



COVID Update Term 2, 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

We have received updated COVID-19 guidelines from NSW Health and Catholic Schools NSW following the press release by the Health Minister, Mr Brad Hazzard on Wednesday April 22. The following information provides a summary of the updated protocols. I ask that you familiarise yourself with the guidelines and thank you for your anticipated support in assisting the College in mitigating as much as possible the risk of infection at school by following these protocols.

1. Guidelines for close contacts

The new guidelines are designed to enable all staff and students who are close contacts and have no symptoms to attend school. Students who test positive for COVID-19 or are unwell or showing COVID-19 symptoms must continue to isolate at home.

Close contacts attending school will need to adhere to the following in addition to the NSW Health guidelines:

- Parents must notify the College if they are intending for their son to attend school under this provision. This can be done by phoning the College on 4321 6400 or via email at info@stedwards.nsw.edu.au
- They should assist their son in administering a daily RAHT and return a negative result each morning before attending school for 5 school days.
- Students must wear a mask indoors except when eating or exercising.
- If any student shows any COVID-19 symptoms whilst at school, parents/carers will be contacted, and the student will need to be picked from the front office. They should remain at home whilst they still have symptoms.
- No student or staff member identified as a close contact will be permitted to participate in overnight excursions, including school camps.
- No students on work placement identified as a close contact will be permitted to attend settings identified as high risk by NSW Health (healthcare, aged care, disability care or correctional facilities)
- Any visitor to a school site who is a close contact is required to advise the school that they are a close contact before they come on site. These visitors should conduct a daily RAHT and return a negative result before attending. They must also wear a mask indoors at all times.

2. Rapid Antigen Home Testing (RAHT)

Additional RAHT's will be dispatched to schools from Tuesday 26 April to support staff and families to comply with daily testing requirements for close contacts returning to school. The delivery is expected to be completed within three weeks. This supply will contain one multipack of at least five RAHT kits for every student and staff member. Kits can be used for symptomatic testing or for daily testing as part of the close contact requirements. Kits will be sent home with students once they have been received.

I thank families for your support with this protocol and provide an important reminder that the testing regime is a precautionary measure. The test results are sometimes inaccurate, can lag in detection time and rely on being correctly administered. It is important that families carefully monitor their sons for signs and symptoms and do not send their son to school if either they test positive or are displaying signs and symptoms.

A further reminder also of the need to notify the College of a positive test result via the link on the College Website at <https://www.stedwards.nsw.edu.au/>.





3. Vaccinations

NSW Health continues to strongly suggest that vaccinations for COVID-19 and flu are a way of protecting yourself, your family and the community ahead of winter 2022. Vaccination is a safe and effective way to give your immune system a helping hand against viral illnesses.

- All staff (including volunteers and providers) on school sites must meet double vaccination requirements for COVID-19 in line with the current [Public Health \(COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers\) Order 2022](#).
- The NSW Government announced that the Public Health Order mandating vaccination for education and care workers will not be extended beyond its current term.
- Students and their families are encouraged to consider vaccination for COVID-19 when eligible.
- Booster vaccinations are available and recommended for anyone 16 years and older who received their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least three months prior.
- NSW Health also recommend getting vaccinated against flu. Flu has different effects to COVID-19 and often affects children more severely than COVID-19.

4. Cohorting

Schools do not need to keep students in their class or year cohort groups. While the requirement to keep students in cohorts has been removed, schools are free to implement cohorting arrangements where appropriate based on their specific contexts.

5. Masks

Masks continue to be mandatory on public transport. This applies to students aged 12 years and older, and staff when travelling to and from school and during school excursions by public transport or by chartered transport services.

In line with the latest advice from NSW Health, masks are recommended for students and staff who have recovered from COVID-19, completed their 7-day isolation period and are no longer showing symptoms for an additional 3 days (from days 8 – 10 after receiving a positive COVID-19 result).

Note: In certain circumstances, some schools may need to temporarily reintroduce mask-wearing to minimise transmission risk. Principals will communicate this update to schools if and when applicable.

6. Ventilation and Physical Distancing

Maximising natural ventilation is an effective method for minimising the spread of COVID-19.

- As we move into the colder months, heating will be used in conjunction with windows and doors remaining slightly open to continue to allow natural ventilation.
- In line with community settings, square metre rules are no longer in place.
- Allowing a reasonable space between people will reduce the risk of transmission in those environments and also ensure people are more comfortable.

7. Reducing the risk of illness this winter

All students, staff and their families should follow NSW Health's advice to reduce the risk of not only COVID-19, but also other illnesses that may affect schools this winter such as the flu. Schools have been encouraged to reinforce the following NSW Health messages with their communities:

- stay home if unwell





- keep up to date with vaccinations – including the flu vaccine, which is available from your local GP, pharmacy or Aboriginal Medical Service. Flu vaccines are free for all children aged 6 months to under 5 years, or for a small charge for those aged 5 years and older
- get tested immediately for COVID-19 if you become symptomatic and isolate until you receive a negative result
- practice good hand hygiene by washing regularly with soap and water
- take a RAHT before visiting vulnerable loved ones or going to large gatherings and events.

8. Continued Safety Measures

We will continue to provide sanitising stations and wipes in classrooms and encourage students to use them. The increased daily cleaning regime will continue throughout this term.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on 4321 6400 or via email at principal@stedwards.nsw.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Bonnici
College Principal

