourage and support physical distancing of students however the Department and Victorian Chief Health Officer has acknowledged that physical distancing in schools is practicably difficult to achieve and has not mandated this practice.
- Parents are asked to observe physical distancing requirements (1.5 metres) and density limits as signed in areas of the school.

Hand, food and drink hygiene

- Hand sanitiser will be available at entry points to classrooms and students will be educated on the importance of this health and safety measure
- All people on school grounds must undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet.
- Where shared equipment is necessary, students will be required to exercise strict hand hygiene before and after use.
- Students must not share their food.

Temperature checks

- Mandatory temperature testing of all students is no longer required. However, we will continue to heed Department and Chief Health Officer advice on this, and temperature checks may be reintroduced if the current levels of community transmission in Victoria increase.

Mobile phones

- The Department and school's mobile phone policies continue to apply and we ask that students and staff clean their phones regularly.

Attendance

Normal attendance notification requirements apply for all students, including students undertaking remote learning from home. Please refer to our school Attendance Policy for further information.

Exceptions to attendance may exist for medically vulnerable students. The Acting Deputy Chief Health Officer has advised that decisions regarding school attendance should be informed by the nature of a child or young person's condition, its severity and intensity of required treatment. In most cases, the presence of common conditions of childhood, such as asthma, epilepsy or Type 1 diabetes, should not preclude a student from attending face-to-face learning.

In keeping with expert public health advice, some students may be at higher risk for severe outcomes or complications of coronavirus (COVID-19), for example those with chronic medical conditions. Any student with a chronic medical condition should seek advice from their medical practitioner about attending school on site at different stages in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Please also contact Principal Zlatko Pear for further support and advice on how we can support your child in these circumstances.

Our school records student attendance in accordance with the Department's [Attendance Policy](#).

School assemblies

School assemblies can now take place, though if members of the public attend, density limits will apply.

Camps, excursions, sport and recreation

We are permitted to undertake camps and excursions as advised by the Department. Further information on any Term 1 camps and excursions will be provided separately to the relevant year group.

Sport and recreation

Based on the Department and Chief Medical Officer advice and requirements as at 20 January 2021:

- Playground equipment can be used by students. However students should practise hand hygiene before and after use.
- Hand hygiene is required before and after use of any sporting equipment.
- Playgrounds are now available for community use.
- All indoor and outdoor sport is now allowed (including interschool sport)
- Outdoor swimming pool use in the community can occur. Restrictions on the number of people permitted to the outdoor pool do not apply if it is being used exclusively by a single school for educational purposes. Further information about Term 1 swimming activities plans will be communicated to the relevant year levels.

Instrumental classes and food technology

- Food preparation can continue with frequent hand hygiene and no sharing of food

Canteen

Our school canteen is open for Term 1 and will operate with the highest hygiene practices. The canteen will be open on Monday, Thursday and Friday.

Visitors and school tours

Under Department and Victorian Chief Health Officer advice and requirements visitors to school grounds are no longer limited, but all visitors to the school grounds must comply with physical distancing and face mask recommendations, practise good hand hygiene, and comply with the density limits applied to certain areas of the school.

This means:

- Parent volunteers can now attend school
- To support contact tracing, visitors will be required to sign in if they attend on-site for longer than 15minutes.

School buses for on-site students

The School Bus Program will continue to operate as normal.

Students should practice hand hygiene before and after catching any form of public or school transport.

Physical distancing should be practised by both parents and students at bus stops, interchange locations and train stations.

As per DHHS requirements, students 12 years and older must wear face masks whilst travelling in the school bus

Outside school hours care

Outside School Hours Care will be available for students in accordance with their usual process.

Interschool activities

Outdoor interschool activities can resume in line with community sport, with the following measures in place:

- spectators to be discouraged or to be within public gathering limits
- reinforce hand hygiene before, during and after
- attendance register maintained to support contact tracing
- no sharing of food (such as oranges at sport)
- cleaning and disinfection of communal facilities prior to and after an interschool sport event (toilets and communal changerooms can open).

Information on Year 10, 11 and 12 students attending VCE and VCAL subjects at Marian College will be provided with separately.

Communication between parents/carers and our school

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact their child's teacher to discuss any concerns or areas of need in regards to their child's learning, health, wellbeing or access to teaching and learning resources.

Cleaning and facilities management

As per the 'cleaning and personal hygiene products' section of the School Operations Guide, additional cleaning arrangements will continue in Term 1 2021, however the scope will differ in line with public advice.

At our school we will:

- Continue extension of routine environmental cleaning, which involves daily end-of-school day cleaning, with a particular focus on cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces, and the inclusion of some elements that were not cleaned daily prior to the COVID 19 pandemic. See Department information about [Access to cleaning supplies and services](#).
- The use of shared equipment will be carefully monitored. We will be practising hand hygiene immediately before and after use of shared equipment.

Further information and resources

- [DET Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website:](#)
 - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/coronavirus-advice-schools.aspx>
- [DHHS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website:](#)
 - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- [DET Infectious Diseases Policy:](#)
 - <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/infectious-diseases/policy>
- [DET Health Care Needs Policy:](#)
 - <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/health-care-needs/policy>
- [Talking to your child about COVID-19:](#)
 - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/covid-19/talking-to-your-child-during-coronavirus.docx>
- Department of Education and Training COVID-19 Advice Line – 1800 338 663
- Department of Health and Human Services Coronavirus hotline – 1800 675 398 (24 hours, 7 days a week)

Review

This policy was last updated on 25th January 2021 and will be reviewed on a regular basis as the situation changes.

Changes made on 25th Nov

P3-Face coverings

P4-Indoor sports

P5- Interschool Sport

Changes made on 25th Jan 2021

Date changes made throughout document

P3-Face coverings and density limits

P4-School assemblies, sport and recreation activities, camps and excursions

P5- Visitors, school bus travel

P6- Cleaning