



Covid 19 Return to School POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how Karoo Primary School (KPS) will be managing risk relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) during key interactions between students, parents and staff.

KPS 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.

KPS is following the advice from the Department of Education and Training including, <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/health-and-safety-advice-all-victorian-schools> which can be found on the Department's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#).

This policy applies to everyone in the 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.

Implementation

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.

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.

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.
- As per the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer, COVIDSafe measures have been put in place to ensure that schools are as safe as possible for all children including those with medical vulnerabilities, however independent medical advice should always be taken on an individual basis.
- An individual assessment is always recommended and decisions regarding school attendance should be informed by the nature of a child or young person's condition, its severity and intensity of required treatment. In most cases, the presence of common conditions of childhood, such as asthma,

epilepsy or Type 1 diabetes, should not preclude a student from attending face-to-face learning.

- In keeping with expert public health advice, some students may be at higher risk for severe outcomes or complications of COVID-19, for example those with chronic medical conditions. Any student with a chronic medical condition should seek advice from their medical practitioner about attending school onsite at different stages in the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Visitors to school grounds should be limited to essential school services and operations. Guidance to support schools about which visits are 'essential' is in the School Operations Guide. Please contact the school for guidance.
- The Victorian Chief Health Officer has determined that COVID-19 vaccination will be mandatory for staff who work in schools. This includes principals, teachers, administration and education support staff, including casual relief teachers (CRTs), pre-service teachers, and Out of School Hours Care staff.
- All staff that work in schools will be required to have a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 18 October 2021 or be able to produce evidence of a vaccination booking within the following seven days.
- All staff are required to be fully vaccinated by 29 November 2021 unless a medical exemption applies. They will be required to show evidence of their vaccination status.
- Essential visitors to school grounds must comply with density limits, face mask requirements, QR code check-ins and practise respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene.
- KPS provides the Service Victoria QR Code check in system to record all visitors entering buildings on the school site (including contractors, external Department staff, building and maintenance staff and parents who enter school buildings).
- The density limit of one person per four square metres should be applied to any spaces and activities being attended by parent/carers and other visitors. The density limit applies to all persons in the space, including students.
- KPS asks that any parents/carers wishing to discuss any matters with a staff member to use the options of either a phone call, video call or email.
- School events, gatherings, assemblies, and non-essential meetings should be deferred or held remotely.
- School excursions and camps will be postponed or conducted virtually if appropriate.
- Allied health professionals can provide urgent or essential services onsite at all schools where telehealth services are not clinically appropriate

- All interschool activities should be deferred or held remotely
- Use of school facilities by community and sport groups is not permitted

Health and Safety Measures

- School staff will increase fresh air flow into indoor spaces (including shared spaces, staff areas and thoroughfares) whenever possible. Staff and students will maximise the use of outdoor learning areas or environments wherever possible.
- Students should practise physical distancing where possible. Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not always be practical in the school environment and may be particularly challenging in the younger years of primary school. In these contexts, a combination of health and safety measures should be utilised to reduce risk.
- All Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 students must always wear a face mask indoors at school, including when attending an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program, unless a lawful exception applies.
- All school staff to wear a face mask while teaching wherever practicable, except where removal of a face mask is necessary for effective communication.
- Karoo strongly recommends students in Foundation, Year 1 and 2 wear face masks when at school, attending an OSHC program, or when travelling to and from school on public transport, taxis or ride share vehicles
- Parents/carers will be required to wear face masks whenever they leave the house, including for school drop off and pick up. If they are travelling in a car alone, or only with members of their household, they do not need to wear a mask.
- School staff should refer to the Department [guidance for the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) in education](#) to determine when additional PPE is required and for information on the correct and safe use of PPE.

School arrival and departure

DET advises that:

Close proximity between members of the school community should be avoided, particularly during school drop-off and pick-up.

This means that for KPS:

- We ask staff and parents/carers to observe physical distancing measures by not congregating in areas inside or around the school.
- To minimise interaction of students and adults within the school and at entry points we:
 - Are implementing staggered starting times for families from 8:45am to 9:00am.
 - Will have staff at entry gates to support students as they enter and leave the school grounds so parents do not enter the school grounds.
 - Request that parents only enter the school grounds when essential to do

so and to contact the school by phone or email where appropriate instead.

- Encourage non-contact greetings.
- Ask that parents/carers do not to linger while picking up or dropping off students.

Hygiene

DET advises that:

At KPS:

- 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. It is recommended that students do not drink directly from drinking fountains at this time but they can refill their drink bottles.
- Staff and students are reminded to clean their mobile phones regularly. The Karoo Primary School Mobile Phone 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:

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 KPS we will be:

- Separating different year levels when outdoors into different areas.
- Keeping windows and doors open to promote fresh air flow indoors when weather permits.
- Maximising use of outdoor learning areas or environments with enhanced ventilation where possible and as practical depending on weather conditions.
- Staff will maintain physical distancing as much as practical when working in a classroom together.
- Wearing masks at the direction of the Chief Health Officer.

School offices and staff facilities

DET advises that:

At KPS we will:

- Spread staff workstations out as much as possible and limit the number of staff in offices, re-locating 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.
- Provide traffic flow guidance in staffroom and resource rooms.
- Monitor staff and student face mask compliance and COVIDSafe practices at school.
- Provide information, training, and instruction on health hygiene to staff and students.
- Eliminate or minimise the necessity of using shared equipment at this time. Such items may include shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, and musical instruments. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use. Risk can be further minimised with users wiping down items where appropriate, for example using a disinfectant/detergent wipe or cloth.
- Display QR codes prominently around the school site, including at gates, entryways, reception and outside buildings.

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 KPS 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. See Department information about [Access to cleaning supplies and services](#).
- Carefully consider the necessity of using shared items or equipment e.g. shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, musical instruments etc. 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.

- 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.

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 KPS:

- Standard precautions as per DET [Infectious Diseases policy](#) and [Karoo 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, unless such precautions are usually adopted in the routine care of an individual student.

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.

This means that at KPS:

- Staff or students experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should be advised to get tested and stay home until they receive a test result. See Managing illness in schools and early childhood services during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 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 and physical distancing. See DET [guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).
- When 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.
- Staff or students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) should be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps.
- Staff and students should not return until symptoms resolve. If they have been tested for COVID-19, they must also wait for a negative test result.
- 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.

- Everyone should consider their health before they start work or attend school and ensure that they are free from coronavirus symptoms and have not had contact in the past 14 days with a person confirmed to have coronavirus or a person suspected to have coronavirus.
- We will contact the Department on 1800 126 126 and make an IRIS Alert 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.

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>
- [DET Infectious Diseases Policy:](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/infectiousdiseases.aspx)
 - <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)
 - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/healthcareneeds.aspx>

Evaluation

This policy was last updated on 10th October will be reviewed at the end of Term 4 2021.