

COVID-Safe School Operational Plan



**Launceston
Grammar**

EST. 1846

Overview

The National Framework for Managing COVID-19 in Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care advises that Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services and schools are deemed essential and should remain open for the delivery of face-to-face learning wherever possible. Launceston Grammar is committed to doing everything possible to contain and slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus and ensure the health and safety of our School community.

Our COVID-Safe School Operational Plan has been carefully considered. National and Tasmanian State recommendations have been followed to ensure teaching and learning can continue and that our sites are safe for our community. The Plan reflects our commitment to the learning needs of our students along with their safety and wellbeing.

We have a clear plan in place to continue to operate the School safely in Term 3, 2022. Risk assessments for all Launceston Grammar sites have been conducted and we are confident we can continue to provide excellent education and care for our students in a COVID-safe environment.

Our COVID-Safe School Operational Plan will be updated as new recommendations and advice is circulated by regulatory authorities. Ongoing guidance and advice will be shared to keep our community informed.

Entry to School

Students, staff and visitors must stay home if unwell or if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Students, staff and visitors must stay home if they are required to isolate after testing positive to COVID-19.

Parent, Carer and Visitor Access

On-site school community activities will have full support in Term 3, as we progressively identify ways to safely invite parents and carers into the school. The School will continue to engage with families via other means where face-to-face is not possible.

It is strongly recommended by Public Health that parents and carers are up-to-date with COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations before attending School sites and will be expected to wear a face mask while indoors.

Drop off and pick up for students will be streamlined – stop, drop and go is preferred.

Face-to-face learning

Face-to-face learning will continue, with COVID-safe measures in place. There is a clear process in place to manage COVID-19 cases. Regular school activities, such as school photos, music and swimming lessons and excursions will continue in a COVID-safe manner. However, if the situation changes, what we do will be revisited.

Attendance

Students should attend School if they are well. School attendance is important for improved learning, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Students should not be sent to School if they feel unwell with cold or flu-like (or hay fever) symptoms including:

- fever
- runny nose
- cough, sore/itchy throat or
- shortness of breath

If unwell with cold or flu-like symptoms, students should stay home and conduct a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT). If the first test is negative then a second RAT or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test should be administered the following day, and the child should not attend school during that time. Should the second test also register a negative result the child may return to school, subject to them not being unwell.

Students, staff and visitors must stay home if they have COVID-19 and wear a face mask at all times while indoors if they are a close contact.

Keeping Safe at School

To keep our students and staff as safe as possible, proactive measures are in place to limit the impact of COVID-19.

These include:

- **Vaccination:** The government deems vaccination to be the best way to reduce the severity of COVID-19 symptoms and recommends everyone aged 5 years and older to be vaccinated.
- **Face masks:** In order to minimise the transmission of COVID-19 and influenza during the Winter peak, the School has endorsed the strong recommendation from Public Health that all staff, adults visitors and students over 12 years of age wear a mask in indoor settings and large gatherings. However, teachers may remove their masks if required to assist clear communication when teaching (e.g., to meet the needs of a student with hearing impairment). Medical exceptions apply.
 - Close contacts are required by Public Health to wear a face mask in any indoor space outside your home, unless you have a mask exemption.
 - Staff, students, parents, and visitors should bring their own masks. We are well stocked with face masks suitable for adults and children should they be needed.
- **Ventilation:** Continuing to maximise airflow by increasing ventilation remains a key strategy to help minimise disease transmission. There are a number of ways to promote air flow and improve air quality. Windows have been assessed and will be open where possible to ensure good ventilation and the School has installed air purifier units into learning spaces, meeting rooms and offices. Air conditioners are in most learning spaces and are regularly maintained.
- **Outdoor learning:** Where practicable, we will take advantage of outdoor learning opportunities.
- **Physical distancing:**
 - Staff and students will be supported to physically distance.
 - COVID-safe measures will apply in staffrooms and offices.
- **Hygiene practices:** Promoting personal hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette, regular handwashing and sanitising will be maintained.
 - Pump action hand sanitisers will be in classrooms, break-out spaces, offices, and soap dispensers in toilets.
 - People will be reminded to sanitise at the beginning of each lesson and when entering/leaving rooms.
 - Posters placed around the campuses will advertise and promote thorough hand washing.
- **Eating & Drinking:** Staff and students will be encouraged to eat and drink outside wherever possible.

