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Education and Training

COVID-19: Intensive OHS Support

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COVID-19 Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan)

KEY CHANGES IN THIS DOCUMENT ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW

This **COVID-19 Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan)** applies to all Victorian government schools, and outlines key health, safety, and wellbeing hazards that schools should plan for. It links to the strategies described in the School Operations Guide and safety advice for on-site schooling in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19) that are issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, and the central and regional supports available. The latest Coronavirus (COVID 19) advice for schools is available here. This COVID-19 Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan) is required to be implemented at each school to:

address the health and safety issues arising from coronavirus (COVID-19) outline the process for record keeping for all workers and visitors attending the school for longer than 15 minutes address the level of appropriate PPE to be worn outline the process to respond to any suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 The School Operations Guide provides more detailed advice and guidance and should be read together with this COVID-19 Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan).

Principals must consult with their local Health and Safety Representative(s) and Health and Safety Committee(s) (if applicable) to implement the recommended controls to the maximum extent reasonably practicable. In the absence of a school Health and Safety Committee (HSC) or Health and Safety Representative, consultation must occur with school staff. Contact your Regional OHS Support Officer for assistance with local consultation if required. A draft agenda has been developed for HSC meetings to assist in facilitating consultation and identifying and managing risks.

COVIDSafe Roles and Responsibilities Posters must be displayed on the school's OHS noticeboard detailing the shared responsibility of health and safety in schools and the health and safety measures that should be applied in schools. Posters will be available in the communications support pack. The coronavirus

(COVID-19) advice for schools is evolving over time and therefore the OHS guidance and supports will be continually reviewed and updated as required. **Supporting our workforce through expert health, safety and wellbeing services, and delivering on the Safe and Well in Education Strategy and Framework.**

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Your local Regional OHS Support Officers and the Department's OHS Advisory Service continue to be available to provide support to your school, including in implementing the latest guidance, for suggestions on establishing effective controls, or difficulty accessing support resources.

The DET COVID-19 hotline (1800 338 663) is available for all Department staff, contractors and parents 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) for any questions, queries or concerns. Employees may also access the guidance at COVID-19 Advice Line - FAQs.

Employees are encouraged to use EduSafe Plus to report hazards, incidents and mental and physical injuries to ensure effective and timely resolution of OHS issues, as well as escalation for further supports when required. EduSafe reports are being monitored to ensure that support can be provided.

If you or your family need extra support, personalised over-the-phone or video counselling is available 24/7 through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This service is available to all school staff and their immediate families (aged 18 years and over). Staff can book by calling 1300 361 008 or by using the live chat function on the Lifeworks' Australia website.

This plan covers three key areas of risk ("hazard types"):

- Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control)

Occupational Violence and Aggression

Mental Health and Wellbeing **Note:** Working Alone, in isolation or from Home has been removed.

Hazard Type

Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

Staff, students, and others on-site may come into contact with an individual currently unaware that they have coronavirus (COVID-19), and subsequently contract the virus from them.

Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control)

Refer to the [School Operations Guide](#) for advice on supporting COVIDSafe behaviours and activities on school premises. Provide information, training, and instruction on health hygiene. Refer to [maintaining good health hygiene](#) and guidance for wearing [face masks](#) in schools (inclusive of staff, students and visitors), as well [Circulate the latest advice](#) to parents (in multiple languages if appropriate), staff and students (where appropriate), including displaying on-site [signage](#). Consult with staff, including through the elected HSR and/or HSC Committee (if applicable) about the implementation of controls. Discuss implementation issues for on-site service provision,

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Hazard Type

Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

as DHHS [guidance on face masks](#).

including planning recesses Ensure staff complete the [School](#) and lunchtimes, use of infection prevention and control alternate spaces to increase [during](#) coronavirus (COVID-19) physical distancing and supervision of hygiene [elearn module](#).

products. Contact the [OHS Advisory Service](#)

School staff should refer to the for more detailed risk assessments

Department [guidance](#) for the if required in relation to students [use of](#) personal protective with complex needs.

[equipment \(PPE\) in education](#) Refer to [School Operations Guide](#) to determine when [additional](#)

PPE is required and for for guidance on use of shared information on the correct and equipment and other school **safe** use of PPE. activities (e.g. playgrounds, shared Display information and resources and excursions).

[signage](#) at school entrances Refer to [ChemWatch](#) (login

and in communal areas such as required) to access hand sanitiser density signage indicating the safety data sheet. Ensure maximum number of members adequate supervision and safe of the public that may be storage of supplies.

present in the space at a single Record the attendance of time. Posters are available in employees, students, and visitors the communications support who are on site for more than 15 pack minutes. Schools can use existing

Conduct regular inspections of mechanisms such as visitor sign-in the workplace to check that procedures, student attendance recommended risk controls are records and staffing rosters to implemented and working record this information.

effectively. The collected information must

Use teaching strategies and include the person's first name and communications resources to

remind staff and students to **surname**, a contact phone number,

wear face masks (in **Supporting our workforce through expert health, safety and wellbeing services, and delivering on the Safe and Well in Education Strategy and Framework.**

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Hazard Type

Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

the date and time the person

accordance with the guidance attended the school and the **areas** in the School Operations within the buildings that the person Guide) and to practice good attended (attendance records for hand hygiene.

