

# Tecoma Primary School

## COVID 'Normal' Policy

effective from 30/11/2020

### Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to outline how our school will be managing risk relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) during key interactions between students, parents and staff in Term 4, 2020 and until such time as the Chief Health Officer advises it is no longer required.

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

### Background

Tecoma Primary School is following the advice from the Department of Education and Training including, [Health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the context of COVID-19](#) which can be found on the Department's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#).

### Scope

This policy applies to everyone in the Tecoma Primary School community. This includes all members of staff (principals, teachers and education support staff), School Council members, all parents/carers who interact with the school and all students. It also includes visitors to the school.

### Term 4 2020 priorities

***The following priorities for students and staff will guide our school's operations in Term 4:***

#### Priority 1 – Wellbeing and Equity

The wellbeing, and particularly the mental health, of every student and member of staff is the highest priority.

This means encouraging and sustaining motivation for learning, re-engaging students and families where needed, and supporting the social and emotional learning of children and young people alongside curriculum-based learning.

This also means ensuring support for school staff, who have sustained their efforts through multiple transitions in modes of teaching and learning delivery.

All available resources will need to be effectively mobilised to ensure support for every student, including our most vulnerable, as well as access to support services for all school staff.

#### Priority 2 – Learning and Excellence

Some students have been better able to progress in their learning in the remote and flexible learning environment, others have maintained their rate of progress, and some have, despite their best efforts and those of their families and teachers, not progressed in their learning.

It will be important to meet all students at their point of need – both to support those who have not progressed in their learning to catch up and those who have progressed to continue to extend and stretch their learning.

**Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum remain a focus, with schools also adapting their teaching and learning program in Term 4 to be responsive to student needs.**

#### Priority 3 – Transitions

Term 4 is a critical period, particularly for the children moving from kindergarten into Prep, from Grade 6 into Year 7.

Students in other year levels will also prepare for a change of teachers and new classmates. A key focus of Term 4 will be to make every effort to ensure each of these end-of-year and beginning-of-year transitions occurs as successfully as possible.

This includes finding contextually appropriate ways to conduct orientations and end-of-year celebrations and ensuring transition information captures additional details as necessary.

### Student reporting requirements

Requirements for student reports for Semester 2 have been adjusted in recognition of the disruptions caused by the transition to remote and flexible learning during Semester 2.

### Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of principals, teachers, school staff and students is a priority.

#### For students

- The [Mental Health Toolkit](#) has advice and resources to support student mental health and wellbeing. This includes advice on positive mental health promotion, curriculum support, how to identify and access support as well as parent- and student-specific pages.
- In addition, the [Quick Guide to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources](#) highlights the most relevant evidence-based resources for teachers, parents and students.

### COVIDSafe Plan

The [Safety Management Plan for COVID-19 \(COVIDSafe Plan\)](#) applies to all schools, outlines the key health and safety risks and links to the latest guidance.

In conjunction with this Operations Guide, it sets out the approach for managing safety risks in our school in accordance with the minimum requirements for COVIDSafe Plans.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

Health and safety measures will be regularly reviewed in line with the changing context of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Victoria.

As Term 4 proceeds, based on health advice, some measures may no longer be required and/or new measures may be introduced.

These measures apply to all Victorian schools: specialist and mainstream, government, independent and Catholic.

The measures bring together Victoria's COVIDSafe principles for business while acknowledging the unique school setting as both a place of work for staff and a learning environment for children and young people, drawing on local and international literature.

A combination of strategies is required to minimise transmission risk. No single strategy completely reduces risk and not every measure will always be feasible and applicable to all education settings. Where some controls are not feasible, others should be enhanced. Strategies should also be adjusted over time in line with changing risk of transmission in the community.

From the Last Step, some COVIDSafe activities are no longer required. These activities are indicated in the table below.

