



School Operating Guidelines

Baseline Settings

ADVICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS & CARE SERVICES

Effective Term 2

These guidelines have been developed for schools as we transition toward living with COVID-19. If conditions change the Chief Health Officer will advise the CEWA to adjust settings.



Definitions

For the purposes of implementing these guidelines, the following definitions apply:

- **Vaccination requirement** means staff to be double dose vaccinated against COVID-19 from 12.01am on 31 January 2022 and have a third dose (booster) vaccine within one month of becoming eligible, unless the staff member has an approved exemption.
- **Ad hoc basis** means attendance at any Education Facility or Facilities no more than once a week.
 - Note: A person who attends multiple education facilities in a week, but does not visit the same education facility twice, does not attend on an ad hoc basis. For example, a tradesperson who works at school A on Monday and then works at school B on Wednesday of the same week must comply with the vaccination requirements in these directions.
- Therefore, **regular basis** means more than once per week (either within one site or across multiple school sites).
- **School sites (education facilities)** include:
 - a school, including CEWA offices e.g. Leederville, Geraldton, Broome and Bunbury;
 - early learning and care, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and long daycare;
 - boarding premises (boarding / residential facilities).
- **Critical worker:** new close contact rules supersede Critical Worker protocols.
- **Close contact:** a close contact is now defined as:
 - A household member or intimate partner of a person with COVID-19 who has had contact with them during their infectious period.
 - Someone who has had close personal interaction with a person with COVID-19 during their infectious period where:
 - they spent greater than 4 hours of cumulative contact with them in any 24-hour period in a residential setting (for instance a home or accommodation facility).
 - where masks have been removed by both people during the period of contact.
 - Someone who is directed by WA Health that they are a close contact.
 - Principals are no longer required to report close contact information on the COVID-19 Reporting Portal.
 - Asymptomatic close contacts are not required to isolate but do have to follow testing and mask wearing requirements.

There is no requirement for parents to report to a school that their child has tested negative to COVID-19, but they are encouraged to do so via the COVID-19 Self-Reporting Portal to further support schools with their management of COVID-19.

Parents/caregivers are instructed to inform the school if their child tests positive and must keep them home until well and free of symptoms. Parents/caregivers must be reminded to also report their child's positive RAT to WA Health.



Vaccination requirement

All staff working at a school site, and visitors who attend the school or schools on a regular basis, are required to meet the vaccination requirements.

Staff who contract COVID-19 may not be eligible to receive their booster vaccination at the point of becoming eligible. Impacted staff must:

- Make an appointment with their medical practitioner and complete the Exemption Application Form.
- Approved exemptions include:
 - Immunisation History Record with the contraindication specified.
 - WA Health written exemption.
 - COVID-19 Certificate with contraindication specified.

A medical certificate is not an approved exemption document and cannot be accepted.

Staff who do not meet the vaccination mandate are not permitted on the school campus until a valid exemption is presented or the booster vaccination is received.



School attendance

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) encourages all students and staff who are well to attend school, including those with health conditions, unless COVID-19 positive.

Please refer to previous advice regarding codes for absences.



Educational Continuity

Consider the following :

- The importance of staff planning ahead and ensuring their planning is easily accessible to others.
- The context of students who are requiring remote learning – those who are in quarantine as household contacts and those in isolation because they are COVID-19 positive.
- The importance of clarity of communication with parents and students.
- Opportunities for students to connect with staff and their peers.
- Ensuring students have access to equipment/resources they require at home. This includes physical resources (books, manipulatives, art materials) particularly for younger children, digital devices and work packs).
- Ways in which Students With Disability, EAL/D students/families and others who may be vulnerable in the current situation will be supported.
- Being realistic in expectations in terms of the work students may be able to complete independently in a remote context.

- Being realistic with staff expectations as some staff may be ill or in isolation.
- Being creative and flexible with staffing, particularly where there are high levels of staff and student absence.
- Collaborating with other Catholic schools in your region and supporting each other.
- Schools need to provide work for students who need to stay at home due to isolation requirements (COVID-19 positive students only). Schools are not required to provide work to students who are being kept at home by a parent when there is no COVID-19 positive case, or the student is not a close contact.



