



COVID-19 Return to School Policy

Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to outline how our school will be managing risk relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) during key interactions between students, parents and staff during the return to school in Term 2, 2020 and until such time as the Chief Health Officer (CHO) advises it is no longer required.

Highvale Primary School is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for our students and staff. The whole school community is required 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. This policy is being implemented during the current State of Emergency and beyond.

Scope:

This policy applies to everyone in the Highvale Primary School community. This includes all members of staff (principals, teachers and education support staff), School Council members, all parents/carers who interact with the school and all students. It also includes visitors to the school.

This policy may be amended at any time as required by the DET, CHO or Highvale Primary School. Amendments will be communicated through Flexibuzz allowing suitable notification to members of our school community. As there are regular updates in requirements, members of our school community should expect changes and are responsible for reading and adhering to the necessary arrangements for the health and safety of all.

Background:

Highvale Primary School is following the advice from the Department of Education and Training including, [Health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the context of COVID-19](#) which can be found on the Department's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#).

Requirements:

Attendance on-site

The Department of Education and Training (DET) advises that:

Perhaps the most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), is to ensure that any unwell staff, children and young people remain at home.

While the risk of transmission of the virus is very low, staff or students most at risk of severe illness should individually assess appropriateness for onsite attendance at this time with support from their medical practitioner.

As the main risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school environment is between adults, it is important that visitors to school grounds are limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations.

This means that at our school:

- All unwell staff and students **must** stay home.
- Parents/carers of students with complex medical needs (including those with compromised immune systems), should seek advice from the student's medical practitioner to support decision-making about whether on-site education is suitable, noting that this advice may change depending on the status of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Victoria. This is in line with the [DET Health Care Needs](#) policy.
- Visitors to school grounds will be limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations (e.g. student health and wellbeing services, maintenance workers).

- Additional staff, including parent volunteers, will not be attending school or student support programs, such as morning reading, until advice from the CHO deems this to be safe. Activities dependent on and involving parents such as daily reading in the morning are cancelled until further notice.
- Parents or carers who need to contact teachers should do so via email, hand written note or by phoning the office. Urgent matters should be communicated by phone call.
- Where required, online video conferencing meetings will be arranged with the approval of the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- All interschool activities that involve onsite attendance by students from other schools, such as inter-school will be cancelled until further notice.
- School assemblies, excursions, camps, indoor extra-curricular programs and other non-essential large gatherings will be postponed until further notice.

School Arrival and Departure:

DET advises that:

As the main risk of introducing coronavirus (COVID-19) to the school environment is from adults, close proximity between adult members of the school community should be avoided, particularly during school drop-off and pick-up.

This means that at our school:

- We ask staff and parents/carers to observe physical distancing measures by not congregating in areas inside or around the school.
- Parent should not enter the school grounds/buildings at any time unless by prior arrangement with the Principal or Assistant Principal
- Secondary school students will not be permitted on Highvale PS grounds. If being collected by older secondary school siblings, Highvale PS students will need to meet their siblings outside school grounds as per the HPS exit arrangements.
- The following arrangements will remain in place until further notice.

Outside School Hours Care

- Academy for Kids OSHC services will continue to operate with the relevant risk mitigation measures in place.
- The Commonwealth Government announced on 6 April 2020 that the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package ‘the package’ would replace Child Care Subsidy and payments from families until 28 June 2020.
- As a condition of this funding, parent fees are not to be charged during this period.
- Academy for Kids will not operate on the Pupil Free Days of the 25th of May and 5th of June due to ‘the package’.
- No new enrolments are available during until new information regarding funding is provided by federal government.
- Queries are to be directed to Academy for Kids vivien@academyforkids.co or 0405323357.

MORNING DROP OFF

To minimise interaction of students and adults at entry points the following arrangements are in place until further notice. **Three** designated entry points to the school will be accessible for students attending Highvale Primary School. Students must enter the school using the gate allocated to their **House Colour**. A staff member will be present at each gate to welcome students.

Ease congestion. If parking, consider parking several streets away and walking to the designate entrance gate for drop off.

The allocated entrance gates are:

- **Ashton Street** [West end near the cricket nets - 2 gates] – **HEATH & WARATAH**
- **Ashton Street** [East end near the school driveway - 1 gate] – **ACACIA**
- **Grantley Drive** [School Crossing - 1 gate] – **BANKSIA**.