Further advice on maintaining a COVIDSafe School and explanation of these principles can also be found at [Health and safety advice for schools in the context of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

### COVIDSafe principles for schools

Reinforce COVIDSafe behaviours*	Create COVIDSafe spaces	Promote COVIDSafe activities	Respond to coronavirus (COVID-19) risk*
Stay home when unwell* Practise good hygiene* Ensure physical distancing (1.5m) *	Make hand hygiene easy Keep surfaces clean and implement enhanced	Move activities outdoors where possible, weather permitting	Keep records and act quickly if someone becomes unwell*

Wear a face mask* (students 12 years and older in secondary school, and staff. Staff are not required to wear face masks while teaching, but can if they wish to do so) Avoid interactions in enclosed spaces*	environmental cleaning and disinfection Promote outdoor air ventilation and do not have air conditioners on recirculate	risk activities	Use personal protective equipment Clean and disinfect appropriately if a staff member or student has been unwell at school Manage individual risk
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\*These items denote Victorian Government [COVIDSafe principle for business](#) and may require adaptation for the school context  
*Principles in italics are not required in the Last Step*

## Reinforce COVIDSafe behaviours

### Stay home when unwell

***The most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), is to ensure that any unwell staff and students remain at home and get tested, even with the mildest of symptoms.***

#### Students with underlying conditions (such as hay fever or asthma)

If a student has persistent symptoms due to an underlying condition such as hay fever or asthma, the student should still be tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) if they develop symptoms that are different to or worse than their usual symptoms.

Parents/carers should also consider getting a medical certificate from the child's treating GP to confirm that it is safe for them to attend school with persistent symptoms that may overlap with some of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) such as cough or runny nose.

#### Young children with persistent mild symptoms

Younger children (in grades Prep to 2) who have had a negative coronavirus (COVID-19) test that was taken after they developed symptoms, the decision about return to school should be made in conjunction with the child's treating GP. If the GP is satisfied the child has recovered from their acute illness, is otherwise well, and does not need a repeat coronavirus (COVID-19) test, the child can return even if they are not completely free of symptoms. Any worsening of symptoms will require review and repeat coronavirus (COVID-19) testing, if considered appropriate by the doctor.

Students with a negative coronavirus (COVID-19) test whose symptoms have completely resolved do not need a medical certificate to return to the school.

### Practise good hygiene

All staff, students and visitors to schools should undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet. Staff should direct or supervise young students or where required.

Sharing of food is not recommended. Where this occurs, individual portions should be encouraged alongside strict hand hygiene.

Use non-contact greetings (not shaking hands, hugging or kissing).

#### Drinking fountains

Drinking fountains and taps should be reopened for normal use.

### Safety information and training

All Tecoma PS staff working on site in schools have been required to complete the eLearn module *School infection prevention and control during coronavirus (COVID-19)*.

### Ensure physical distancing

A variety of strategies to support physical distancing among all students and staff should be pursued, where possible.

Staff **must** practise physical distancing between themselves and other staff members or adults to the extent that is reasonably practicable. Staff should physically distance themselves from students where appropriate and feasible.

A face mask provides protection when physical distance cannot be maintained. Physical distancing is not practical when providing direct care. In this situation a face mask together with standard precautions, including hand hygiene, are important for infection control.

Students **should** practise physical distancing where possible. Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 meters will not always be practical in the school environment and may be particularly challenging in the younger years of primary school. In these contexts, a combination of health and safety measures should be utilised to reduce risk.

Density quotients of one person per 4m<sup>2</sup> do not apply in classrooms and other spaces for the purposes of student use, including corridors and other shared areas.

Density quotients apply to staff areas such as staff lunchrooms and areas accessed by the public, such as reception areas. For public areas, signage must be displayed to indicate the maximum number of members of the public that may be present in the space at a single time.

### Face masks in schools

Face masks must be worn indoors, unless an exemption applies. This includes school classrooms and while travelling on public transport. Face masks are not required outdoors except where 1.5 metres physical distancing cannot be maintained.

A face mask that covers the nose and mouth is now the only permitted type of face covering. Face shields, scarves or bandanas do not meet these requirements.

Schools must ensure that staff wear face masks when required.

Teachers and education support staff are not required to wear face masks while teaching, but those who wish to do so, can. Teachers and education support staff must wear face masks in other indoor areas of the school when not teaching.

Health, wellbeing and inclusion staff are required to wear face masks, unless an exemption applies, including the need for 'clear enunciation or visibility of their mouth' (for example, when undertaking a speech therapy intervention or working with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing).

### Managing safe school arrival and departure

To ensure consistency with physical distancing measures, students and families should not be permitted to congregate at the school gate before or after school and will be required to maintain 1.5 metres between each other as far as is practicable at the start and end of the school day.

