

LCS OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR MANAGING COVID-19 IN SCHOOL

Created: 28th January 2022

To be in place for the first 5 weeks of Term 1 – 2022*

This plan has been developed from the following resources:

- Australian Govt - [National Framework for Managing COVID-19 in Schools & Early Childhood Education Care](#) ;
- Dept of Education - [Tasmania's Operational Plan for Managing COVID-19 in Schools](#); and
- Independent Schools Tasmania - Notes and Guidance for IST Member Independent Schools

*Plan to be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains contemporary, complies with Public Health advice and continues to provide the best protection for students.



LAUNCESTON
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

Principle 1 - Schools are essential and should be the first to open and last to close wherever possible in outbreak situations, with face-to-face learning prioritised.

To keep our students and staff as safe as possible, COVID Safe measures will be in place in our schools in line with public health advice. These measures build on what schools are already doing.

COVID Safe measures include:

- Hygiene and physical distancing;
- Vaccination;
- Ventilation and use of outdoor learning environments;
- Safe site management;
- Face masks; and
- Outbreak management plans.

All students should be at school unless they:

1. are unwell or have symptoms of COVID-19;
2. have medical advice which states they are unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical condition; or
3. have been directed to stay home by Public Health.

LCS will continue to support students and young people with disability and those who are medically vulnerable on an individual basis, working closely with parents and carers. Families of students with disability who have complex health needs will be contacted within the first teaching week to discuss updating their individualised learning plan as a priority.

Parents can contact the school to discuss their child's individual learning plan.

Online Learning

- The Hub will continue to be a good source of information for learning management. Initially, this will not replace face-to-face classroom based learning.
- Should there be a need to provide an online learning educational experience, the School will communicate and provide student access to Microsoft Teams and The Hub in accordance with the LCS [Online Teaching and Learning Guidelines](#)
- When a student is isolating and/or quarantining and unable to return to school, teachers will strive to provide an authentic teaching program subject to constraints within the subject/classroom. This may be done via Teams or providing work for students to complete whilst in isolation.

Staff

LCS is proactively reviewing its workforce to identify pressure points and put in place strategies to cover expected absences. This includes:

- contacting existing part-time staff to increase their teaching load if required for Relief
- revisiting long service leave requests
- using relief staff.

Principle 2 - Baseline public health measures continue to apply.

COVID Safe measures will be in place in line with public health advice.

Attendance and Cleaning

- Staff, students and any visitors to LCS who are unwell or have COVID symptoms must stay home and not come on site.
- Students, staff and visitors must stay home if isolating if they have COVID or quarantining as a household or household-like close contact.
- Maintenance Dept will increase their cleaning regime to include high-touch surfaces twice daily.
- Classroom desks/chairs will be disinfected by staff/students at the end of each lesson.
- Quad-Hygelene (disinfectant), hand sanitiser and paper towel will be available in all classrooms for staff and students to use.
- Additional cleaning of rooms that hold after school events will be conducted.
- Additional disinfecting of high touch point surfaces and increased ventilation will occur following a positive case.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing and density requirements help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

- All staff and visitors must stay 1.5 metres apart and comply with density requirements such as maximum room capacity advice. Maximum occupancy numbers will be signed at the entrance of communal rooms and spaces.
- COVID-safe measures will be applied in staff rooms and offices, and students will be supported to physically distance *where possible*.
- Staff will limit unnecessary mixing. Two staffrooms will be created to separate Junior School and Admin Staff from the Secondary School as much as possible:
 - **Main Staffroom** to be used by Leadership, Junior School Teachers and Aides, Maintenance & Admin Staff.
 - **E Block Breakout space & kitchen** to be used by Secondary Teachers and Aides as a staff room.
- Where possible Secondary Staff to use staff toilets in A, D, E & F blocks & toilets behind the PAC. Junior School, Leadership, Maintenance, Admin to use toilets within admin block.
- Teachers will limit unnecessary mixing between class groups where this is not required for learning.
- Distance markers will be placed on the floor in staff rooms and reception areas
- Non-essential staff gatherings such as Birthday Morning Teas will be postponed until at least Week 5.

Facemasks

Facemasks are required to be worn indoors by all staff, parents, visitors and students in years 7 – 12 in accordance with [Tasmanian Government directives](#).