Ensure sign in requirements capital works should be managed are followed by all contractors by the principal contractor). The and visitors attending site. Victorian Government QR Code

Escalate issues to the OHS Service can be the method used to

Advisory Service if issues record attendance. cannot be resolved locally. Follow the advice in the [School Operations Guide](#) to minimise risk. Schools are strongly encouraged to increase outdoor air ventilation whenever contact with delivery personnel is possible and to maximise the use of outdoor learning areas **events/activities on school premises** or environments. *(including Open Days and Sporting events)*

Visitors to schools and events Visitors to school grounds must *(including Open Days and Sporting events)* comply with physical distancing and face mask recommendations

- The **density limit** of 1 person set out in the [School Operations Guide](#) per 2 square metres should be applied to any school spaces accessible to the public. The density limit applies to all persons in the space, including when planning for a safe event on school premises. For these public spaces, signage must be displayed to indicate the maximum number of persons event on a school site is **publicly advertised**.

Schools must also refer to the [Public Events Framework](#) when an event on a school site is **publicly advertised**. **Supporting our workforce through expert [health, safety and wellbeing services](#), and delivering on the [Safe and Well in Education Strategy and Framework](#).**

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Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

For information and training relating to the correct use of PPE, school staff should refer to the [guidance for staff on the use of PPE in education settings](#). Staff are also

encouraged to watch the education [video](#) on donning and doffing PPE. Refer to [personal hygiene products](#), including [sourcing](#) and [procurement tips](#) for high demand [items](#). Refer to the advice in the [School Operations Guide](#) with respect to outdoor air ventilation and use of outdoor spaces. Physical distancing should be encouraged where possible, and [density limits](#) for areas accessible by the public be implemented in accordance with the [School](#)

[Operations Guide](#) **Excursions** (*off school premises*)

Refer to the [School Operations Guide](#) and [Excursion Policy](#) on PAL for guidance on process and requirements related to excursion planning.

Refer to the [School Operations Guide](#) in relation to requirements for **seated events involving external visitors**. Record keeping for contact tracing purposes is **required** for public events in school environments. Schools are strongly encouraged to use the free [Victorian Government QR Code Service](#) for attendees to 'Check-in' to school events. Refer to the [School Operations Guide](#) for guidance on the use of face masks in schools. School Principals should ensure appropriate cleaning requirements are in place, including the timing of any additional professional cleaning services required. **Excursions** (*off school premises*)

School staff and students should ensure they continue to practise appropriate safety measures while at the external venues, such as physical distancing, regular hand hygiene, and wearing a face mask in line with health advice.

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Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

Refer to the [School Operations Guide](#) and [School Camps During COVID-19](#) webpage on guidance for participating school groups on health and safety measures recommended to manage risks associated with COVID-19.

Most excursion venues are required to use electronic record keeping for contact tracing purposes in line with current public health directives. An [electronic or hard copy](#) list of staff and student's first name and surname including contact numbers should be provided to the venue at the time of the excursion.

Staff and students may contract disease by touching surfaces contaminated with coronavirus (COVID-19), following exposure from someone with the virus.

Refer to the advice with respect to [environmental cleaning services](#) and [access to cleaning supplies and services](#) For advice about the use of playgrounds please refer to [School Operations Guide](#) Schools should refer to the [COVIDSafe routine cleaning guidelines](#) for advice on cleaning requirements.

Purchase of supplies through the State Purchase Contract supplier, Complete Office Supplies (COS), or retail outlets. Schools may continue to use their usual supplier: Schools should contact the Department at cleaning@education.vic.gov.au.

Vulnerable workforce (higher risk of serious illness) .

Refer to the advice in the [School Operations Guide](#)

Ensure consultation with your elected Health and Safety Representative and staff and incorporate into workforce planning.

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Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

A suspected case may occur among staff and students

Refer to the managing suspected cases advice in the [School Operations Guide](#).

Also see the advice in the Operations Guide [regarding management](#) of unwell students [and staff](#).

Circulate expectations to the school community and communicate the protocols to staff.

Refer to the [communications support pack](#) for resources to communicate with your school community. Stay in contact with affected staff or families remotely.

A confirmed case (or a close contact of a confirmed case) may occur among staff, students, or the school community.

Refer to the managing suspected cases advice in the [School Operations Guide](#). Also see the advice in the Operations Guide [regarding management](#) of [unwell students](#)

[and staff](#). Contact the Department by calling 1800 126 126 to report an IRIS incident alert if a student or staff member tests positive to COVID 19. Schools do not need to take further action until directed to do so. The Department will notify WorkSafe on behalf of the affected school.

Circulate expectations to the school community and communicate the protocols to staff. Refer to the [communications support pack](#) for resources to communicate with your school community. Stay in contact with affected staff or families remotely.