- We are aware that some students who live on the Capital Avenue side of Highvale Secondary College (HSC) walk across the HSC oval and enter HPS from behind the tennis courts. They then walk across the grass (near the bike shed) and enter through the top gate near the MPC. Parents should note that this is not an official school entrance point. However, to further aid social distancing, students can continue to use this access point with their parent's permission. Parents are not permitted beyond the tennis courts please. HSC have granted permission for HPS students to walk across their oval.



- All gates will be relocked at 9.15am except the main driveway gate.
 - **8.40am** - Students can be dropped off to proceed to their allocated gate entrance from 8.40am.
 - **Prep – Year 2** - Parking away from the school and enjoying a 5 minute walk together with your adult is recommended.
 - **Year 3 - 6 students** – Dropping off a few streets back from the school and enjoying a 5 minute walk to school is recommended. A practise run or two with Mum or Dad prior to return to school would be a good idea.
 - Parents remain **outside** the gate at both Ashton Street entrances and the Grantley Drive entry points. Social distancing requirements should be exercised.
 - At the Grantley Drive entrance, parents are advised to say goodbye well before the start of the laneway.
 - Students enter school grounds and proceed to their class to unpack their bag.
 - Parents vacate the drop off area as quickly as possible.
 - Students place their belongings in the classroom, set up their table and head outside for a short play.
 - **8.55am** – The MUSIC will signal students to move from before school play to their line up area.

Line up areas:

One teacher at front and one at rear of lines

- Prep - Line up area as normal in Prep undercover area.
- 1&2K & 1&2WD - Line up in the Year 1&2 breezeway.
- 1&2S & 1&2W - Line up under the cover outside the main double door entrance.
- 3&4GT, DE, C, D - Line up area as normal in Year 3&4 undercover area.
 - ***2 teachers at front and 2 at rear of lines***
- 5&6BB & 5&6P - Line up area as normal in Year 5&6 undercover area.
- 5&6B & 5&6S - Line up under the cover outside the old canteen.

TURNING CIRCLE DROP OFF (Mornings)

Parents and carers are encouraged to continue to use the drop off circle. Turning Circle and drop off rules are in place for the safety of our students and staff. This includes the Staff Car Park. **Only staff are permitted in the Staff Car Park between the hours of 8.20am – 4.00pm.**

Our rules apply to everyone, every day, no exceptions. Adults using the driveway and turning circle are responsible for knowing and abiding by the rules and setting a good example to all students on school grounds. Non-compliance with the rules is a serious issue and will be treated accordingly.

Traffic volume and adherence to school rules will be monitored carefully. A copy of the **'HPS Vehicle Access Rules'** is attached for your information – **Appendix 1**. And available on the School website at

<https://highvaleps.vic.edu.au/parent-information/>

Please note – There is no parking in the turning circle at drop off or pick up times. Parents and carers are required to stay in their vehicle at all times and transition through the turning circle in a safe and orderly manner.

LATE ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

- **Late arrival is strongly discouraged due to the need for careful measures at drop off time and negative impact on learning.**
- **Late arrivals from 9.00am – 10.00am are not permitted to enter the school grounds / driveway in a vehicle.**
- **Between 9.00am - 10.00am the turning circle is reserved for morning deliveries, unexpected early pickups due to student illness and official school business arrangements.**
- Parents of students arriving late must sign in their children if they arrive to school late using the following process:
 - Parents and their children enter via the Main Gate at Ashton Street and walk the concrete path directly to the School Office main entrance at the front of the school.
 - Proceed directly to the School Office. Parents must adhere to the required social distancing practises (1.5m minimum) and use hand sanitiser upon entry to the school office.
 - If deemed necessary by HPS staff, adults (parents, carers, visitors) may be required to wait outside the office due to the small office space.
 - All adults will be required to social distance at all times.
 - Parents must sign in their children using the Office iPad.
 - Children must wait quietly until they are given a green late pass. They must then proceed directly to their classroom.
 - Adults (parents, carers, visitors) will depart the office using the same pathway and promptly exit school grounds.

Under no circumstances should children arrive to sign without an adult present. Parents will be called if this occurs.

AFTERNOON PICK UP

- Pick up will be the most difficult point of the school day in regard to social distancing and all members of the school community will need to be very careful at this time.
- **Parents should discuss their individual arrangements using the information below. This should be revisited several times with your children before students return to school.**
- To **minimise** interaction of students and adults within the school and at exit points we ask that parents use a regular and pre-arranged pick up routine for collecting children from school.
- Ease congestion. If parking, consider parking several streets away and walking to the designate pick up spot.
- The House system will also be utilised for students exiting school grounds for pick up. Students will exit the school grounds from the same point that they entered each day.