- LCS has a limited supply of surgical masks for staff and students. Staff and parents are strongly encouraged to supply their own masks.
- Junior school students are not required to wear masks but they will be supported should they choose to wear them. Class teachers will have a limited supply available in their classrooms.

- Students in Years 7-12 will be required to wear masks on public transport when travelling to and from school (unless they can provide a medical exemption).
- Training will be provided to staff and students on the correct wearing of masks, responsible use, hygiene and infection control in accordance with [public health guidelines](#).
- Staff, parents and visitors to school sites are **required** to wear a mask indoors (unless they have a medical exemption).
- Parents are encouraged to drop off and pick up only for students. Parents needing to accompany their child to their classroom **must wear a mask even whilst outdoors**.
- IST recommends that teachers wear masks at all times in their classroom, other than when clear enunciation is required. Staff will not be identified as close contacts at school unless they have had household like contact, this being longer than 4 hours and without wearing a mask. Therefore, a staff member wearing a mask at the time of exposure to a confirmed case at school will not be classified as a close contact irrespective of the exposure time.

Ventilation

Natural airflow will be increased by opening windows and doors and learning outdoors where possible.

- Windows around the School have been assessed and repaired where needed to ensure they can be opened. Teachers will be instructed to ensure where possible all doors and windows remain open and air-conditioning left on to ensure maximum circulation of air.
- Periodic maintenance of air conditioners and air purifiers is ongoing, including the replacement of air filters.
- An external audit of workspaces within the school is being undertaken to identify additional ventilation needs and solutions such as air purifiers.
- The School is working to identify further opportunities for outdoor learning spaces and to enhance existing outdoor learning areas.

Vaccination

Public Health advice is that vaccination is the best way to reduce the severity of COVID-19 symptoms and the likelihood of contracting the virus.

- All staff, visitors and contractors must comply with the LCS Covid-19 Staff Vaccination Policy.
- All staff will be supported to receive booster doses.
- Current Public Health advice strongly encourages students aged 5 and upwards to be vaccinated.
- Contractors and volunteers must be fully vaccinated to work at or visit the school. Unvaccinated visitors must provide either a Medical Contraindication Form or apply at least 48 hours in advance to the Principal via a Conscientious Objection Form in line with our LCS Covid-19 Staff Vaccination Policy. Visitors to the school outside of normal school opening hours will be required to provide evidence of vaccination to a staff member if requested.
- LCS will not treat students differently based on their vaccination status.

Outbreak Management

The LCS COVID Safety Plan is regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with Public Health advice.

- A class outbreak is determined when five or more cases occur in students and staff from a class within 7 days of each other with Public Health to support if and when required.
- The class will continue to operate with regular testing and quarantining if a teacher or child is positive or symptomatic.

Parent, Carer & Visitor Access

Minimising the number of people who come inside school buildings helps minimise transmission.

- Any parent or visitor who is under medical treatment or testing in relation to COVID-19 will be refused access to the school. This includes anyone who has been instructed to isolate or quarantine.
- Drop off and / pick up for students will be streamlined - stop, drop and go.
- Parents of young children may accompany their child to their classroom but **must wear a mask even whilst outdoors** during peak drop of and pick up times. Parents should not enter the classroom.
- Parent meetings with staff must be held outside or online only.
- Parents or visitors accessing the school site between 9am and 3pm must comply with the entry requirements of the School:
 - Sign-in at the Office and agree to questions on Visitor Information Check In (VICI)
 - Register on the Check In Tas App
 - Provide proof of vaccination status
 - Be wearing a mask.

Assemblies and Performances

Restrictions may apply due to Public Health requirements such as density limits.

- There will be limited events and performances during the first 5 weeks of term.
- 2021 Senior School Awards Night will continue with ticketed numbers limited.
- Junior School Teacher Parent Info Evening will not proceed in a face-to-face forum. Teachers will advise parents of alternative arrangements which may include a video on the class Hub page.

School Sport Activities, Excursions and Camps

- It is anticipated that carnivals, excursions and camps will proceed as normal with COVID Safe practices in place.
- Masks are not required to be worn by students whilst outdoors.
- Masks are not required to be worn when undertaking vigorous physical activity indoors.
- All risk assessments will require a COVID Safe plan to be approved by the Head of School prior to any activity taking place.

Mixing of Learner Groups

- Teachers will limit mixing between different student groups where this is not required for learning purposes.
- Where possible, Junior and Secondary staff will be separated unless specifically required for learning purposes.