Schools must implement actions to reduce the congregation of adults around the school and reduce congestion. Schools can do this through strategies such as the use of multiple entry/exit points, creating spaces for egress in different areas of the school and appropriate signage to communicate expected behaviours.

It is no longer required to reduce mixing amongst different year levels. Implementing staggered start and finish times in order to reduce congestion is no longer required.

### Practise good hygiene

All staff, students and visitors to schools should undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet. Staff should direct or supervise young students or where required.

- Taps may be used to refill water bottles.
- Sharing of food should not occur.
- Non-contact greetings should be used (not shaking hands, hugging or kissing).

## Other hygiene measures

- Hand sanitiser should be made available at entry points to classrooms and education will be provided on hand hygiene.
- Playground equipment can be used by students. However, students should practise hand hygiene before and after use.
- Schools should consider the necessity of using shared equipment at this time. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use. There is no requirement for books to be placed aside for a given period after use or if loaned to students.
- The Department's Students Using Mobile Phones Policy remains in place. Remind staff and students to clean their phones regularly. Phones can be turned on with the COVID SAFE app activated immediately before and after school. Schools are managed environments that include records of student, staff and visitor attendance, which can support contact tracing.

## Promote COVIDSafe activities

### Limit school access: Visitors to schools and school tours

Limitations on who can visit school premises no longer apply from the Last Step, however school activities involving visitors must comply with gathering limits for community facilities (group limit of 20 people indoors and 50 people outdoors).

Visitors to school grounds must comply with physical distancing and face mask advice set out in this Operations Guide, and practise good hand hygiene.

To support contact tracing, schools must keep a record of all staff, students and visitors who attend on-site for more than 15 minutes. Schools must record the name, contact details, date, and time of attendance at school, as well as the areas of the school that the person attended. Schools can use existing mechanisms such as visitor sign-in procedures, student attendance records and staffing rosters to record this information.

Even though Parent-teacher information sessions and interviews are now able to take place on-site, in line with public gathering limits, at Tecoma Primary School we will for December 2020 be holding these only via Webex (as this has already been put into place).

Schools can conduct on-site school tours for prospective students and their families during operating hours, in accordance with gathering limits.

### Kinder-to-school transition

Kinder-to-school transition activities are permitted in schools, such as parents, educators and children meeting a Prep teacher in a school environment. Group sizes should not exceed gathering limits (20 people indoors and 50 outdoors).

On-site visits by a Prep teacher to meet a Kindergarten teacher and children in kindergarten settings is also permitted across Victoria.

### Year 7 transitions

Primary to secondary school transition activities can resume. This includes Grade 6 students and their teacher or parents meeting Year 7 educators in the secondary school environment. Group sizes should not exceed gathering limits (20 people indoors and 50 outdoors).

### Statewide Year 6-7 Orientation Day

Orientation Day events can go ahead in an adapted form. Programs must be adapted, with all arrangements in line with public health advice:

- Students must be allocated into a single class-size group for the day (maximum of 30 people, including two staff).
- There are no limits to the total number of groups on site at each school. Groups may include students from more than one school. However, these groups must not mix.

- All students attending Orientation Day are required to wear face masks indoors (some [exceptions may apply](#)). This will be a new experience for Grade 6 students, who are not required to wear face masks in primary school.
- Peer support or 'buddy' programs are permitted from the Last Step and students from other year levels may take part in Orientation Day programs.
- Schools may hold transition activities in line with this advice on other days — in addition to, or instead of, the statewide Transition Day, in line with public health advice.

### Use of school facilities and playgrounds

Playground equipment can be used by students. However, students should practise hand hygiene before and after use.

Playgrounds on school grounds can be made available for community use. **Daily cleaning is no longer required.**

Schools may approve use of outdoor facilities on school property such as ovals if the use aligns with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and DET advice for the relevant activity. Schools may also permit use of indoor facilities on school property by community groups in line with permitted activities in the community. Use must be out of school hours. Any indoor facilities, including toilets, must be cleaned before the next school day.

### Reduce mixing between groups and create workforce bubbles

From the Last Step, schools are no longer required to consider how students can be grouped together (for example, in classes or year levels) and how to best minimise mixing between different groups of staff (for example, by site layout or year level).

Considering the order and pace in which different buildings and classrooms are vacated.

