

Return to school – Term 1, 2022



The school year will start on time on 9 February 2022 for Tasmanian Government students. A safe learning environment is our top priority. This is our plan to return to school safely and make every day of learning count.

Big picture *(national approach)*

Our planning aligns with a national approach to managing COVID-19 in schools and early childhood services.

1. Schools are first to open and last to close. Face-to-face learning is a priority.
2. COVID-safe behaviours will be practised at all times.
3. No vulnerable child or child of an essential worker will be turned away.
4. Managing COVID-19 cases will be informed by public health advice.
5. Schools and early childhood services will be equipped with public health advice.
6. The health and wellbeing of children and staff is our top priority.

From 9 February ▶ Week 1 ▶ Week 2 ▶ Week 3 ▶ Week 4 ▶ Week 5 ▶ Review and continue future planning

Early childhood

Childcare programs and Out of School Hours Care will operate with COVID-safe measures in place.

Primary schools

Childcare programs and Out of School Hours Care will operate with COVID-safe measures in place. Face-to-face learning will continue with COVID-safe measures in place.

Secondary schools

Face-to-face learning will continue with COVID-safe measures in place. Year 11 and 12 students will have additional support through Virtual Learning Tasmania and online tutorials. Vocational placements and school-based apprenticeships will continue with COVID-safe measures in place.

Vulnerable students

Individual learning plans for students with disability that have complex health needs will be updated if required by schools in consultation with parents/carers.

We will continually monitor the situation and make changes as necessary. This may mean moving to online learning, if required, on a school/classroom basis.

Regular school activities - like school photos, music and swimming lessons and excursions - will continue in a COVID-safe manner. However, if the situation changes, this will be re-evaluated on a school-by-school basis.

How we'll manage COVID-19 cases



Testing for COVID-19

Each student will be provided with an initial supply of two rapid antigen tests (RATs) before school starts, then with two RATs per week for each student to use if they have symptoms. All school staff will be provided with two RATs to use if they have symptoms.



Close contact

Similar to other illnesses, if there is a case in your child's classroom, monitor your child closely for symptoms. If they're unwell, stay at home and get tested. Schools will communicate directly with families if there's a case at school.



Managing cases

Public health will work closely with schools if there are increased cases in classrooms.



Learning from home

If your child needs to isolate at home, their learning will be supported online. No child will fall behind, and the core curriculum will be delivered at home. We are prepared for any learning at home periods, and our workforce planning will ensure all learners have access to a teacher.



Workforce planning

Proactive strategies are in place to ensure there are enough staff in schools. If needed, relief teachers, recently retired teachers or teachers on long service leave will be called on.

COVID-safe measures in place



The most important action you can take is that if your child is unwell, please keep them home and get tested.

Vaccination: Children aged 5+ years are encouraged to be vaccinated - vaccination is not mandatory for a child to attend school. All Department of Education staff, including volunteers and contractors, are vaccinated.

Face masks: All adults will wear face masks, however, teachers may remove their masks if required to assist clear communication when teaching (for example, to meet the needs of a student with disability). Primary school students do not need to wear face masks. Secondary school students must wear face masks. Medical exceptions apply. All schools are well stocked.

Ventilation: Open windows and air purifiers will be used in classrooms.

Outdoor learning: Schools will take advantage of outdoor learning opportunities.

Physical distancing: All adults will keep a physical distance of 1.5 metres from each other.

Hygiene practices: Regular handwashing and sanitising will continue.

Cleaning: Frequent cleaning will continue, particularly on high-touch surfaces.

Safe site management: Non-essential visitors will be limited, and schools will regularly review their COVID safety plans.

Groups: Mixing of students and staff will be limited where possible.

► **Access the detailed operational plan at education.tas.gov.au/COVID-19. This plan applies to Tasmanian Government schools.**