Principle 3 - No vulnerable child or child of an essential worker is turned away

- Term 1 is commencing on time with school open for face-to-face learning.
- The Government is coordinating efforts across agencies to ensure that all Tasmania's children and young people are safe, well and actively engaged in learning.
- The Department of Education works closely with other agencies to support vulnerable students to access, participate and engage in their learning.
- Class teachers, Year Level Coordinators and Heads of School in conjunction with the School Wellbeing Unit & Education Support Unit will continue to support the wellbeing of all students, with a particular focus on those students with diverse and complex needs requiring coordinated support.
- It is a priority that schools remain open for vulnerable children and children of essential workers to attend. However, they should not attend if they are:
 - feeling unwell,
 - have medical advice which states they are unable to return to school due to an ongoing medical condition, or
 - they have been directed to stay home by Public Health.

Principle 4 – Responses to be proportionate and health-risk based

This plan applies for the first five weeks of Term 1. This will allow proportionate adjustments to be made in the second five weeks of Term 1 based on the extent of community transmission and increased vaccination rates of students.

The plan for weeks 1 to 5 of Term 1 will be communicated to students, parents, families and staff in advance.

Back to School COVID Care Package

All students will receive a COVID-19 Care Package to support their return to school. This will include:

- an initial two Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) per student, to be used only if symptomatic
- 2 disposable surgical masks (for secondary students only); and
- important practical information for students and parents/carers.

These will be provided to each student to take home on their first day of school.

Parents should contact the school office if their child is symptomatic and in need of a further test.

The school will have a limited supply of RAT's for use by staff if they are symptomatic.

Parents, staff and students should continue to follow Public Health advice in regards to what to do if you have been advised that you are a [close contact](#).

Stay Home if Unwell

Students, staff and visitors **must stay home if unwell** or if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (even if tested negative).

- Parents will be contacted to collect their child immediately if they are sent to the Office with symptoms.
- A Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) will be provided for the parent to administer at home.
- The results of the RAT should be provided to the school.

What to do if you test positive to COVID-19 – Checklist

1. Look after your health & call the COVID@Home Care Team on **1800 973 363**
2. Immediately isolate for 7 days
3. Register your positive RAT result via the online declaration form ([hyperlink](#))
4. Advise the School by contacting the Office on 63 272 854 or by email office@lcs.tas.edu.au
5. Inform your close contacts
6. Tell your social contacts
7. If you have no symptoms on day 7 you can leave isolation

For further information please visit the Public Health website –

<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/what-to-do-if-you-test-positive-to-covid-19-checklist>

Confirmed Cases and Outbreak Management

- Parents/carers and staff will be informed if there is a case in a class and will be asked to:
 1. monitor their child for symptoms;
 2. test if needed; and
 3. stay home if unwell.
- Unless otherwise advised, the class will remain open for learning and students who are well should continue to attend.
- Public Health advice currently states that a class outbreak is determined when five or more cases occur in students and staff from a class within 7 days of each other with Public Health to support if and when required.
- Staff and Parents of the class will be notified via electronic communication as soon as practicable.
- The class will continue to operate with regular testing and quarantining if a teacher or child is positive or symptomatic.
- Students with disability with complex health needs will continue to be supported on an individual basis, working closely with parents and carers as necessary. This could include additional medical advice within the student's medical action plan.

Principle 5 - Equip schools to respond on the basis of public health advice and with support from public health authorities where required

- Independent Schools Tasmania (IST) (in conjunction with The Department of Health and Department of Education) will support LCS to revise our COVID plans, according to Public Health advice.
- Staff, students and their families will be provided with clear advice on what to do if they are considered a close contact in line with Public Health advice.
- Subject to available supplies, LCS will distribute RATs for students in the first week of Term 1, and aim to provide further supplies for use by staff and students when confirmed cases occur.
- Confirmed cases in schools will be managed in accordance with Public Health advice.

Principle 6 – Wellbeing of children and education staff to be supported

Student Wellbeing

- Students will be actively encouraged by class teachers to use PULSE, an online wellbeing check-in program.
- Class teachers, Year Level Coordinators and Heads of School in conjunction with the School Wellbeing Unit & Education Support Unit will continue to monitor and support the wellbeing of all students providing both face-to-face and online support, for students learning on site and from home as required.
- Parents are encouraged to refer any concerns to class teachers in the first instance, then to Year Level Coordinators and/or the appropriate Head of School if concerns continue.

