

Operating in a COVIDSafe way – guidance for Community Language Schools

Community Language Schools (CLS) are able to resume face-to-face teaching on-site.

CLS **operating from government schools** must operate in accordance with the *COVIDSafe principles for schools* set out below and **all CLS** must follow Department of Health (DH) advice. Further information is available on the [Health and safety advice for all Victorian schools](#) webpage. In addition, this document summarises the key health and safety measures that must be incorporated into the COVIDSafe planning.

COVIDSafe Plan

Each CLS must have a COVIDSafe Plan in place, which addresses the health and safety issues arising from COVID 19. Further information and templates are available on the [COVIDSafe Plan](#) webpage.

COVIDSafe principles for schools

Reinforce COVIDSafe	Create COVIDSafe	Promote COVIDSafe	Respond to COVID-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home when unwell • Practise good hygiene • Ensure physical distancing (1.5m) • Wear a face mask* when required or recommended • Avoid interactions in enclosed spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make hand hygiene easy and accessible • Keep surfaces clean and implement regular environmental cleaning • Promote outdoor air ventilation and do not have air conditioners on recirculate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move activities outdoors where possible, weather permitting • Adapt, modify or defer higher-risk activities <p><i>Not currently required with low community transmission:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Limit school access to outside visitors where possible</i> • <i>Reduce mixing between groups</i> • <i>Create workforce bubbles</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep records and act quickly if someone becomes unwell • Use personal protective equipment where indicated • Clean and disinfect appropriately if a staff member or student has been unwell at school • Manage individual risk

* These items denote Victorian Government [COVIDSafe principle for business](#) and may require adaptation for the school context

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Health and safety measures

CLS must follow the following health and safety measures, regardless of their premises (Victorian school facility, privately owned facility, other rented facility, etc).

Keeping records	Maintain records of people that visit the educational premises 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. The Victorian Government has developed a QR Code Service which is free to use and can assist with record keeping requirements
Cleaning	<p>Frequent and regular cleaning and disinfectant of shared spaces, including high touch communal items such as door handles and desks. CLS operating on school facilities must meet the cleaning requirements outlined in the COVIDSafe routine cleaning guideline, including ensuring any school facilities, including bathrooms, are cleaned prior to the next school day.</p> <p>This will require CLS working with the school's principal to ensure appropriate cleaning requirements are in place, including the timing of any additional professional cleaning services required. For further information see COVIDSafe routine cleaning guideline.</p>
Physical distancing	1.5 metres distance between staff and students should be maintained <u>where possible</u> . Density limits do not apply in classrooms and other spaces for the purposes of student use, including corridors and other shared areas. Density limits of one person per two square metres apply to staff areas such as staff lunchrooms and areas accessed by the public, such as reception areas.
Personal protective equipment (PPE)	CLS must ensure that staff are familiar with the appropriate use of PPE (see attached PPE Guidance for education settings). This guidance includes a video link on how to safely use PPE. CLS must source and have available appropriate PPE for staff and students.
Personal hygiene products	CLS should purchase personal hygiene products (such as soap and hand sanitiser) if this is not readily available at the facility. CLS should actively monitor cleaning and hygiene supplies, and reorder to ensure a constant supply.

Hand hygiene	Hand hygiene remains one of the critical measures to limit the spread of COVID 19. Hands should be cleaned with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or washed with soap and water regularly for 20 seconds.
Face masks	Please see the Department of Health (DH) website for the latest face mask requirements, as advice may change at short notice.
At risk cohorts (staff and students)	Staff or students most at risk of severe illness as a result of COVID-19 should individually assess appropriateness for on-site classes with support from their medical practitioner. These assessments should be reviewed alongside notable changes to the COVID-19 situation in Victoria. Further information can be found in the attached Advice for schools and families on medical vulnerability during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic .
Large gatherings (for example awards ceremonies)	If an event is held with external guests (parents/carers/visitors) then the overall attendee limit (inclusive of guests, staff and students) must be based on available floor space of the venue; with the density limits of one person per two square metres applied.
Sharing food (celebration cakes etc.)	Sharing of food is not recommended. Where this occurs, individual portions should be encouraged alongside strict hand hygiene.

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Staff meetings and professional development	Face-to-face professional development and staff meetings can recommence. The density limit of one person per two square metres should apply to spaces used by staff for these activities, and facemasks must be worn as per current requirements unless a lawful exception applies. Virtual alternatives should continue to be considered where appropriate and practical.
Aerosol generating activities (for example singing)	Musical instruments may be used, and group singing is permitted without specified limits. However, CLS must consider and implement measures that may prevent or significantly reduce the risk of infection transmission as outlined by the Department of Health's COVID-19 transmission from air-circulating, wind blowing devices and activities . Measures include physical distancing, moving outdoors, increasing ventilation, reducing the number of people, or reducing the length of time of the activity.
Routine First Aid	Physical distancing is not practical when providing direct care. In this situation standard precautions, including hand hygiene, are important for infection control. Standard precautions are advised when coming into contact with someone to provide routine care and/or assistance (for example, the use of gloves for nappy changing, toileting or feeding). Standard precautions as per the Department's Infectious Diseases policy and related policies should be adopted when providing First Aid. For example, use gloves and an apron when dealing with blood or body fluids/substances. Always wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after performing routine care or first aid.

<p>Managing an unwell student or staff member</p>	<p>It is important that any staff member or student who becomes unwell while at school gets tested and returns home immediately. There are sensible steps schools can take while a student awaits collection by a parent or carer as a precaution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and students experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, such as fever, cough or sore throat, or loss or change in sense of taste or smell 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. It is not suitable for an unwell student to travel home unsupervised. • Where staff or students are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, 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 attached PPE Guidance for education settings. • 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 attached PPE Guidance for education settings. • 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 COVID-19.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell, they should contact the parent or carer to discuss concerns and take a precautionary approach by requesting the parent or carer collect their child from school. • Staff or students experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should be advised to get tested, and stay home until they receive a test result see Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic • Where staff or students have been tested, they must isolate at home until they receive their test result. • Staff and students are 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. If they have been tested for COVID-19, they should also wait for a negative test result. Staff continue to be required to present a medical certificate in accordance with personal leave policy for periods of absence on personal leave. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any areas accessed by the student should be cleaned appropriately. If a student spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), clean surfaces immediately with disinfectant wipes while wearing gloves.
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Managing a suspected or confirmed case of COVID 19	<p>CLS must document steps to take in to manage a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in their COVIDSafe Plan.</p> <p>If the CLS operates from a school premises, the CLS should notify the school immediately.</p> <p>DET has comprehensive procedures in place with the Department of Health to manage suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in schools.</p>
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