

Dear St Joseph's parents and carers,

Welcome to a new school year, an exciting time as our students start or return to their school journey. You may have heard via media or even a direct message from the NSW government about measures being taken for return to school for all NSW students.

I want to share how we are building on our experiences of the last two years and continuing to safeguard our school community while keeping our school open, where we know the best learning happens.

We will start 2022 with a layered approach to COVID-smart measures that have been developed in partnership with NSW Health to help minimise transmissions at school. The health and wellbeing of our students and staff remain our priority and these measures are designed to help keep our school open and our students learning in the classroom. These are some basics now, we will send a further communication later this week.

These key measures include:

- Rapid antigen test (RAT) kits will be provided to all students to help monitor your child's health and minimise transmission of COVID-19 across our school. Once these are delivered to our school, I will communicate details of collection procedures. We are hoping that collection will occur this Friday morning and next Monday morning to enable your child to take their 1st RAT **BEFORE** attending their scheduled MAI time with their class teacher
- Wearing of surgical masks indoors is required for all staff and strongly recommended for all primary students.
- Only fully vaccinated visitors essential to delivering and supporting learning or wellbeing can come on a school site. Two vaccinated Parents/carers per child are permitted for Kindergarten transition to school on Wednesday 2nd Feb and for any new students to the school on Tuesday 1st Feb
- Continued use of good hygiene, enhanced cleaning, good air flow and ventilation in learning spaces and physical distancing practices.

While this is not going to be a normal start to the school year, we know that being together in the classroom is the most effective way for students to learn and grow. Your child's relationship with their teacher is important, but as we manage potential disruptions to staffing due to COVID-19, they may get to meet more teachers than usual.

Unwell at school

Any student or staff member who is unwell and/or displays symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to go home and stay until they can complete a RAT or PCR test.

- If a student or staff member displays even mild COVID-19 symptoms, they must take a RAT or get a PCR test and isolate until they receive a negative test result.
- Students **must not come to school until they are symptom free, even if they get a negative RAT result.**

What happens when a student or staff tests positive to COVID-19

Under the new close contact rules, schools are no longer included in contact tracing. I will inform the school community when there is a positive case in our school and advise families on public health advice, including monitoring for symptoms.

Visitors on school sites and vaccinations

No parents, carers or visitors will be allowed on school site for the first 4 weeks of Term 1 with the exception of:

- Two parents/carers are allowed to accompany their child into school on their first day of Kindergarten or new students starting at our school.
- Visitors supporting school operations and curriculum delivery.
- Allied health partners for the wellbeing of students.

All staff on school sites are required to be fully vaccinated, including having their booster when eligible.

We strongly encourage our students and their families to consider vaccination when eligible. [Find a vaccination clinic](#) to book an appointment near you.

Other key measures

Ventilation

We will continue to follow NSW Health ventilation guidelines in that natural ventilation is the most effective measure so we will maximise fresh air flow in learning spaces through opening doors and windows. We will continue to use the CO2 monitors to measure the CO2 in rooms to indicate if we need to ventilate more. This approach is strongly supported by expert advice. We will continue to use outdoor settings if possible.

Cleaning

We continue to have enhanced cleaning focusing on high-touch and high traffic areas with our Hygienist, Maeve.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Virginia Outred

Principal