



# COVID-19 Policy for Term 4

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline to parents, carers and students how our school will be managing risk and other operational matters relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) during Term 4, 2020.

Burwood East Special Developmental School (BESDS) is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for our students and staff. We ask for all members of the school community to follow this policy to enable us to provide the safest possible environment during this time. We all have a role to play in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in Victoria.

## Background

BESDS is following the advice for schools from the Department of Education and Training which can be found on the Department's website at: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

## Scope

This policy applies to everyone in the BESDS community engaging in on-site learning or visiting school grounds. This includes all members of staff (principals, teachers and education support staff), all parents/carers who interact with the school and all students. It also includes visitors to the school. Information specific to staff only and not directly relevant to students and their families is not included in this policy.

## Details

### Term 4 priorities

We will continue to have in place measures to protect the health and safety of students, staff, families and the community. In addition to the health and safety measures outlined in this policy, we will be focused on three key priorities in Term 4:

#### **Mental health and wellbeing**

Our highest priority will be the wellbeing, particularly the mental health, of every student and member of staff. This means effectively using all available resources to support our students and enabling staff to access the relevant support services.

#### **Learning and excellence**

Some of our students have thrived in the remote and flexible learning environment, others have maintained their learning progress, and some have fallen behind, despite their best efforts and those of their families and teachers..

## Transitions

We will make every effort to ensure successful transitions for children moving from kindergarten into Prep, the Grade 6s moving into Year 7, the Year 12s moving into employment or further education and training.

## Health and safety at school

Our school follows the Department and Victorian Chief Health Officer's advice and requirements in relation to health and safety. The health and safety measures relating to students are outlined below. These health and safety measures are regularly reviewed in line with the changing context of COVID-19 in Victoria. As a result, as Term 4 proceeds, some measures may no longer be required and/or new measures may be introduced.

### *Unwell students (including students who have been tested)*

- Unwell students **must** stay home.
- Where students have been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) they are required to isolate at home and must not attend school until they are both symptom free and have received their results (provided the result is negative).

### *Managing unwell students at school*

- Students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough, chills or sweats, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, loss of smell or taste, will be supervised in an appropriate space and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible. Urgent medical attention will be sought where needed. Unwell students will not be permitted to travel home unsupervised.
- Health care plans, for students with complex medical needs, should be updated by parents in collaboration with an appropriately qualified medical professional. Updates should be provided to the school regarding additional advice on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell in the first instance we will contact the parent/carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the student, and we will take a precautionary approach, requesting the parent/carer to collect their child if concerns remain. A staff member may take the temperature of the student, where appropriate, to support decision-making. Gloves will be worn for the purpose of taking a temperature.
- Parent/carers of students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) will be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps. Students should not return until symptoms resolve.

### *Managing a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19*

The Department has comprehensive procedures in place with the Department of Health and Human Services to manage suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools. In accordance with these procedures:

- We will contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 to seek advice if a student or staff member:
  - is a confirmed case
  - has been in close contact with a confirmed case
- We will inform the Department's Incident Support and Operations Centre who will support the school to make an [IRIS incident alert](#).

DHHS defines 'close contact' as someone who has either:

- had at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- shared a closed space for more than two hours with someone who is a confirmed case.

#### *Face coverings*

- All school staff on site will wear face coverings unless exempt due to a medical condition or disability but may remove their face covering when teaching students.
- Students with a disability are exempt from the requirement to wear a face covering. They are welcome to do so if they wish to wear one.
- Students should bring their own face masks to school.
- Parents are also required to wear face coverings whenever they leave the house, including for a school drop off and pick up. When travelling in a car alone, or only with members of their household, they do not need to wear a mask.

#### *Physical distancing*

- Wherever possible we will encourage and support physical distancing of students however the Department and Victorian Chief Health Officer has acknowledged that physical distancing in schools is practicably difficult to achieve and has not mandated this practice.
- Parents are asked to observe physical distancing requirements (1.5 metres) whenever dropping off or collecting students from school and must not congregate at the school gate.

#### *Reducing mixing between student groups*

In a specialist setting it is not possible to guarantee that students will not mix with other students. We do, however, endeavour to maintain and educate our primary and secondary students to stay in their own play spaces at recess and lunchtime. In addition, class groups will only join together for the purposes of an educational activity that cannot be delivered in another way.

#### *Hand, food and drink hygiene*

- Hand sanitiser is available in classrooms and students will be educated on the importance of this health and safety measure. Hand washing with soap and water is also encouraged.
- All people on school grounds must undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet.
- Where shared equipment is necessary, students will be required to exercise strict hand hygiene before and after use.
- Students should continue to bring their own water bottle for use and refilling at school.
- Students must not share their food.