- The Senior Campus Café 1846 will be operating. Junior and Senior students can order lunches as usual.
- Students will also be encouraged to be fully self-sufficient in terms of food and water/drink, bringing all they need for the day from home.
- There is to be no sharing or swapping of food or drink bottles, etc.
- Drinking fountains that require contact to operate and that bring the mouth close to/touching the water outlet will be turned off.

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

Rapid Antigen Tests

Each student will be provided with an initial supply of two rapid antigen tests (RAT) when School recommences in Term 3. If used, these will be replaced upon request. All School staff will be provided with two RATs to use if they have symptoms. These will be distributed through the School.

The Boarding House will also have a supply of RATs for use as needed. These are to be kept in the Nurse's office.

Parents are asked to register any positive COVID-19 cases with the respective Head of Campus via the following link: [Positive COVID-19 Test Result Form](#). People should not return to School for 7 days after a positive test **and** they are free from all symptoms or have otherwise been directed by Public Health.

People who test positive to COVID-19 more than 28 days after ending isolation due to previous infection should be reported and managed as new cases.

Any student who presents at School with cold and flu-like symptoms or develops symptoms during the course of the day will be isolated at School and their parent contacted to pick them up. Any staff member/adult who presents at School with cold and flu-like symptoms or develops symptoms during the course of the day will be required to go home, or if too unwell, isolated at School and an appropriate means of transport organised.

Close contacts are advised to follow the latest Public Health guidelines, which are available on their website: [Advice for contacts](#). RATs will be available at Reception to assist staff and students to comply with close contact rules.

The School Day

Students

All students, whether during School hours or at the Boarding House, are always to refrain from physical contact, e.g., hugs, handshakes.

The respective Heads of Campus will review the Duty Roster for each campus and ensure appropriate staff are on duty at sites that have the most potential for incidental contact between students, such as the Senior Campus Café 1846.

Staff

- Staff are to refrain from physical contact e.g., hugs, handshakes, etc.
- All staff will need to sign-in each day via the kiosks located at entry points.

Procedures during class time

- Students are to use only their own equipment (no sharing of pens, pencils, ruler, etc).
- If required, classrooms will be reallocated to ensure that larger rooms are used by classes with larger numbers of students.
- Staff who teach practical subjects and operate in shared spaces (e.g., Gym, Music etc.) will implement subject specific COVID-safe practices.
- The Buddy programme will operate outdoors.

Junior Campus Recess and Lunch

Students are to use outdoor areas, and indoor areas which are supervised, in breaks. Early Learning and Prep-Grade 6 programmes will remain separate.

Senior Campus Recess and Lunch

Students are not to leave the campus at lunch unless they are traveling to a Co-Op class at another School. Students will be supervised while they eat lunch, with hygiene protocols a priority. Boarders will continue to use the Boarders Dining Hall, supervised by the Head of Boarding, to collect recess and lunch.

Café 1846

Café 1846 will be open with COVID-safe measures in place. Orders through Flexischools will continue.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) Monday to Friday – Junior Campus

The OSHC programme will operate as usual in the EL Street building with COVID-safe measures in place. Students will be encouraged to be outside where practicable.

7.30am – 8.30am	Before School Care
3.00pm – 6.00pm	After School Care

School support and wellbeing

Our staff will continue to support the wellbeing of all students, with a particular focus on those students with diverse and complex needs. We will continue to promote and implement the recommended strategies to assist our students, families, and staff.

- Vulnerable students will be supported to access, participate, and engage in learning.
- Those who are more at risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19 will be supported.
- The psychological wellbeing of students, staff and families will be a priority.

At Risk Students

If you are concerned about specific risks that your child has, please contact the respective Head of Campus.

Student Absences

Parents are to advise the School if their child is absent and the reason for the absence. The most important action you can take if your child is unwell is to keep them home and ensure they get tested.

Junior Campus Absences

Students who are absent from School can stay up to date with their learning by liaising with their child's classroom teacher. The Primary Years Programme (PYP) Coordinator will oversee learning arrangements for students who are absent.

Senior Campus Absences

Students who are absent from School can stay up to date with their learning by looking online at the TASS eDiary which will be updated by staff with learning intentions and materials. With the support of their teachers, students are encouraged to take responsibility for self-managing their learning. Students should also liaise with the relevant Head of House (Grades 8-12) or the Head of Grade 7.

