



COVID-19 POLICY (for Term 4 2020)

Revised: 6/10/2020

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.

Fairhills High School 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

Fairhills High School 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 Fairhills High School 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

On-site learning and remote learning from home

We are pleased to advise that our Year 7 students, along with our VCE and VCAL students will return to full-time on-site learning the week commencing Monday 12 October. Information on starting dates and times for each year level will be provided to parents via the school website, in a Compass post and through email to students and their families.

Remote and flexible learning will continue for Years 8 – 10 with on-site supervision available for eligible students, being students of permitted workers not working from home and vulnerable students. Please contact the General Office if you need to arrange on-site supervision.

Term 4 priorities

We will continue to have in place strong 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 mobilising all available resources to support our most vulnerable 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. Our priority will be supporting both those who need it to catch up and those who have progressed to continue to extend their learning.

Transitions

We will make every effort to ensure successful transitions for all our students moving into the next Year Level, including the new Grade 6s moving into Year 7 in 2021, and supporting 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 isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision 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, where relevant, should be updated to provide 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 trained 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

- A face mask that covers the nose and mouth is now the only permitted type of face covering. Face shields, scarves or bandanas do not meet these requirements and will not be appropriate in the school setting.
- 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.
- All students over the age of 12 must wear a face covering unless they are exempt due to a medical condition or disability. Parents are asked to contact the Principal (via email or by phoning the General Office) to discuss any medical exemption.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own face mask to school but will be provided with a single-use mask if they forget their own mask, or if they do not bring a mask for any other reason.
- 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.

School arrival and departure arrangements for Term 4

Normal school times will continue for term 4. To support physical distancing at our school we will continue to use the variety of entry/exit points along the Scoresby Road side of the school. Students must maintain appropriate social distancing practices at all times, including when entering or leaving the school. Parents should use the drop-off section of the parent carpark near the oval, and should remain in their car when picking up or dropping off students.

Reducing mixing between student groups

Mixing of students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be minimised throughout the term with specific class groups maintained for all non-elective subjects. The number of Year Level Assemblies will be minimised and held outside if required. Whole School Assemblies will not be held this term.

Hand, food and drink hygiene

- Hand sanitiser will be available at within classrooms and students will be educated on the importance of this health and safety measure.
- 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 must not drink from the school water fountains and must 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

- Although mandatory temperature testing of all students is no longer required by the Education Department students at Fairhills High School will continue to be tested for the time being as we moved into the VCE exam period. We will continue to heed Department and Chief Health Officer advice on this matter especially if community transmission in Victoria increases.
- If a concern arises over the health of a student then a temperature check will be carried out. Students identified with a possible health concern will be immediately isolated and parent/carer contacted to arrange their collection from school and further health checks.

Mobile phones

- The Department and school's mobile phone policies continue to apply (with no usage of student phones whilst at school). We would remind students to make sure that they are using (when not in school) phones that have been cleaned regularly.

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.
- Please contact the Wellbeing Centre via the General Office for further information

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. All essential visitors to the school must sign in and out at the General Office.
- 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. Please refer to our school Attendance Policy for further information.

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.

Please also contact the specific Level Coordinator for further support and advice on how we can support your child in these circumstances.

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 communication will continue to occur via Compass and Webex meetings.

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:

- Equipment in the grounds (eg. seats and tables) can be used by students. However students should practise hand hygiene before and after use.
- Indoor sport is not allowed. Wherever possible students will participate in physical education or recreational play outdoors and will be discouraged from engaging in contact sport.

Instrumental classes and food technology

- Choirs and woodwind/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

Canteen

Our school canteen may be open later in Term 4 (more details to be provided) and will operate with the highest hygiene practices.

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

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 either take place virtually or will be cancelled. Year 10, 11 and 12 students attending Fairhills High School or another school for VET subjects will be provided with further information by the relevant provider.

Communication between parents/carers and our school

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the Year Level Coordinator to discuss any concerns or areas of need in regards to their child's learning, health, wellbeing or access to teaching and learning resources.

Cleaning and facilities management

At our school we will:

- 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](#).
- Carefully consider the necessity of using shared items or equipment e.g. class sets of teaching and learning materials, musical instruments, etc. at this time.
- We will be practicing hand hygiene immediately before and after use of shared equipment

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 on 6/10/2020 and will be reviewed on a regular basis as the situation changes over the course of the term.