#### *Air ventilation*

- Wherever possible, we will increase fresh air into indoor spaces and maximise the use of outdoor learning areas and environments.

#### *Temperature checks*

- Mandatory temperature testing of all students is no longer required. However, we will continue with this as we feel it is an important visual reminder to students, maintains pro-social and cooperative behaviours that students have learned and also recognises that temperature checks may be reintroduced if the current levels of community transmission in Victoria increase.

### *Health, Wellbeing and inclusions Workforces at school*

- Health and wellbeing staff (such as Student Support Services, Koorie Engagement Support Officers, Visiting Teachers and school nurses) will continue to provide support to students as required.

### *Record keeping for contact tracing*

- To support contact tracing, we are required to keep a record of the name, contact details, date and time of attendance of all staff, students and visitors who attend on-site for more than 15 minutes.
- We are also required to record the areas of the school the person attended.

### *COVID-19 Safety Management Plan*

- Our school follows and implements the Department's COVID-19 Safety Management Plan, available at: [COVID19 Safety Management Plan](#).

## Attendance

Normal attendance notification requirements apply for all students.

Exceptions to attendance may exist for medically vulnerable students. The Acting Deputy Chief Health Officer has advised that decisions regarding school attendance should be informed by the nature of a child or young person's condition, its severity and intensity of required treatment. In most cases, the presence of common conditions of childhood, such as asthma, epilepsy or Type 1 diabetes, should not preclude a student from attending face-to-face learning.

In keeping with expert public health advice, some students may be at higher risk for severe outcomes or complications of coronavirus (COVID-19), for example those with chronic medical conditions. Any student with a chronic medical condition should seek advice from their medical practitioner about attending school on site at different stages in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Our school records student attendance in accordance with the Department's [Attendance Policy](#).

## School assemblies

School assemblies will not take place face-to-face but instead may occur using virtual systems such as WebEx.

## Camps and excursions

- Camps and excursions cannot take place. We will inform parents and students if this changes over the course of Term 4.

## Sport and recreation

Based on the Department and Chief Medical Officer advice and requirements as at 5 October 2020:

- Playground equipment can be used by students. However students should practice hand hygiene before and after use.
- Wherever possible students will participate in physical education or recreational play outdoors and will be discouraged from engaging in contact sport. Our outdoor covered courtyard area is a suitable, well-ventilated space for activities in the event of rain.

## Music and food technology

- Choirs and wood/wind/brass instrument use is not permitted in schools except where required for essential assessments
- Food preparation can continue with frequent hand hygiene and no sharing of food

## Visitors and school tours

Under Department and Victorian Chief Health Officer advice and requirements visitors to school grounds must be limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations (e.g. student health and wellbeing services, cleaning and maintenance workers). This means:

- Parent volunteers must not attend school
- Parent-teacher information sessions and interviews will be conducted remotely online
- On-site school tours for prospective students and their families will not be conducted unless an exemption has been granted by the Principal to support essential educational planning and decision-making for students with disability or highly complex needs.

Visitors to school grounds must comply with physical distancing and face covering requirements and practise good hand hygiene.

## School buses and transport

The Students with Disabilities Transport Program will continue to operate as normal.

Students should practice hand hygiene before and after catching any form of public or school transport.

Physical distancing should be practised by both parents and students at bus stops, interchange locations and train stations.

## Interschool activities

All interschool activities that involve on-site attendance by students from other schools will be cancelled.

## Communication between parents/carers and our school

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school leadership team to discuss any concerns or areas of need in regard to their child's learning, health, wellbeing or access to teaching and learning resources.

## Cleaning and facilities management

At our school we receive:

- Continue extension of routine environmental cleaning, including progressive cleaning throughout the day to ensure that risks of transmission are reduced for high-touch services. See Department information about [Access to cleaning supplies and services](#).

## Further information and resources

- [DET Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website:](#)
  - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/coronavirus-advice-schools.aspx>
- [DHHS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website:](#)
  - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- [DET Infectious Diseases Policy:](#)

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/infectious-diseases/policy>
- [DET Health Care Needs Policy:](#)
  - <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/health-care-needs/policy>
- [Talking to your child about COVID-19:](#)
  - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/covid-19/talking-to-your-child-during-coronavirus.docx>
- Department of Education and Training COVID-19 Advice Line – 1800 338 663
- Department of Health and Human Services Coronavirus hotline – 1800 675 398 (24 hours, 7 days a week)

## Review

This policy was last updated 05/10/2020 and will be reviewed on a regular basis as the situation changes.