School activities

- School activities during school hours, offsite and onsite, must promote and practise good hygiene principles.
- The following activities may take place without restriction:
 - Band, choir and orchestra rehearsals and performances
 - Whole school and year level assemblies
 - Sporting programs
 - Professional learning activities and conferences
 - Inter-school activities and workshops
 - School balls
- Excursion and offsite events can resume in accordance with venue-based requirements.
- Proof of vaccination for venue entry has been removed, excluding high risk settings.
- Schools must consider the COVID-19 Safety Plan of third party providers, to ensure continued risk mitigation.



Offsite activities

Before approval for offsite activities is made, as part of the excursion risk assessment documents, ensure the business or venue has an up-to-date COVID-19 Safety Plan that it continues to implement.

- Activities must adhere to any additional public health and social measures in place.
- Excursion providers and external staff associated with excursions **are not** required to be vaccinated unless otherwise mandated.



Camps

School camps are permitted from Term 2.

- Staff/students are required to show evidence (photo) of a negative RAT taken on the morning of the camp for their attendance to be permitted.
- Staff/students who have recently recovered from COVID-19 (within 12 weeks of the camp) are not required to undertake RAT testing.
- Student permission notices for camps must include:
 - Permission for staff to administer a RAT to any student who has symptoms or meets the close contact definition.
 - Agreement of parent/caregiver to immediately collect their child from camp should they test positive or be identified as a close contact.
 - Agreement of parent/caregiver to be contactable at any time and available to take immediate responsibility for the child in the event that they cannot remain/return to the camp facility.
 - Agreement that asymptomatic students identified as close contacts while on camp self-administer a daily RAT and wear a mask.

A supply of saliva RATs should be provided and used wherever possible to allow for the child to self-administer.

- If staff must assist a student with their RAT the staff member must
 - wear appropriate PPE; and
 - ensure consent for the RAT has been obtained from the child's parent/caregivers.
- Schools should refer to the School Camp COVID-19 Risk Assessment Checklist 2022 when planning for a camp.
- The School Camp COVID-19 Risk Assessment Checklist 2022 can be used to support coordinating staff while the camp is underway.
- A COVID-19 case/outbreak checklist 2022 has been provided to support coordinating staff in the event of a COVID-19 positive case, while on camp.



Professional Learning

Face-to-face professional learning, including events that involve staff from multiple schools/sites, can proceed.

- Offsite venues are encouraged to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place, but these are no longer mandatory.



Travel

Intrastate & interstate travel

- Travel locally and nationally is unrestricted for CEWA staff during their prescribed holiday periods.
- Interstate travel is allowed for CEWA staff if it is in line with core business and approved by either the Deputy Executive Director/Executive Director.

International travel

- International travel for CEWA staff is permitted during their prescribed holiday periods.
- Principals should contact either the Deputy Executive Director or Executive Director to discuss international travel for school-related purposes.



School canteens

School canteens can open, and parents and community volunteers can continue to assist in school canteens.

- Regular cleaning undertaken.
- Schools should review and update as needed their school risk assessment procedures to include COVID-safe principles.
- School canteens may continue to be an exception from the requirement for a COVID Safety Plan.
- Mandatory requirement that all education facilities confirm and record non-employee (such as contractor or regular volunteer) compliance of COVID-19 vaccination status.



Health and hygiene

Arrangements to continue to reduce direct contact, enhance personal hygiene practices, and strengthen cleaning regimes in schools and care services, are to be encouraged.

Each person has a responsibility to protect themselves and others. This is achieved through the ongoing promotion of the following good hygiene principles and practices:

- staff, students and parents must stay home when sick or symptomatic.
- adults maintain physical distancing from other adults, where possible;
- avoiding unnecessary physical contact and physical greetings (e.g. handshakes, hugs);
- covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, using a flexed elbow or tissue;
- disposing of tissues appropriately;
- washing hands regularly for 20 seconds with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitiser, including prior to meal breaks; and
- posters and visible messaging regarding handwashing and cough-sneeze hygiene should be displayed.



Masks

- Asymptomatic close contacts (in Year 7 or above 12 years of age) are required to wear a mask outside of the home at all times.
- The mask mandate no longer applies to staff and students in schools. Students and staff are encouraged to wear a mask should they wish.
- Masks are required on public transport, including public transport taken during the course of school activities, as well as in vehicles provided by schools.



Ventilation

- Use fresh air and well-ventilated spaces where possible.