Organising student traffic in corridors, locker bays and canteen areas (for example, dividing the corridor for traffic direction and having multiple entry and exit points).

### Adapt, modify or defer higher-risk activities

#### Transitions, end-of-year events, assemblies and other school gatherings (e.g. school sports events)

**Face-to-face year level assemblies, graduations and other school gatherings can occur at full capacity if they are exclusively attended by students and staff only.**

Graduation ceremonies, assemblies and other school gatherings (e.g. school sports) on school sites involving external guests are subject to a gathering limit (including students, staff and visitors) of 150 indoors or 300 outdoors, with a density quotient of one per 4m<sup>2</sup> applicable to staff and visitors/parents.

**At Tecoma Primary School our Graduation arrangements for Year 6 students will be in line with what has been previously share with our school community – with attendance limited to students and staff ONLY, and the ceremony being live streamed to parents.**

**This will be the same for our Prep Graduation, with the ceremony being attended by staff and students ONLY, with a copy of the ceremony being supplied to all parents on a USB.**

### Sport and recreation

**Indoor and outdoor contact and non-contact sport can resume.**

In line with community advice, reasonable precautions are still advised to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the context of sport and recreation.

Outdoor facilities are recommended for physical education and recreational play **where possible.**

Hand hygiene must be practised before and after use of any sporting equipment.

## Swimming pool use

Swimming pools can be used by students (in all parts of Victoria), with the following safety measures in place:

use of the changing facilities should be staggered to limit the number of students in the changing rooms at one time

changing facilities need to be cleaned at least twice a day.

## Use of woodwind and brass instruments, singing, voice projection and dance

Use of woodwind instruments and singing and voice projection does entail risk of potential spread of aerosols and droplets. As such only individual tuition and small ensemble groups (five or fewer participants indoors; **no limits outdoors**) can be conducted, with physical distancing and other hygiene measures where possible.

Note that children are able to sing 'Happy Birthday' to classmates, including in classrooms, given its short duration. This is an appropriate way to mark a significant milestone for children.

## Excursions

Excursions can resume across Victoria for all schools. There are no restrictions on travel between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

There is no limit on group sizes, but excursions must be conducted in line with any specific capacity limits on venues that are being used.

Health and safety requirements and enhanced cleaning will continue to apply at all external venues.

## Camps

School camps, including to attend remote campuses, can resume across Victoria for all schools. There are no restrictions on travel between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

**Multiple schools can now attend a single facility.**

## Interschool activities

**Interschool activities, in addition to interschool sport, can now resume.**

Indoor and outdoor interschool sport can resume in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria in line with community sport, with the following measures in place:

spectators to be discouraged or to be within 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).

## Respond to coronavirus (COVID-19) risk

### Management of an unwell student or staff member

It is important that any staff member or student who becomes unwell while at school gets tested and returns home. While it is unlikely that a staff member or student who is unwell with flu-like symptoms will have coronavirus (COVID-19), there are sensible steps schools can take while a student awaits collection by a parent or carer as a precaution.

Staff and students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough or sore throat, should be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable

supervision and students should be collected by a parent or carer as soon as possible. Urgent medical attention should be sought where indicated.

Where staff or students are experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), the important actions to follow include hand hygiene, physical distance and putting on a surgical face mask (both staff and student where appropriate). See the Department's [guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).

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 supervision or direct care, the staff member should wear surgical face mask, gloves, gown and eye protection. See the Department's [guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).

Face masks should not be used in situations where an individual is unable to safely or practically tolerate a face mask (for example, a child with complex medical needs including existing respiratory needs. Children who are two years or younger must not wear face masks as they are a choking and suffocation risk).

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 it is advisable in the first instance to contact the parent or carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the student, and taking a precautionary approach, request the parent or carer to collect their child if concerns remain.

Staff or students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) should be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps.

**Where staff or students have been tested, they must isolate until they receive their test result.**

Staff and students are generally not required to present a medical certificate stating they are fit to return to an education setting after a period of illness, however staff and students should not return until symptoms resolve. Staff continue to be required to present a medical certificate in accordance with personal leave policy for periods of absence on personal leave.

Follow cleaning guidance according to the situation of the case. If a student spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), clean surfaces immediately with disinfectant wipes while wearing gloves.

