



Coronavirus:

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

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CONTENTS

ATTENDANCE AND SITE VISITORS.....	2
HYGIENE.....	2
SUSPECTED AND CONFIRMED CASES OF CORONAVIRUS.....	3
SCHOOL CLOSURES.....	3
TRAVEL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.....	4
SOCIAL DISTANCING AND EVENTS.....	5
CONTACTS.....	6

ATTENDANCE AND SITE VISITORS

1. How do parents provide proof that their child is unwell if they do not go to school?

If a child is unwell and parents cannot obtain a medical certificate, your school will accept this advice. It is important not to burden our GP's with appointments for colds at this point in time.

2. What if the child is told by Public Health that they can't go to school?

They should be kept at home as per Public Health advice.

3. Can I take my child out of school if they (or someone in my family) have pre-existing conditions which may make them more susceptible to getting sick?

Parents should provide written advice if their child or someone in their family is medically compromised. Parents should then talk to the school about how their child can keep up with their learning.

4. What if I want to keep my child at home, even though they are not sick?

If the school is open, and your child is well, it is still safe to send your child to school. As a parent, it is ultimately your decision if you wish to keep your child at home.

5. If a parent is in isolation, does their child need to be (and vice versa)?

If a person is in self-isolation, those living with them only need to self-isolate if that person becomes sick or becomes a confirmed case. Information in self isolation can be found

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-home-isolation-when-unwell-suspected-or-confirmed-cases>

6. Can external visitors such as NDIS staff, parents and volunteers still visit schools?

There are no arrangements in place to restrict visits to school at this time. Visitors may still attend school sites provided they are well and have adhered to health advice if they have recently travelled.

7. Can DoE staff (i.e. School improvement leaders, literacy coaches, Professional Support Staff still visit schools?

Yes, provided they are well and have adhered to health advice if they have recently travelled.

8. Can students still attend work placements?

Students can still attend work placements if it is safe to do so, and they have parental approval.

HYGIENE

1. Will school cleaning processes be more thorough?

Providing clean school facilities is a priority. The Department will ensure that our Education Facility Attendants and contract cleaners adhere to nationally recommended standards for regular cleaning.

2. What health and hygiene practices are happening in schools?

The best thing we can do to keep ourselves healthy is to make sure we are washing our hands and not touching our faces.

Schools will be:

- adopting strict hand washing protocols – [Poster on Hand Washing](#)
- limiting personal contact

- reminding students to use their elbow to cover their nose and mouth when they sneeze
 - cleaning hard surfaces in classrooms, such as door handles, keyboards and desks.
 - enforcing social distancing. Events like assemblies, excursions, school camps, fairs and sports carnivals should be cancelled/postponed. Meetings should be done via skype/phone if possible.
3. **What is the Department doing for schools who are having difficulty accessing hand wash for their classrooms so students can wash before eating?** The Department of Education has contracts established for the supply of toilet paper, hand towel and Hygiene/Washroom products and are working closely with schools to ensure sufficient supplies.
 4. **Do schools need to have hand sanitiser?**
There are several types of hand sanitiser available from our suppliers. However, research shows that washing your hands properly with soap and water is the best method for killing germs.

SUSPECTED AND CONFIRMED CASES OF CORONAVIRUS

1. What will happen if there is a suspected case in a school?

The Public Health Hotline will be called for guidance on the next steps.

2. What will happen if there is a confirmed case in a school?

The school will be closed to allow for Public Health officials to trace any close contacts of the infected person and cleaning to be undertaken. Usual school closure emergency procedures will apply. The school will only be reopened once Public Health has advised it is appropriate to do so. This may take a few days.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

1. Why are we keeping schools open?

Schools will remain open for as long as it is safe to do so. At this time the best advice we have from our Public Health officials is that continuing to keep schools open, whilst exercising good hygiene practices, is appropriate. This was supported by the National Cabinet, comprising the Prime Minister, State Premiers and Chief Ministers.

Read the latest on [Public Health Services in relation to schools remaining open](#)

2. When will schools close?

Schools will remain open as long as it is safe and practical to do so. The Director of Public Health will also provide guidance on this. A school will close if a confirmed case is identified.

3. Will school holidays be moved forward?

There are no plans to adjust school holidays at this point in time.

