

Dear parent and carers,

As promised, I am writing with additional information about the return of students to our school. campus. First, a reminder about the dates for our phased return.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Commencing 25 October**  **(Week 4)** | * Early childhood centres (ECEC) * Preschool and kindergarten * Years 1 and 2 * Year 6 * Years 9 and 10 * Out of school hours care (OSHC) |
| **Commencing 1 November**  **(Week 5)** | * Years 3, 4 and 5 * Years 7 and 8 |
| *From weeks 1 to 4 of term, onsite supervision and care continues to be available for vulnerable children and young people whose parents are essential workers.* | |

Drawing on national and local health advice we have developed a return to school plan which has three key priorities:

* the health and safety of staff and young people,
* the mental and emotional well-being of students and staff, and
* ensuring continuity of learning.

Below is an outline of [ACT Health Guidelines](https://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1861600/09.-Health-Guidelines-for-Schools-and-ECEC-including-OSHC.pdf) that schools are required to implement to ensure effective COVID-19 measures are in place.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Use of Check in CBR app** | All staff and visitors must check in using the ‘Check in CBR' app. Parents and carers cannot enter school grounds except for an essential reason. Visitors must call to make an appointment, or in advance of attendance. All visitors must report to the front office. |
| **Student illness** | Staff and students who are unwell are not able to attend school. Students who present unwell will be required to go home. |
| **Hygiene** | Schools will maintain and promote appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene practices. Students will need to wash hands and use hand sanitisers throughout the day. Students will not be allowed to share food or drink. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Masks** | Staff, visitors and students\* in years 7-12 must wear a face mask on campus. Students in years 3-6 are encouraged to wear a mask if they are comfortable doing so. Students in Preschool to year 2 are not required to wear a mask. Masks may not be suitable for students with a disability or medical condition and schools will make allowances for those students not to wear masks.  *\* Students will be required to wear their personal masks. Masks will be available at school for those who require them. Disposable masks need to be changed every four hours.* |
| **Physical Distancing** | Physical distancing between children and young people is not always possible, particularly in single classrooms and school environments. It is however important for limiting the transmission of COVID 19. To promote physical distancing we may adjust learning programs, breaktimes, our timetable as well as pick up and drop off arrangements. More specific information about what this means for your child is included below. |
| **Environmental cleaning** | Our school cleaning program includes regular cleaning of high touch services, frequently used objects, and play equipment. |
| **Ventilation** | All schools have been assessed to increase fresh air circulation and this may involve changes to ventilation, modified HVAC system settings and maximising the use of outdoor learning spaces. |
| **Managing suspected cases** | We are prepared to respond to a positive COVID-19 case on campus, should the need arise. ACT Health will provide direction to the school and community, which may result in a full or partial school closure. A student who presents with symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated with suitable supervision, and parents will be required to collect their child. Symptomatic students will be required to wear a mask. |
| **Will schools have routine testing for COVID-19?** | Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should get tested immediately. ACT Health is not recommending routine COVID-19 testing of children, young people  or staff using rapid antigen testing. |
| **Wellbeing supports** | Wellbeing and learning supports, such as face to face appointments with the school psychologist or access to a Learning Support Assistant, will recommence with the return to school.  For parents and carers of students with a medical vulnerability: if you wish the school to make reasonable adjustments for the safe return of your child, you must consult a GP and provide medical advice to that effect. Where adjustments can’t be made, the school will support your child to learn from home. |