- The school driveway and turning circle will be operational for pick up. Patience will be required by all and rules must be adhered to. Adults must stay in their car.

The allocated exit gates are:

- **Ashton Street** [West end near the cricket nets - 2 gates] – **HEATH & WARATAH**
 - **Ashton Street** [East end near the school driveway - 1 gate] – **ACACIA**
 - **Grantley Drive** [School Crossing - 1 gate] – **BANKSIA**.
1. Where there are two or more siblings - Older siblings should collect younger siblings at a pre-arranged, designated spot inside school grounds. For example, the Junior Playground, MPC Shade Sails, Sanctuary, Running Track.
 2. Once together, proceed to the allocated exit gate. Stay together.
 3. Grantley Drive - Parents should not enter the lane way. Parents should wait along the nature strip (socially distancing) so children can locate and join them. If parked in the immediate vicinity, parents may wait at their cars and students can exit to locate them. Once together, exit the area promptly watching for traffic.
 4. Ashton Street - Parents should wait along the nature strip (socially distancing) so children can locate and join them. If parked in the immediate vicinity, parents may wait at their cars and students can exit to locate them. Once together, exit the area promptly watching carefully for traffic.
 5. It is suggested that parents / carers collect Prep_– Year 2 children from the nature strip as described above. The school will monitor practices but will rely on cooperation of all parents.
 6. When Year 3-6 students return on the 9th June, the number of adults will increase. Parents may plan with these students and their younger siblings to walk together to a designated pick up spot a few streets away. If doing this, it should be practised together before the Year 3-6 students return to school.
 7. The school may introduce staggered pick up times if social distancing is not practical or adhered to.

Until further notice, Highvale PS staff will be in attendance at each entry/exit point to supervise students. All adults are responsible for their own social distancing of 1.5m. Cooperation and patience will be essential.

Hygiene:

DET advises that:

Everyone can protect themselves and prevent the spread of coronavirus by continuing effective hand hygiene.

At our school this means:

- All staff and students will undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet. This will be directed or supervised by staff where required.
- Where soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser provided by the school will be made available to all students, staff and visitors.
- Students and staff are welcome to bring their own personal hand sanitiser with their name on it.
- Students will use their own items such as pencils and equipment wherever possible. If it is necessary for students to share equipment during classes, they will be asked to sanitise or wash their hands, whichever is practical, before and after this sharing.
- Opening windows (temperature permitting) and doors to classrooms to allow air flow.
- Our school will be provided with an additional 6 hours of cleaning each day. This will be utilised to clean high touch areas and equipment. Adventure playground equipment will be wiped down after recess and lunch. Adventure playgrounds are not to be used before or after school.
- All students and staff will practice hygiene before and after each break.
- Students must bring their own water bottles to school for use (and refilling). Students will not be able to drink directly from drinking fountains / bubblers at this time.
- Sharing of food is not permitted.
- Staff and students are reminded to clean their mobile phones regularly. The Highvale PS Mobile Phone Policy remains in place. Students must hand in their mobile phones at the office upon their arrival at school.

Specific Arrangements for Teaching and Learning Environments and Break Times

DET advises that:

Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not be practical in education settings. Physical distancing is most important between adults.

Reducing mixing between different cohorts (either classes or year levels) is recommended as a precautionary measure to minimise risk of spread of transmission and aid containment in the rare event of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) on site.

At Highvale P.S we are fortunate to have a large yard area that will support social distancing and minimise interactions between year level groups as much as possible.

At our school, we will:

- Maintain a normal recess and lunchtime schedule for all students.
- Students from different year levels will be allocated zones to play in during recess and lunch breaks.
- For **example**: Prep – Year 2 students may be allocated the P-2 adventure play area and a combination of other grassed, synthetic or hard surface areas. When Year 3-6 return, the Year 3&4 cohort and the Year 5&6 cohort may be allocated the sports courts / oval and running track etcetera on alternating days.
- Students will be strongly encouraged to keep their social distance as much as possible, and discouraged from touching or having physical contact with other students or staff.
- There will be no contact sports allowed.

In classrooms, we will:

- Organise learning spaces according to DET recommendations/ Advice from Chief health Officer.
- Wherever possible use natural ventilation to maintain a flow of fresh air in classrooms.
- Wherever possible use outdoor areas for activities such as Physical Education.

Additionally:

- Until further notice there will be minimal mixing between classes. Students will spend most of their learning time with their regular class members / teachers and support staff.
- There will be no formal assemblies or student meetings or extra-curricular activities conducted indoors.

School Offices and Staff Facilities:

DET advises that:

As the greatest risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school environment is between adults, close proximity between staff will be avoided where possible and especially in offices and staff rooms.

