



Geelong East Primary School

Covid-19 Return to School Policy 2020

PURPOSE

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.

Geelong East Primary School is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for our students and staff. We ask for the whole 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

Geelong East 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](#).

SCOPE

This policy applies to everyone in the Geelong East Primary School community. 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.

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.

GEPS has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse

- 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, are discouraged from attending school at this time. Activities dependent on and involving parents (eg incursions, excursions, school swimming program, etc.) are cancelled until further notice.
- We ask that any parents/carers wishing to discuss any matters with a staff member phone the school office. We are also able to arrange a Video Conference call for parents to discuss matters that require greater attention. If a face-to face meeting is absolutely needed, it must meet the physical distancing requirements of 1.5m between adults.
- All inter-school activities that involve onsite attendance by students from other schools will either take place virtually or will be cancelled.
- School assemblies, excursions, camps and other non-essential large gatherings will be postponed. Opportunities to hold virtual school assemblies and other Parent and Community Engagement opportunities will be explored.

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 and adhere to the staggered drop off and pick up times provided to families. This advice also covers the car parking areas outside the school.

To minimise interaction of students and adults within the school and at entry points we have:

- Staggered drop off and pick up times as follows:

From the 26th of May 2020 (until further notice from DET)

8:45 am – P-2 students assemble on Netball area, entering through the front gate only

3:00 pm – P-2 finish of school ALL children will line up to walk out of the school to their parents
(No adults other than essential workers on site)

From the 9th of June 2020 (until further notice from DET)

8:45 am – P-2 students line up on Netball area, entering through the front gate only

3:00 pm – P-2 finish of school ALL children will line up to walk out of the school to their parents
(No adults other than essential workers on site)

9:00 – 3-6 students' line up on Netball area, entering through the front gate

3:15 pm -3-6 finish of school ALL children will line up to walk out of the school to their parents
(No adults other than essential workers on site)

EARLY pickups or LATE arrivals – please phone the school on your arrival at the front gate to pick up/drop off your child. A staff member will collect your child or bring your child to the front gate.

➤ Conditions during drop off and pick up are:

- **Only attend the drop off area at the designated time for your child's class. Students will not be permitted to enter the school grounds prior to their allocated time slot due to staffing arrangements unless approved in negotiation with the Principal.**
- Supervise your own children to the front gate and form a socially distanced queue maintaining 1.5 metres from other parents and carers.
- Staff members will be at the gate to assist children to their designated areas.
- You will need to leave as soon as your child has entered the gate where supervision becomes the responsibility of the school.
- If your child has a fever you will be called to collect your child. You will need to phone the office when you reach the school an office staff will take your child to the front gate so you can take your child. We advise seeking of medical advice prior to your child's return to school.
- **Only attend the pickup area at the designated time for your child's class.**
- Please wait for your child in your car or form a socially distant queue maintaining 1.5 metres from other parents and carers.
- Please do not enter the school grounds

Prep-6

Your child will be brought out to the gate and handed over (sent) to you by the staff member and you will be required to wait outside the school grounds and leave as soon as your child is in your care.

- Please note that the office door will remain locked throughout the day due to restricted access to the school site. If you arrive late to school or collect your child early at the end of the day, please call the office on 03 52484885.
 - Parents will need to be prepared for all types of weather. Please monitor the weather forecast and dress appropriately or bring an umbrella as there is no shelter available outside the school.
 - If your child appears to be even mildly unwell **they must not attend school**. Even if your child only appears to have a runny nose, cough or generally appears pale or unwell please keep them home and contact the school as you normally would for an absence.
 - If the school staff identifies that a child is unwell, parents/carers will be contacted and required to collect the child from school as soon as possible.
 - Students who display **even the mildest of symptoms of illness** whilst at school are **required to be isolated until** a parent or carer can collect them from school.
 - Students that have suppressed immunity are able to seek advice from their medical practitioner about their attendance onsite. If you are advised to keep your child at home for their medical safety we will continue to provide access to remote learning for these students. This will need to be communicated to the Principal in writing with the Doctor's advice.
- Geelong East Primary School will encourage non-contact greetings ie virtual high fives

Hygiene

DET advises that:

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

At our school:

- 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 will be made available.
- Students must bring their own water bottles to school for use (and refilling). Water fountains have been turned off until directed to do otherwise by the Department of Education & Training.
- Staff and students are reminded to clean their ICT equipment regularly. The Geelong East Primary School Mobile Phone - Student Use Policy remains in place so students will not be handling their mobile phones during the school day.
- Sharing of food is not permitted.

Specific arrangements for teaching and learning environments and break times

DET advises that:

Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not always 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 our school we will:

- Separate different year levels when outdoors
- Maximising use of outdoor learning areas or environments with enhanced ventilation where possible and as practical depending on weather conditions
- Students and staff will remain in their standard timetabled classroom and timetabled specialist programs will run in their classrooms.
- Staff will maintain physical distancing as much as practical when working in a classroom together

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:

- Spread staff workstations out as much as possible and limit the number of staff in offices, relocating staff to other spaces (e.g. unused classrooms)
- In line with other workplaces across Victoria, we will remind staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as possible in the reception, staff room and offices.

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 from 11am to ensure that risks of transmission are reduced for high-touch services. At our school this is being facilitated by our regular cleaners coming in throughout the day.
- Carefully consider the necessity of and reducing the use of shared items or equipment e.g.: class sets of teaching and learning materials, musical instruments etc., at this time.
- 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:

This means that 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. We will not be using the gym until further notice.
- Swimming and aquatic facilities will not be used.
- 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 Geelong East Primary School 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 face masks, is not required to provide routine care or first aid for students who are well.

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 or sore throat, 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.
- 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. See DET [guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).
- In the context of schools supporting students with complex health needs, if the care of an unwell child or young person is to be prolonged (for example, because it will take some hours for a parent to collect a child) and maintaining distance is not practical when providing direct care, gloves, gown and eye protection will be considered if available.
- 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.
- Staff or 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. A medical certificate is not required to return to school after a period of illness, however 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).

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 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 by making an 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.

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://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/infectiousdiseases.aspx>

- [DET Health Care Needs Policy](#)
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/healthcareneeds.aspx>

- [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 22nd May, 2020 and will be reviewed at the end of Term 2