Staff Wellbeing/Workload

- LCS will communicate clearly with staff on expectations, processes, planning and resources related to COVID, including the resources available to support student learning and wellbeing.
- Staff will continue to be supported with leave to access vaccinations and boosters as required
- Paid Pandemic Leave (up to 10 days per annum) will be available to support all staff through COVID-related absences
- Staff are encouraged to access the LCS Pastoral Counsellor and/or Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if needed.
- Teaching Staff will be permitted to leave at 3:30pm each day unless required for meetings / duty
- Face-to-face staff meetings will be minimised
- Staff PULSE will be introduced to provide an online wellbeing check-in program

Appendix 1 – LCS Safety in Schools Plan (Infographic)

Appendix 2 – What to do if you are a close contact (Infographic)

LCS Safety in Schools Plan

First 5 weeks of term until Friday 11th March - to be reviewed and communicated

Principle 1 - Schools are essential and should be the first to open and last to close

- Face-to-face learning is a priority. A switch to online-learning will be communicated if required.

Principle 2 - Baseline public health measures continue to apply.

- Attendance - The most important action you can take is that if your child is unwell, please keep them home and get tested
- Cleaning – Frequent cleaning will continue, particularly on high-touch surfaces
- Physical Distancing – All adults will keep a physical distance of 1.5 meters from each other. Students will be supported to physically distance where possible.
- Facemasks – All adults will wear face masks indoors except where clear enunciation is required by teachers. Year 7-12 students must wear face masks when indoors. Medical exemptions apply. School will maintain a limited supply.
- Ventilation – open windows/doors will be used for classrooms
- Vaccination – All staff must comply with the LCS Covid-19 vaccination policy. Public Health encourages all students age 5 years and older to be vaccinated.
- Outbreak management – classes will continue to operate when there is a positive case at school and a management plan actioned.
- School Access – Parent access to school will be restricted to quick drop off/pickup, meetings with teachers limited and access to school through the office
- Assemblies/Performances – limited or postponed
- School Sport, Activities, Excursions & camps – essential part of curriculum and will continue with Covid safe measures

Principle 3 - No vulnerable child is turned away

All efforts will be made to support and engage student in learning. Vulnerable students and children of essential workers will continue to be supported at school even if we have to return to on-line learning.

Principle 4 - Responses to be proportionate and health-risk based

Back-to-school care package – an initial 2 RAT's to be supplied to students for use if symptomatic.

Staff and students must stay home if unwell and if they are positive to Covid they must advise the school and Public Health.

Staff, students and parents will be notified via electronic communication if there is an outbreak at school.