Cleaning for all schools and care services

- Cleaning guidelines are based on, and continuously reviewed in line with, advice from WA Health.
- Cleaning of high-touch surfaces, including classrooms, meeting rooms and washroom/toilets should be maintained on a daily basis.
- Playgrounds and play equipment should be cleaned once a week.
 - Hand hygiene before and after use of equipment should be encouraged.
- Schools and care services are to ensure water bubblers have good water pressure, handles are cleaned daily and students do not make contact with the water bubblers with their mouths or water bottles.
- Bin waste removal after school daily.

- Computer keyboards and mice, printers, photocopiers and telephones cleaned once a day.
- High-use equipment (e.g. sporting gear) to be cleaned after use.



Visitors on school and care services sites

All visitors must comply with the health and hygiene conditions previously outlined for staff.

- Schools will continue to display signage regarding COVID-19 safe practices.
- All visitors will sign in, according to the school's protocol and show compliance with COVID-19 vaccination, if mandated.
- In accordance with the Disability Standards for Education 2005, schools are required to take reasonable steps to facilitate the provision of support services, such as therapy.
- When considering use of school facilities and resources, principals consider their duty of care of students and staff. These considerations continue alongside COVID-19 practices such as:
 - suitability of, and access to, the facilities to be used;
 - cleaning of all facilities used for meetings
 - cleaning of equipment used for the purposes of therapy; and
 - use of PPE and good hygiene practices.
- Where modifications are required to the existing provision of services, schools must consult with parents about these modifications and limit the disruption caused by the modification.
- Principals should continue to liaise with providers to ensure understanding of, and compliance with CEWA policies and processes.
- Families may be referred to the NDIS COVID support line on 1800 800 110.
- There is a mandatory requirement that all Catholic schools confirm and record non-employees (such as contractors and regular volunteers) compliance of COVID-19 vaccination.
- **Third Party user - facility access**
 - Groups using school facilities under a third party agreement including community and non-community use, outside of school hours care, school uniform shop and canteen, and



playgroups are included in this category and can continue to operate on school sites.

- Third party users can use school premises in accordance with public and social health measures.



Parents/caregivers

Parents and caregivers are permitted on school sites and in classrooms in order to:

- Support school services (canteen/uniform shop).
- Attend both year level and whole school assemblies and special infrequent school events.
- Drop off/pick up.
- Morning reading/activities or to volunteer in classroom activities.
- Attend parent teacher conferences.



Work placement

- Schools should conduct work placement risk assessments to ensure employers comply with WA COVID-19 Health guidelines.
- Continue to confirm that work environments have COVID-19 Safety Plans in place.
- Students are not required to be vaccinated, unless they are on a work placement where they will need to comply with the requirements of that workplace.
- Student work placements, simulated work placements and work experience will be required to follow any public health restrictions applicable to their work placement site.



Medically vulnerable and immunocompromised

Students

- Ensure individual care plans for vulnerable students continue to be managed in accordance with their needs.
- School staff can access support from the students with disability team. For students who cannot attend school due to a family or they themselves having an immune compromised medical condition during COVID-19.
- Vulnerable school students will be supported remotely if school attendance is not possible, through the school in which they are enrolled.

Staff

- Employees who are medically vulnerable or immunocompromised should develop with their medical practitioner a COVID-19 action plan outlining the required controls for their safe return to work.
- If it is unsafe to return to work, alternative arrangements may be supported. Consultation with Employee Relations should take place in this circumstance.



Travel to remote Aboriginal communities

Under the WA Government's [Remote Aboriginal Communities Directions](#), the only people who can enter a remote Aboriginal community are residents of those communities and those who are:

- providing essential services and supplies
- going to work or school there
- entering for family or cultural reasons
- delivering a community program or activity
- entering in an emergency.

These people cannot enter a community if they have COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19, or if they are waiting for a test result or have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.

For more information visit: <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-coronavirus-remote-aboriginal-communities-travel>



School bus services

- Mask wearing remains in place for travel on public transport for persons aged 12 and above.
- Schools should be aware that school buses are unable to transport students when they have symptoms or if they are supposed to be isolating.

Sources of authority

[Education Worker \(Restrictions on Access\) Directions \(No. 5\)](#)

[Booster Vaccination \(Restrictions on Access\) Directions \(No. 2\)](#)

[Proof of Vaccination Directions \(No. 5\)](#)