To further support the ACT Health Guidelines our school is making the following adjustments.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Drop off and pick up** | We are working with Special Needs transport to ensure a staggered drop off. This will minimise the number of students entering the school at the same time. As per the health Guidelines families will not be allowed on school site at this time. Please contact us if you have any concerns about your child’s drop off or pick up.  All students will continue to be met by a staff member outside the front door of the school. Students in Rooms 1-3 will enter and leave the school via the entrance door opposite room 3.  Students in Rooms 4 and 5 will enter the school through the main doors and move straight to the playground to enter their classroom via their playground access door.  Students in Rooms 7 and 8 will enter the school through the door adjacent to the Wisdom St car park and move straight to their rooms via the corridor.  Students in Rooms 11-15 will enter the school through the main doors and move straight to the playground to enter their classroom via the top corridor or courtyard gates. |
| **Hygiene routines** | Students are always supervised when completing hand washing routines and are supported by verbal prompts and visuals schedules displayed at all basins.  Hand sanitiser is accessible in all rooms, either in pump bottle form or as a dispenser attached to the wall. Supplies are checked daily and replenished as needed.  The school has a documented procedure for hygienic nappy changing and disposal of nappies. All staff have been provided with a copy of this procedure and appropriate PPE is available in all bathrooms. Protocols for cleaning items such as chewy toys are in place.  All HAAS procedures will be carried out with staff in appropriate PPE and in accordance with Health guidelines. |
| **Teaching and learning** | As a school, we have reviewed our class groupings and teacher cohorts.  We will aim to minimise the interactions between large numbers of students and teachers through adjusting access to shared spaces and limiting the numbers of staff working across all class groups.  The teaching program and individual education plans will be implemented as per normal with a focus on student wellbeing and engagement. Where possible we will be using outdoor spaces as part of our learning programs.  The school has been zoned into four areas; facilities for both students and staff have been duplicated in all areas to minimise movements across the school.  We have reviewed our shared spaces across the school. Some of the spaces have been temporarily converted to staff rooms to provide staff facilities across the school. Some shared spaces have been closed temporarily; the use of some shared spaces will be prioritised for identified students only. |
| **Break times** | Student break times will be modified to minimise the interactions between large numbers of students and teachers. This will reduce the numbers of students on the playground at any one time. Where possible students will be using outdoor spaces. Individual student visual timetables will be produced to support them understand their daily program.  Students in Rooms 1-3 will only play in the early ed playground adjacent to their classrooms. They can continue to have their three breaks per day and will be supervised by staff from this area.  Students in Rooms 7 and 8 can continue to have their three breaks per day. They will have their breaks outside in their courtyards, supervised by staff from this area.  The remaining two groups of classes will temporarily revert to two breaks a day to minimise the number of students on the playground and provide ample time to clean the equipment between groups. Each group will be supervised by staff from their own area. |
| **School Shop** | Our school shop will not operate in term 4. |
| **Hydrotherapy pool and gym** | The hydrotherapy pool will be open for identified students only. The pool is not available for use by outside users until further notice.  The gym will only be available for students with complex sensory needs; gym programs will be catered for in the context of the gross motor equipment available in our well-resourced playgrounds across the school. |
| **NDIS Therapists** | All NDIS therapy appointments must be booked through our deputy, Dagmar Martin. Therapists must follow our protocol for visiting the school; a copy of the protocol will be made available to therapists at the time of booking. Therapists will not be permitted to visit multiple classrooms across the school in one day. |

We will continue to review and adjust these measures based on the most up to date advice from ACT Health.

Remember, all adults and children aged 12 years and above are eligible for vaccination. If your child is eligible but not yet vaccinated, we encourage you to book them in by calling the COVID-19 vaccination line on 5124 7700 daily between 7am-7pm. Bookings can also be made with some [GP clinics and pharmacies](https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility?lang=en).

We understand that there has been considerable change and uncertainty for our students during the pandemic, and as we transition back to school. I’d remind you that you and your child can book an appointment with our Telehealth Support Service on 02 6205 1559 between 9.00am and 4.30pm weekdays. With the return to school, your child will also be able to organise face to face sessions with our school psychologist.

For more information about the return to schools, I’d recommend visiting [the Education Directorate’s website.](https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/covid-school-arrangements)  You can keep up to date with the latest health information, advice and resources on the [ACT’s COVID-19 website](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au).

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and understanding as we return to face-to-face schooling. We look forward to seeing all our students back at school.

My regards,

Allison Chapman

Malkara School