### **Managing a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)**

The Department has comprehensive procedures in place with DHHS to manage suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools.

The Department will notify WorkSafe on behalf of the affected school.

### **Monitoring of close contacts in schools**

To minimise further community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has introduced a new system for the identification, notification and monitoring of close contacts (primary and secondary).

In line with this, schools will now be advised if a student at their school has been identified by DHHS as a close contact of a person with coronavirus (COVID-19).

Close contacts are contacted directly by DHHS regarding requirements for quarantine and testing; the student should not attend school until they are advised by DHHS that their quarantine has concluded. Students should bring a copy of the clearance message (text, email or letter) they receive from DHHS indicating that their quarantine period has ended when they return to school.

Schools will be asked to confirm that the student identified as a close contact is not attending school during this time. If the student is attending school, they must be sent home immediately and notify their Area Executive Director. The school is not required to close due to a close contact attending.

### Supporting students during quarantine

Schools are asked to provide support to the close contact student and their family during the quarantine period to facilitate continued engagement in learning and address wellbeing needs.

### School site closures

The Department works closely with individual schools and DHHS to manage and respond to reported cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) that may include exposure to the virus at a school site.

The Department's rapid school site closure, cleaning and contact tracing process, agreed with DHHS, reduces the risk of any transmission occurring at a school site and ensures that school sites can reopen, and staff and students can return to on-site learning as quickly and safely as possible.

### Infectious cleaning

In most cases where a school site closes due to a positive case, some or all of the school site will undergo an 'infectious clean', also known as a deep clean. This clean is arranged and paid for by the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) and this applies to all Victorian Government schools, both metropolitan and regional.

The cleaning is conducted in accordance with guidelines that have been developed with DHHS.

### Cleaning and personal hygiene products

Extended and increased cleaning arrangements have been introduced and will continue. This involves progressive cleaning throughout the day to ensure that risks of transmission are reduced for high-touch services.

### Outside School Hours Care

Outside school hours care (OSHC) may operate before and after school programs, following public health directions and applying the operational health and safety advice to schools.

For further information, see [Outside school hours care during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

# APPENDIX 1 - QUICK REFERENCE OF PERMITTED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

## COVIDSafe behaviours

Key actions for schools	All Victorian schools
Temperature checks	NO
Face masks	YES

## Create COVIDSafe spaces

Key actions for schools	All Victorian schools
Enhanced environmental cleaning	YES
Enhanced hand hygiene facilities	YES
Enhanced ventilation	YES
Community use of school playground	YES
Libraries (for borrowing and as a learning space)	YES

## Promote COVIDSafe activities

Key actions for schools	All Victorian schools
School tours	YES
Excursions	YES
Community pool use (outdoor pool)	YES
Community pool use (indoor pool)	YES
Incursions	YES
School photos	YES
Camps and overnight stays	YES
Assemblies (whole school and year level)	LIMITED
Formals	NO
Graduation ceremonies	LIMITED
Kinder transition program	LIMITED
Year 7 transition programs	LIMITED
Non-contact sports (indoors)	YES
Contact sports (indoors)	YES
Contact sports (outdoors)	YES
Non-contact sports (outdoors)	YES
Interschool and intraschool sports	YES

Other interschool activity (such as debating)	YES
Singing, brass and woodwind classes and groups	LIMITED
Swimming (school-based pool)	YES
Professional development and staff meetings (face to face)	YES

## Respond to coronavirus (COVID-19) risk

Key actions for schools	All Victorian schools
Keep visitor records	YES
Maintain adequate PPE supply	YES

### Further information and resources

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

### REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy may be amended at any time as required by the DET, CHO or Tecoma Primary School. Amendments will be communicated through *School Stream* allowing suitable notification to members of our school community. As there are regular updates in requirements, members of our school community should expect changes and are responsible for reading and adhering to the necessary arrangements for the health and safety of all.

This policy was last updated on **27<sup>th</sup> November, 2020** and **will continue to be updated as new directives and School Operation Guides are received.**

**Initially reviewed by:** Rohan, Thompson, Di Double, Deb Langford, Chelsey Robins, Lisa Dell, David Coe, Nigel Grainger, Natalie Lees, Narelle Paul

**Updated in line with DET's Term 4 Operations Guide by:** Rohan Thompson, Di Double