Families can provide support for student learning by encouraging attendance on video calls and regular check-ins on the TASS eDiary, helping to provide quiet space for work, and engaging in conversations about posted materials.

If the majority or a whole class is absent (or the teacher), the teacher may utilise Microsoft Teams to run the class online for those well enough to participate. In the unlikely event of the need to return to remote learning, further information will be provided.

An electronic record of all students who have contracted COVID-19 will be kept. This will include the day/date they tested positive and the date of their return to school. If a student is absent and no reason is provided, parents will be contacted to provide the reason for the student's absence. Student information will be confidential and is for internal records only.

Staff Absences

People and Culture will keep an electronic record of those staff who have contracted COVID-19 and subsequently returned to the workplace. This will comprise of the day/date they tested positive and the date of their return to work.

Staff who are close contacts may attend work if they are feeling well, but this must be registered with People and Culture and they must wear a mask at all times and follow COVID-safe behaviours.

Staff information will be confidential and is for internal records only.

Proactive strategies are in place to ensure there are enough staff. If needed, relief teachers will be employed.

Other Respiratory Illnesses

Symptoms of other respiratory illnesses, such as asthma, sinusitis, hay fever, etc may be confused with those typical of COVID-19 infection. Hay fever symptoms are similar to cold, flu and COVID-19 symptoms, so it is hard to tell them apart without testing.

If your child is experiencing hay fever symptoms such as a runny or blocked nose, sneezing, itchy eyes, or a cough – even if they are mild symptoms – please keep them at home and ensure they get tested. People can return to School once they have returned two negative COVID-19 test results. If symptoms worsen through the hay fever season, please contact your doctor.

Staff and students will be asked to provide a doctor's certificate identifying the symptoms typical of other respiratory illness so that they can attend the School. As a precaution, those with symptoms should perform regular RATs to verify their COVID-negative status.

Public Transport

People using public transport are strongly encouraged to wear a face mask and physically distance where possible.

This may include:

- walking or cycling if undertaking a short trip
- keeping a physical distance of 1.5 metres from other passengers when queuing at bus stops
- choosing a seat away from others where possible – members of the same household may sit together
- not occupying the first row of seats nearest to the driver. All school bus operators will continue frequent cleaning of bus interiors, particularly on high-touch surfaces.

Boarding House

Students and staff will be asked to not return to the Boarding House if showing symptoms and/or are considered a close contact of a confirmed case. Students and staff will be required to follow Public Health guidelines regarding confirmed cases and close contacts.

There will be daily monitoring of student symptoms in the Boarding House and use of RATs if symptoms are present.

The following strategies have been adopted to mitigate risks:

- Creation of a Case and Outbreak Management Plan specifically for on-campus positive case of COVID-19.
- Immediate isolation of infected individual into allocated rooms and follow confirmed case management plan.
- Follow the directive of Public Health if a confirmed case is on site.
- Maintain up-to-date records on staff and student movements within the House and leave via Reach. Be prepared to share key information with Public Health on suspected close contacts.
- Establish a long-term isolation facility for those unable to return home. Ongoing provision of meals, showers, toilets and mental health support and medical monitoring, in isolation from other wings of the house.
- Medical assessment of close contacts.

Students will be advised to wear masks in common areas where adults are more likely to be working. Visiting parents are strongly recommended to be up-to-date with COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations and will be expected to wear a face mask while indoors. Contractors and suppliers are expected to adopt social distancing protocols and wear masks.

Vulnerable Students in the Boarding House

The following mitigating strategies will be adopted in the Boarding House for vulnerable people:

- Vulnerable students and staff are identified.
- Staff seek medical assessment of their health and seek advice on their suitability to work.
- Staff are provided with sanitisation and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Staff are allocated alternative roles that limits exposure.

Physical Distancing in the Boarding House

The following physical distancing strategies will be adopted in the Boarding House to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19:

- Staff workstations will adhere to the physical distancing advice in each house.
- Prep time during academic support of students of an evening will be completed, adhering to physical distancing protocols. Same rules as if in a classroom environment.
- Roles requiring close contact with students will be allocated to non-vulnerable staff.
- Staff and Students are restricted from entering the main Chartwell kitchen.
- Room allocation will be one-bedroom per person where possible. Large rooms will have an allocation of a maximum of two boarders.
- Bench seating has been removed and single chairs have been placed around the tables in the Dining Hall.