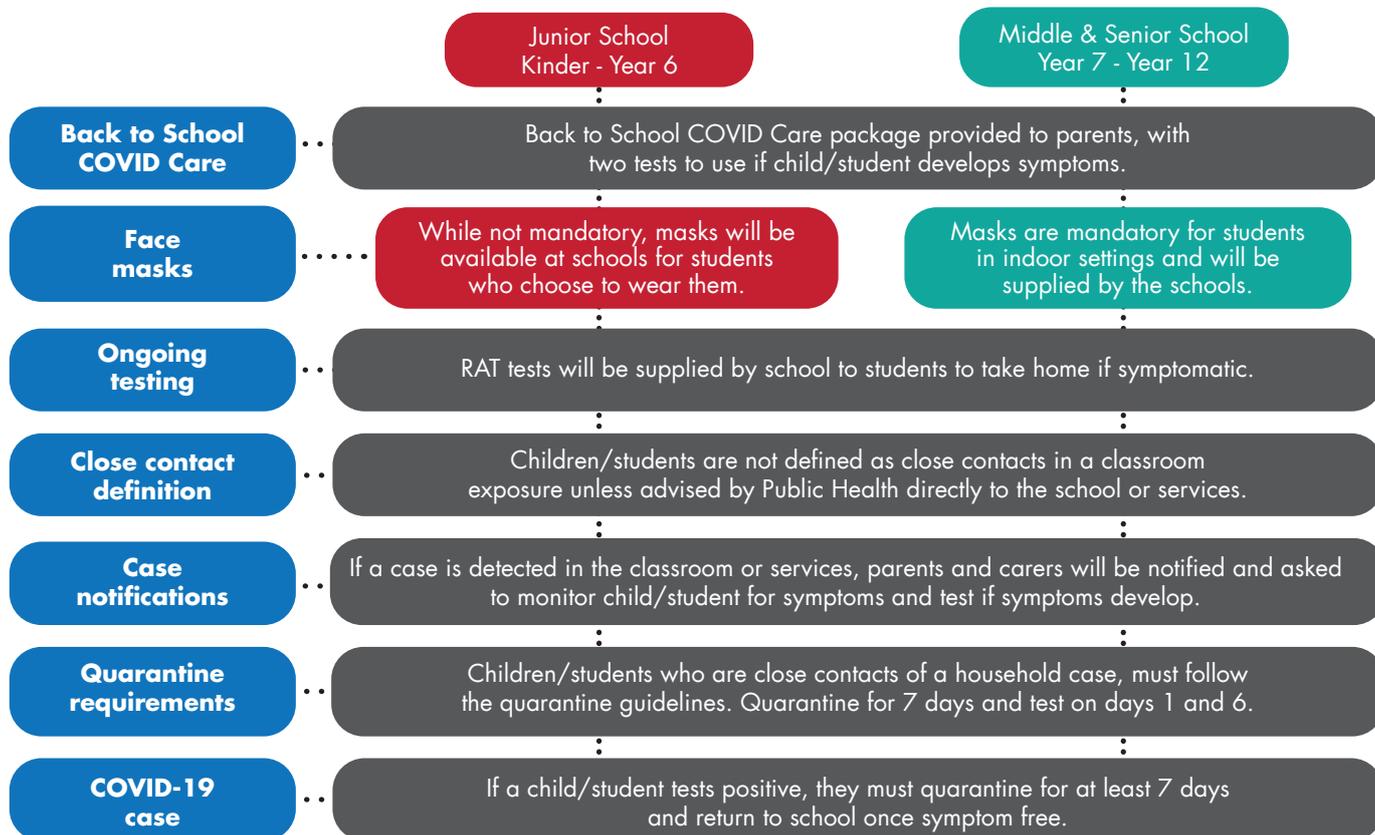
Principle 5 - Equip schools to respond on the basis of public health advice

- Staff, students and their families will be provided with clear advice on what to do if they are considered a close contact in line with Public Health advice.

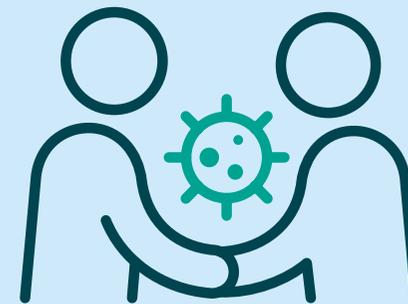
Principle 6 - Wellbeing of children and education staff to be supported

• Class teachers, Year Level Coordinators and Heads of School in conjunction with the School Wellbeing Unit & Education Support Unit will continue to monitor and support the wellbeing of all students providing both face-to-face and online support, for students learning on site and from home as required.

• Staff will be supported if unwell through access to pandemic leave & counselling services. Teaching Staff will be permitted to leave at 3:30pm each day unless required for an essential meeting / duty. Face-to-face staff meetings will be minimised



What to do if you are a close contact



A **close contact** is a household or household-like contact who has had face to face contact for more than 4 hours with a case i.e. at home or when visiting another home. Where determined by Public Health, a close contact may also be someone who has spent more than 4 hours at an event or premises where a significant transmission event has occurred.

Due to the number of COVID cases in our community there will be a number of people who become **close contacts** of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

Most people will be notified they are a close contact by the person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Close contacts must **quarantine for 7 days** and **take a rapid antigen test (RAT)** on day one and day six of quarantine.

Quarantine exemptions can be provided for close contacts who work in critical work areas.

Monitor for symptoms and test (either RAT or PCR test) if symptoms develop at any time.

Close contacts that received negative test result taken on day 6 and do not have symptoms can **leave quarantine after 7 days**.

OR

If you test positive to COVID-19 you must isolate immediately. If you used a RAT, you are required to notify Public Health of your positive test result. Complete the online form atcoronavirus.tas.gov.au/positive-result or call the Public Health Hotline.

For more information refer to the coronavirus website.