WorkSafe may be in contact with [the affected](#) school to ensure the **Supporting our workforce through expert [health, safety and wellbeing](#) services, and delivering on the [Safe and Well in Education Strategy and Framework](#).**

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Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

[school](#) is following the health and safety guidance outlined in this document and has implemented their COVID-19 Safety Management Plan. Please contact the OHS Advisory Service (1300 074 715) for support in managing occupational health and safety matters. **Please refer** to the [Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines](#) for advice on cleaning and disinfection when a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified in a Victorian Government School.

Non-DET contractors and their staff may need to enter school grounds to carry out work.

Refer to the advice in the [School Operations Guide](#) regarding visitors and contractors attending school sites

Schools should ensure contractors (such as Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs)) receive appropriate induction.

Hazard Type

Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

Occupational Violence and Aggression

Online, over the phone or other remote threatening or aggressive behaviour by students, parents/carers, school staff or other members of school community.

Refer to the [Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy](#), which covers online and on-site behaviour.

Ensure on-site staff are ready to manage the students that will be attending and that student supports, including Behaviour Support Plans, are up to date.

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Hazard Type

Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

Consider whether any student

If wearing a mask when working supports, including Behaviour with students at risk of grabbing Support Plans, require revision in or pulling it, use a mask that will On-site violence, bullying or consultation with Student Support **release** easily, e.g. with hooks harassment by students, parents/ Services.

over the ears rather than ties carers, school staff or other members

Also, refer to Creating Respectful

around the back of the head. of school community.

and Safe School Communities

Regularly and explicitly teach (including template Statement of students not to touch or attempt Values), the Respect for School to remove others' masks. Staff local policy template, and Set expectations for behaviour resources available through with the school community and Respectful Relationships and promote appropriate ways for Schoolwide Positive Behaviour parents to raise their concerns. Support

Discuss extra supports or Proactive and open

strategies for staff who engage communications with parents and with anyone known to present a Staff experiencing stress or anxiety

carers is important to prevent an risk. stemming from exposure to increasing escalation in behaviours. Refer to

Encourage staff to report onsite or online occupational violence

Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for

incidents in eduSafe and IRIS and aggression from parents.

parents, carers and guardians, and as appropriate, de-brief, and

to the communications support. Many parents/carers are likely to be seek escalated support (e.g. anxious during this time).

through EAP) if required. Escalated referrals will be managed by the Employee Wellbeing Response Team, and Complex Matter Support Team. Refer to the [mental health and wellbeing advice on the OHSMS](#)

COVID-19 [Employee supports](#). Supporting our workforce through expert [health, safety and wellbeing services](#), and delivering on the [Safe and Well in Education Strategy](#) and [Framework](#).

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Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

[page](#), and the relevant [policy and procedure](#).

Hazard Type

Hazard Description

Recommended Controls

Examples of practical solutions

Leaders managing the anxiety and mental health of others – including students, staff, and members of the school community

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Refer to the [mental health and wellbeing advice on the OHSMS COVID-19 Employee supports page](#), and the relevant [policy and procedure](#). Encourage staff to access

MyWellbeing Program by contacting [employee.wellbeing.response.team](mailto:employee.wellbeing.response.team@education.vic.gov.au)

[@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:employee.wellbeing.response.team@education.vic.gov.au). Refer to the [Return to Work Coordinator Portal](#). Refer to the Principal Health and Wellbeing services on the OHSMS

Consult (check-in) with your staff on how they are feeling with the current situation, encourage managers to be flexible. Have regular conversations to provide as much clarity and flexibility as possible about tasks, priorities and the way work can be delivered (e.g. pre recorded lessons). Allow time for staff to access the relevant information, instruction and training

Staff experiencing changes to workload (increase/decrease) from modifications in tasks and priorities.

Balancing non-work-related demands (e.g. caring responsibilities).

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Examples of practical solutions

Staff experiencing disengagement and low morale regarding clarity of tasks, team roles and evolving priorities.

Staff experiencing uncertainty, stress, anxiety from the transition to an altered working environment

COVID-19 Employee support page. Refer to DET Flexible Work Policy. Refer to School Operations Guide Video-counselling is available via the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all staff and their immediate family (aged 18 years and over)

Encourage staff to use EAP, for themselves and their immediate family, as well as the other supports and resources available, and, promote the ability to access individualised supports through a referral to *MyWellbeing*, by contacting *employee.wellbeing.response.team@education.vic.gov.au*

Staff experiencing uncertainty and anxiety about the COVID-19 risks to their personal health (especially if working onsite).

Staff experiencing isolation and changes in levels of support from leaders and colleagues as a result of the changed arrangements.

Ensure there are adjusted return to work strategies for people on sick leave or Workers' Compensation leave

Aggravation of stress caused by pre existing conditions (e.g. existing mental health conditions, disabilities, vulnerable cohorts, and staff on leave, including Workers' Compensation or sick leave, etc.).

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