Launceston Grammar Early Learning Centre and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) programme:

Testing – supply and use of equipment

RATs are to be distributed to all parents/carers so that there is no need to come in to School to collect tests if symptomatic. Instructions for use will be included in the packet the RAT will be collected in. RAT tests should not be used on children two years or under. It is advised that parents/carers book for PCR test for children under two. Tests are to be administered by parents at home.

Testing (reporting of positive results) and case management

Parents, carers and staff are to register positive RAT results (children and adults) online and to notify the School. [Information for positive cases](#) is available on the Public Health Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) website.

Report significant transmission events (e.g. 20-30% of the cohort are active cases) via the online COVID-19 Outbreak Notification Form or, where this cannot be used, by email to: covid.outbreaks@health.tas.gov.au

Cleaning and Disinfecting

The School has a detailed cleaning schedule identifying what areas are cleaned, when they are cleaned, and by whom.

Work areas and shared surfaces should be cleaned as follows:

- Use disposable cloths and disposable gloves. Clean surfaces as usual with a neutral detergent and water.
- In addition to routine cleaning, the following surfaces which are commonly touched should be disinfected:
 - door handles and light switches.
 - tables and counters.
 - armrests of chairs (if not fabric).
 - bathroom surfaces including door handles, door locks, toilet seats and buttons.
 - taps, washbasins, counters.
- Coronavirus is killed by a number of chemical disinfectants readily available from retail stores and commercial suppliers.
- Sanitising of classrooms will occur regularly, as per the cleaning schedule.
- Toilets will be cleaned as per the cleaning schedule twice per day.

- Cleaning/sanitising of high-volume touchpoints, such as desks, door handles, play equipment handrails, locker areas will take place regularly.
- Water fountains to be turned off/covered up if possible.
- Play equipment, outside seats and play equipment/sports equipment to be cleaned and sanitised regularly.

Staff Cleaning

- Staff are to wash up their own cups and any utensils (nothing left in sinks). A dishwasher on the highest heat setting or washing by hand using hot water and soap are both effective cleaning methods.
- Microwaves to be wiped out after use and surfaces to be wiped down.
- Staff areas are to be cleaned and sanitised daily.
- Hand sanitiser and surface sprays will be located in staffrooms, classrooms and receptions.
- Soap will be available in all toilets.
- Hand washing regime will be employed.
- Posters will be provided in staff areas, classrooms, and common shared area.

Boarding House Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Provision of hand sanitisation at entry points.
- Handwashing monitored.
- Provisions for chemical clean of shared shower and toilet facilities to be applied between uses.
- Chemical and cleaning provision stock monitored and bulk ordering occurring.
- Compliance of chemicals used in line with WHO recommendations for catering, laundry, and general household. Chemical strength upgraded where required.
- Cleaning regimes to incorporate daily cleaning of high-volume touch points.
- Continuation of cleaning surfaces in Boarders Dining Hall and Kitchen preparation areas. Monitoring for compliance as this is student led.
- There will be clearly marked bins provided specifically for the disposal of face masks.
- In the event of a shut-down, Public Health are notified and a thorough clean is coordinated with preferred supplier and Public Health.
- Non-local students are provided with alternative accommodation whilst deep cleaning.

Events and Co-Curricular Activities

Community and Parent Gatherings

The School recognises the importance of parent and community access to our campuses and the value of incidental conversations between parents and staff.

One-on-one parent-teaching meetings can be conducted with COVID-safe protocols in place, including physical distancing.

Each event will be risk assessed and managed on its merits, with the situation continually reviewed. When it is deemed safe to do so, parents and community will be welcomed back to our campuses and school events.

Co-curricular Activities

The co-curricular programme is an essential aspect of the holistic education of our students. Where possible, co-curricular activities will proceed in a COVID-safe manner. To enable this, the following will occur:

- Each co-curricular activity is to provide a Risk Assessment pertinent to its situation prior to the activity and it must be approved by the Head of Campus.
- Bands may continue to rehearse as per their normal schedule although musicians should physically distance wherever possible.
- Choirs are a significant risk for the transmission of COVID-19 and as such choristers are to wear masks or rehearse outdoors, weather permitting.
- The School will adhere to all Government and Public Health guidelines around co-curricular activities.

Excursions and Camps

All planned excursions and camps will continue in Term 3. Organisers must provide a risk assessment pertinent to the specifics of the excursion/camp five days prior to the date of the camp/excursion and it must be approved by the relevant Head of Campus, Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Headmaster. The Risk Assessment must cover all COVID-safe strategies in this Plan.

