



## Preparing for COVID-19 in Schools

Based on Queensland Health's *Principles for preparing for COVID-19 in Schools* (attached) and current close contact protocols, the following is likely to apply to these scenarios (provided we have no further or different advice directly from Queensland Health or the local Public Health Unit). This is the procedure we will be asking both staff and students to follow at the College:

### ***Student or staff member is on site and learns they are a close contact of a person diagnosed with COVID-19***


- As soon as the student or staff member is notified that they are a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, they should isolate in a safe area (in the case of a student) and return home as soon as possible (after making arrangements with a parent or care giver in the case of a student).
- The student or staff member should follow the relevant [QH protocols for quarantine](#) and notify the school if they are diagnosed with COVID-19.
- If they test positive to COVID-19, they will follow the relevant [QH advice](#) and [QH protocols for diagnosed cases of COVID-19](#).
- The student or staff member can end quarantine in line with relevant [QH protocols for ending quarantine](#).
- In limited circumstances an asymptomatic close contact staff member may be able to come to school during the quarantine period to work if they (and the employer) meet all the [critically essential worker requirements](#).

### ***Student or staff member becomes unwell at school with flu-like symptoms***

- If symptoms occur at school, the student or staff member should be isolated from other members of the school in an appropriate area and sent home as soon as possible (by contacting a parent or care giver in the case of a student).
- They should seek medical assistance and undertake testing in line with medical and [QH advice](#).
- If they test positive to COVID-19, they will follow the relevant [QH advice](#) and [QH protocols for diagnosed cases of COVID-19](#).
- If the student or staff member is not diagnosed with COVID-19 (but are still unwell) they should stay home until their symptoms have resolved.

### ***Student or staff member who was recently on the school campus notifies their school that they have been diagnosed with COVID-19***

- Students or staff who are awaiting test results should be isolating at home until they receive their result. Therefore, if you are notified that they have tested positive they should already be at home and not on campus.

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- When COVID-19 cases occur within the school, the school will notify our community (particularly in the early phases of managing cases during February 2022) to advise staff and families that:
    - There has been a COVID-19 case at the school (keeping all details confidential)
    - To monitor for symptoms and to stay home if unwell
    - If symptoms occur at school, the student or staff member should be isolated from other members of the school and sent home as soon as possible.
    - To get tested if unwell
  - This advice will be provided each time a case is identified at the school, as part of our regular updates to staff and families (via letter through our App and email).
  - A student or staff member who has tested positive to COVID-19 will follow the relevant [QH advice](#) and [QH protocols for diagnosed cases of COVID-19](#).
  - They may end their isolation period in line with the [QH protocols for ending isolation](#).

# Principles for preparing for COVID-19 in schools

January 2022

## Guiding principles

### Encourage vaccination to reduce opportunities for COVID-19 to circulate in schools

- To reduce the occurrence of COVID-19 in a school community, all students should get vaccinated where possible. Family members of the school community should also be encouraged to get vaccinated.
- COVID-19 transmission is less likely to occur from a person who is vaccinated and provides better protection against a person becoming seriously ill if they contract the virus. This is particularly important for vulnerable members of the school community.
- There is currently no vaccination requirement that impacts on a student's ability to attend school.
- Workers at schools are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19:
  - by 17 December 2021 – received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and
  - by 23 January 2022 – received at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine
- The vaccination requirement for workers at schools includes any person who works, volunteers, undertaking a work placement or otherwise provides services at the school. For example, teachers, administration officers, gardeners, maintenance contractors, cleaners, presenters, tuckshop assistants, student teachers and teacher aides.

### Reduce the spread of COVID-19 through COVID safe measures – operate under a COVID Safe Plan

- Each school should operate under a COVID-19 safe plan which includes COVID Safe Measures and outbreak preparations including:
  - Establish a COVID-19 Response team for COVID-19 planning and leadership within the school community.
  - Public health and social measures:
    - Practicing good hand and respiratory hygiene and providing education and reminders for staff and students;
    - Processes to implement and monitor physical distancing throughout the school including for example, student desks, lunch-rooms, canteens, student drop off/pick up areas, assemblies;
    - Regular cleaning protocols;
    - Ensuring face masks are worn by workers and students over 12 years of age, when required by a [public health direction](#);

- Instructions on what to do if a student, worker or a member of their household is sick with COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19;
  - Consider altering routines to reduce mixing of students for example introducing class bubbles or other ways of cohorting the school community;
  - Consideration of room ventilation or use of outdoor learning spaces.
- Prepare for continuity of teaching and learning during an outbreak, isolation or quarantine, including online learning and preparation of translated (including AUSLAN) resources as required
  - Encouraging check-in app use for contractors, volunteers and visitors to the school.
  - Processes to ensure students, staff and visitors who have COVID-19 symptoms do not attend the school. Schools should have a process for screening students and staff for COVID-19 like symptoms daily before commencement of school eg. self-assessment at home and a self-report check during roll call. Students and/or staff who become unwell with symptoms at school should be isolated from other students and sent home as soon as possible.
  - Communication within the school community:
    - COVID-19 information can change quickly during an outbreak. Schools should processes for an easy, fast way to communicate with all staff, students and families (for example, a set email list or newsletter that is regularly updated).

## Keep accurate and up to date attendance and enrolment lists for students

Accurate information is essential for rapid identification of risk and communication with staff, students, families and visitors.

- Maintain up to date details of students including which parent or carer they live with.
- Keep readily available and up to date class / stream student and staff lists, including rooms/areas occupied and the time duration of the class.

## Managing COVID-19 in the school and/or the community

- When COVID-19 cases occur at the school, schools should implement the measures in their COVID Safe Plan and advise staff and families that:
  - There has been a COVID-19 case at the school (remember to keep the details of the case confidential)
  - To monitor for symptoms and to stay home if unwell
  - If symptoms occur at school, the student should be isolated from other students and sent home as soon as possible.
  - To get tested if unwell
- This advice may be provided each time a case is present at the school, or as part of the school's regular updates to staff and families.

- A school will not be asked to close by the local Public Health Unit unless in exceptional circumstances.

## School camps

- If a school decides to continue with school camps, the school should ensure there are records of which students shared accommodation.
- Cohorting of students should occur where possible. If a student becomes symptomatic at the school camp, the student should be isolated away from other students, arrangements should be made for the child to return home as soon as possible and to undergo a COVID-19 test.
- If the student receives a positive result for COVID-19, other students who have shared accommodation OR an enclosed communal space (e.g. Dining hall) for more than four hours, will be required to quarantine as a household-like contact.

## Quarantine and Isolation

- If a staff member or student tests positive for COVID-19 they will be required to isolate at home and cannot attend school while isolating. More information on isolation is available.
- If a student's household tests positive for COVID-19, then the student will be required to quarantine as a close contact and cannot attend school while in quarantine. More information on quarantine is available.
- If a staff member's household tests positive for COVID-19, then the staff member is required to quarantine as a close contact. As education is a critical industry, the staff member's employer may deem their role as critically essential and the staff member may be able to leave quarantine to undertake the critically essential work. A number of requirements must be met before the staff member can leave quarantine.

## Resources

- [Queensland Health Alert Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Queensland Government COVID-19 update](#)
- [Department of Education COVID-19 website](#)