

Billanook Primary School



COVID 19 Return to School Policy

Rationale:

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 and until such time as the Chief Health Officer (CHO) advises it is no longer required. This policy may be amended at any time as required by the DET, CHO or Billanook Primary School. Amendments will be communicated through Compass. As there will be regular updates in requirements, members of our school community should expect changes and are responsible for reading and adhering to the necessary arrangements for the health and safety of all.

Billanook 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. This policy is being implemented during the current State of Emergency and for as long as deemed necessary.

Background:

Billanook 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 Billanook 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.

Implementation:

Attendance on-site

The Department of Education and Training (DET) advises that:

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.
- 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, specialist curriculum programs and maintenance workers).
- Additional staff, including parent volunteers, will not be attending school or student support programs until advice from the CHO deems this to be safe. Activities dependent on and involving parents are cancelled until further notice.
- We ask that parents or carers who need to contact teachers do so via email, hand written note or by phoning the office. Urgent matters should be communicated by phone call.
- All interschool activities that involve onsite attendance by students from other schools, such as inter-school sports will be cancelled until further notice.
- School assemblies, excursions, camps and other non-essential large gatherings will be postponed until further notice.
- All shared learning resources will be cleaned each day
- All payments and purchases for school uniform are to be done through our online store or at the Spartan School supplies shop.

School arrival and departure

The Department of Education and Training (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.
- Parents/Carers should not enter the school grounds or buildings at any time unless by prior arrangement with the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- The following arrangements will remain in place until further notice.

DROP OFF (Mornings)

- In the morning class teachers will meet their classes at the main gate. They will stand apart from other classes.
- Each class will walk from the main gate to the classroom with their class.
- Where possible, parents who drive their children to school are encouraged to drop off their child/ren in the kiss and drop area.
- We understand that some children will be anxious about returning to school and will require an adult to walk them to their classroom, if this is absolutely necessary please keep your distance from other adults and leave the school site as soon as possible.

LATE ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

- Any students arriving after the 9am bell (if the classes have moved off to their classrooms) must be brought to the main entrance and signed in with one of the office staff. As the front door will be locked during the day, parents will need to knock loudly or telephone the school office for the door to be unlocked.

- Students must NOT be sent directly to classrooms after 9am.

PICK UP

- In the afternoons we are sending children down to the main gate in 2 groups.
- Children with a surname that begins with A – K will be collected at 3pm.
- Children with a surname beginning with L – Z will be collected at 3:30pm.
- Children from Levels 3 – 6 who are learning onsite will be collected at 3:30pm, unless they have a sibling that is leaving earlier.
- Children who are walking or riding home will leave at 3:30pm.

Hygiene:

The Department of Education and Training (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). Students will not be able to drink directly from drinking fountains at this time.
- Staff and students are reminded to clean their mobile phones regularly. The Billanook PS Mobile Phone Policy remains in place so students must hand in their mobile phones at the office upon arrival at school.
- Sharing of food is not permitted.
- If students are required to share equipment during classes, they will be asked to wash hands at the conclusion of this sharing.
- Consideration is given to sanitising of tables and equipment located in shared learning spaces

Specific arrangements for teaching and learning environments and break times

The Department of Education and Training (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 Billanook PS we are fortunate to have grounds and play areas that will support social distancing and minimise interactions between year level groups as much as possible.

At our school, we will:

- Maintain a normal recess and lunchtime schedule for all students.
- Students from different year levels will be allocated zones to play in during recess breaks. For example: Foundation students may be asked to play in the sandpit area and the basketball court and level one students may be asked to use only the mini oval.
- Students will be strongly encouraged to maintain social distancing as much as possible, and discouraged from touching or having physical contact with other students or staff

- Contact sports will be discouraged

In classrooms, we will:

- Organise learning spaces according to DET recommendations and advice from the Chief Health Officer.
- Wherever possible use natural ventilation to maintain a flow of fresh air in classrooms.
- Wherever possible use outdoor areas for activities such as Physical Education

Additionally:

- Until further notice there will be minimal mixing between classes – who will spend most of their learning time with their regular class mates, teachers and support staff.
- There will be no formal assemblies or student meetings conducted indoors

School offices and staff facilities

The Department of Education and Training (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 Billanook PS we will:

- In line with other workplaces across Victoria, remind staff to maintain physical distancing from each other as much as possible in the staff room, learning spaces and offices.
- Instruct staff who have any illness to stay home
- Ensure that contact in administration areas / offices is kept to a minimum
- Ensure that staff are appropriately distanced in the staffroom and social areas of the school.
- Ensure that meetings will be conducted using video conferencing via WebEx.

Cleaning and facilities management

The Department of Education and Training (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 the 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](#).
- Provide liquid hand soap and/or hand sanitiser for use of students and staff
- Carefully consider the necessity of using shared items or equipment eg. shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, musical instruments etc at this time.
- Practise hand hygiene immediately before and after use of shared equipment.

Sport and recreation

The Department of Education and Training (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 (after week 7). 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. Where indoor facilities are used, we will limit the number of students in the gym or community building to a single class.

- Non-contact sports will be encouraged at this time. Hand hygiene will be practised before and after the use of any sporting equipment.

Provision of routine care and first aid

The Department of Education and Training (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 Billanook PS First Aid Policy will be followed. We will use gloves when dealing with blood or body fluids/substances and a plastic apron for major injuries
- Hand hygiene will be practised before and after performing routine care or first aid.
- Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including 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.
- PPE may be considered for adults who are supervising or caring for any children who are showing cold/flu symptoms.

Management of an unwell student or staff member

The Department of Education and Training (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.

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 symptoms compatible 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](#).
- 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 with a non touch thermometer.
- Staff or students experiencing symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19) are 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 cleaned immediately 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.

The school will:

- Contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 to discuss further steps if a student or staff member:
 - is a confirmed case
 - has been in close contact with a confirmed case
- We will inform DET by making an [IRIS 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)

Evaluation:

This policy was last updated on 20th May, 2020 and will be reviewed at the end of Term 2