Communication and Education of Staff, Parents and Students

Education will be a key aspect to ensure this Plan is successful. It will ensure to the extent that is practicable:

- People who are unwell do not enter any School campus.
- All adults and students are encouraged and supported to wear masks indoors.
- Social distancing is maintained wherever possible.
- Good hygiene is practised by staff and students.

Our community will be sent an email with a link to the School's COVID-Safe School Operational Plan which will be located on the School website.

Confirmed Cases and Outbreak Management

Parents/carers will be informed if there is a significant increase in positive cases in a grade level and will be asked to monitor their child for symptoms, test if needed and stay home if unwell. Unless otherwise advised, the class will remain open for learning and students who are well should continue to attend. Specific outbreak management plans for Term 3 are being updated in accordance with Public Health advice and communicated to staff.

A class outbreak is determined when 20-30% of students and staff from a grade level test positive within seven (7) days of each other, with Public Health to support if and when required. In most circumstances when this occurs, staff and students from that classroom would be tested immediately and then only if symptomatic.

Notifications to families regarding cases and outbreaks will utilise existing communication channels used by schools. The School will continue to support students and young people with disability to continue to learn throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including making adjustments to learning and implementing Medical Action Plans where appropriate.

Case notification to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings – Launceston Grammar Early Learning Centre and Outside School Hours Care program:

- All children and staff cases must notify the relevant early childhood education and care setting if they attended the setting during their infectious period

Infectious period *The period extending from 48 hours before the start of symptoms or the positive result (whichever comes first), during which a person may be able to spread the virus to other people despite not knowing they have COVID-19.*

- There is no need for ECEC settings to notify Public Health when cases occur within the setting, unless an outbreak definition has been met.
- ECEC services are still required to notify the ECU of cases in attendance at ECEC while infectious to meet the regulatory requirements under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*.

Return to ECEC setting: If symptoms have stopped, staff and child cases can return to ECEC seven (7) days after their positive test result. If they still have symptoms, they should stay at home for an extra three days (a total of 10 days).

ECEC group outbreak: Where there is an increasing number of cases (e.g. 20-30% of a cohort are active cases), when a significant transmission event has occurred (e.g. in a group/room) or when cases in staff are such that ECEC is unable to meet operational requirements.

- All cases must meet the definition of an ECEC-associated case. If a child or staff member reports a positive test result but did not spend time in the ECEC setting within seven (7) days of the start of their symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19, they are not considered an ECEC associated case.
- If a group outbreak is declared, all ECEC contacts must be tested, regardless of symptoms, and then again only if symptomatic. Public Health will inform the school about further testing requirements where there is concern about significant transmission.
- Children and staff with symptoms must stay home until their symptoms have resolved, regardless of the test result.
- ECEC contacts do not need to quarantine while awaiting test results. They can attend ECEC settings and continue normal activities while waiting for results.

School Boarding House Outbreak Definition: An outbreak in a school boarding house is defined as two or more cases in students or staff within that facility within 72 hours.

Standing down an outbreak:

- An outbreak is generally stood down after 7 days if there are fewer than 2 active cases in the group or boarding house, or as advised by Public Health
- Staff who are close contacts may attend work if they are feeling well, but this must be registered with People and Culture and they must wear a mask at all times and follow COVID-safe behaviours.

Students with additional needs

Students with a disability and/or with complex health needs will continue to be supported on an individual basis. Staff will work closely with parents and carers as necessary. This could include additional medical advice within the student's Medical Action Plan, as appropriate.

For the latest information about COVID-19 visit:

- [Tasmanian Government Coronavirus website](#)
- [Australian Government Department of Health website](#)
- [Tasmanian Government COVID-19 vaccination website](#)

For general COVID-19 inquiries, contact the Tasmanian Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.

For vaccination information, contact the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080.

For Independent school related COVID-19 inquiries, contact Independent Schools Tasmania on 03 6224 0125.

References:

Australian Health Protection Principal Committee statement on COVID-19 winter update (8 July 2022)

Department of Education Tasmania's COVID-safe schools operational plan (Term 3, 2022)

Independent Schools Tasmania Updated PHEOC COVID Outbreak Guidelines (21 July 2022)

National Framework for Managing COVID-19 in Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care

COVID-19 Case and outbreak management guidelines for Tasmanian early childhood education and care settings (July 2022)