4. What planning is being undertaken for potential school closures?

We are working closely with the Director Public Health on a number of scenarios. We are well-prepared should we get a confirmed case in a school or on a site. If it is necessary for a school to close we will do everything we can to support our students, school community and staff.

There have been instances in the past where the Department has been required to close schools, and there are well established procedures in place if this needs to occur. The Department will provide Principals and school staff with as much support as needed throughout this time.

5. How will students continue learning if schools need to close?

If schools are closed for an extended period, some online learning materials will be made available through a dedicated website as well as alternative learning opportunities for those students without reliable access to the internet.

For questions regarding possible **longer-term implications for students** in Years 11 and 12, work is being undertaken nationally to determine arrangements. This will consider internal and external assessments and the impact on student pathways to further education (including ATAR). In the interim, arrangements will be made at a local or regional level to continue course coverage as best as possible.

6. If schools close, how will we know the school is safe to go back to?

Following a safety assessment, we will be guided by advice from Public Health Tasmania on this issue. The school will be thoroughly cleaned before students return.

7. What if my child needs to be isolated and can't access learning materials?

Every reasonable effort will be made to provide material to the students where appropriate.

8. How will TASC course provision and VET for Years 11 and 12 students be considered?

For any questions that parents have now about course provision and VET for Years 11 and 12 students, we ask you to talk to your child's school or email, years9to12learning@education.tas.gov.au, and we will work to answer your query as quickly as possible. Where required, we will liaise with TASC.

9. Can external occupiers of school property (i.e. those who lease office space) still operate if schools close?

Use of school property by external occupiers will be considered on a case by case basis.

TRAVEL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

1. Can interstate trips still go ahead?

All interstate travel for staff/students should be postponed.

2. Can international trips still go ahead?

As of COB Monday 16 March 2020, all overseas student and staff travel will be postponed. This reflects the Prime Minister's request that people review their need to travel internationally, and the announcement that all individuals returning from overseas will need to self-isolate for 14 days on their return.

3. What if a student or staff member has returned from overseas?

The Prime Minister has announced that from midnight on 15 March 2020, individuals who have returned from overseas must self-isolate for 14 days. Full relief costs will be covered centrally in these circumstances.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND EVENTS

1. What can we do to implement appropriate social distancing measures?

Public Health are currently working on advice to support schools in implementing safe social distancing measures.

Currently the cancellation of large gatherings has been implemented in schools.

Staff in our schools and CFCs are aware of these requirements and are actively doing what they can to support the measures.

2. Are recess and lunch times being staggered to lessen student gathering?

If this is a practical measure that schools are able to implement, then it would be supported.

3. Do we need to cancel Launching into Learning sessions?

Launching into Learning is a core Department of Education learning program and can continue where it is appropriate.

Due to the unique nature of LiL programs in schools and the nature of families attending school sites with their children, the continuation of sessions is a school-based decision. This will need to be made utilising all of the current information and Departmental guidance available.

4. How long will it be until school events can resume?

We will be advised by Public Health authorities on when it is safe for group gatherings to resume as normal. You should be aware that it may take several months for things to return to normal.

5. Is there any advice around Breakfast Clubs and Kitchen Garden programs?

These programs can continue as normal until advised otherwise.

6. Should schools be allowing their facilities to be used for external events (sport, workshops etc)?

School are still operating 'business as usual' and facilities can still be used for external events if the user wishes to do so following their own risk assessment and ensuring hygiene standards are followed.

7. Should Outdoor Education classes be cancelled?

If the activity is extra-curricular then it should be cancelled.

If the activity is a core element of learning program, then it can go ahead as long as it is safe to do so.

Appropriate risk management must be in place.

8. Will school photos be going ahead?

Yes – provided reasonable processes are undertaken and only photos taken in class groups

9. Music and PE classes – can they go ahead?

Yes, need to ensure reasonable processes are in place to support good hygiene practices.

10. Can breakfast clubs continue to operate?

Breakfast Clubs – are able to continue with management of good hygiene and social distancing

CONTACTS

For up-to-date information, visit:

- [Tasmanian Public Health website](#)
- [Tasmanian Department of Education](#)
- [Australian Government Department of Health website](#)
- Coronavirus Health Information Line [1800 020 080](tel:1800020080).