At our school we will:

- In line with other workplaces across Victoria, we will remind staff to maintain social distancing from each other as much as possible in the reception, staff room, learning spaces and offices.
- Instruct staff who have any illness to stay home.
- Have teachers working in their own class and office areas as much as possible utilising social distancing or video conferencing via WebEx or Google Meet where advantageous or required.
- Advise staff to utilise social distancing and minimise contact in administration areas and office.
- Minimise the main Staff Resource Room to 4 members at any one time whilst maintain social distancing.
- Maintain social distancing in the Junior School photocopy area and work areas.
- Configure the staffroom to support the provision of social distancing.
- Limit the number of staff in the staff room to no more than 8 persons at a time. Doors open.
- Staff should not spend any more than 1/3 of one break time in these areas wherever possible.
- PLT meetings can be conducted in designate office spaces or classroom areas providing table areas are sanitised prior to the meeting, doors are open and staff work at least 1.5m from each other.
- Opening windows (temperature permitting) and doors to classrooms to allow air flow.
- Staff PL Meetings will be conducted using video conferencing via WebEx or Google Meet.
- Students will not be permitted in the staffroom until further notice.

Cleaning and Facilities Management:

DET advises that:

Environmental cleaning, coupled with regular hand hygiene, remains important to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission.

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.
- Provide liquid hand soap and/or hand sanitiser for use of students and staff.
- Carefully consider the necessity of using shared items or equipment e.g. shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, musical instruments and sport equipment etcetera at this time.
- We will be practising hand hygiene immediately before and after use of shared equipment.

Sport and Recreation:

DET advises that:

In line with community advice, reasonable precautions are still advised to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the context of sport and recreation.

At our school:

- Playground equipment can be used. However, students will be directed to practise hand hygiene before and after use.
- Wherever possible, outdoor facilities will be used for physical education and recreational play. Where indoor facilities are used, we will limit the number of students to the size of a single class.
- We will encourage non-contact sports at this time. Hand hygiene will be practised before and after use of any sporting equipment.

Provision of Routine Care and First Aid:

DET advises that:

Physical distancing is not practical when providing direct care. In this situation standard precautions, including hand hygiene, are important for infection control.

At our school:

- Standard precautions as per DET [Infectious Diseases policy](#) and the Highvale PS First Aid Policy will be followed when providing first aid. For example, we will use gloves and an apron when dealing with blood or body fluids/substances.
- Hand hygiene will be practised before and after performing routine care or first aid.
- Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), for example a face mask, is not required to provide routine care or first aid for students who are well, unless such precautions are usually adopted in the routine care of an individual student.
- PPE may be considered for adults and students who are supervising or caring for any children who are showing cold/flu symptoms.

Management of an Unwell Student or Staff Member

DET advises that:

It is important that any staff member or student who becomes unwell while at school returns home. While it is unlikely that a staff member or student who is unwell with flu-like symptoms will have coronavirus (COVID-19) there are some sensible steps schools can take while a student awaits collection by a parent or carer as a precaution.

This means that at our school:

- Staff and students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough, sore throat, or regular runny nose will be isolated in the most appropriate available space with suitable supervision. Students must be collected by a parent/carer as a priority. Urgent medical attention including ambulance will be sought if needed. Unwell students will not be permitted to travel home unsupervised.
- Where staff or students are experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus, we will ensure hand hygiene, physical distancing and (where possible) use of a face mask as informed by DET guidelines.
- Health care plans, where relevant, will 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. We will take a precautionary approach, requesting the parent/carer to collect their child if concerns remain. A Level 2 First Aid 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 using a non-contact clinical forehead infrared thermometer.
- Staff or students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) will be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional to advise on next steps. A medical certificate is not required to return to school after a period of illness. Staff and students should not return until symptoms resolve.
- If a student spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), surfaces will be immediately cleaned with disinfectant wipes (and using gloves).
- Where a student or staff member complains of feeling unwell, or is suspected of being unwell, the school reserves the right check the student or staff member's temperature.

Managing a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

DET 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. We will adhere to these procedures.

At our school:

- We will contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 to discuss what to do next if a student or staff member:
 - is a confirmed case.
 - has been in close contact with a confirmed case.
- We will inform the Department.

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.

Further information and resources

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

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - 'HPS Vehicle Access Rules'
- Appendix 2 – Drop Off & Pick Up Summary

Review

This policy was last updated on 20th May 2020 and will be monitored for revision weekly until the end of Term 2 or upon advice from the Victorian Government.