



Term 2, 2022 Return to School Plan - Parents

'Educating with COVID'



GUIDING PRINCIPLE

As with the key guiding principles of the College throughout the covid pandemic, the primary objective of this Return to School Plan is the safety and wellbeing of the College and its Community.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Term 2, 2022 Return to School Plan (Plan) is to maintain continuity of teaching and learning in as safe an environment as possible by applying mitigating strategies against the deleterious effects of COVID-19 (covid).

The Plan reflects a detailed risk assessment conducted for College operations in December 2021 against the backdrop of educating with covid, and reflects the significant additional mitigation strategy now available regarding covid vaccination of adult members of the College community.

The Plan is also consistent and reflective of the general strategy of the Australian and Tasmanian Governments regarding management of covid which involves a shift to 'living with covid' within a largely vaccinated community as opposed to the previous primary management tools of isolation and lockout of covid. It is also noted that the ongoing delivery of education is regarded by Government as an essential service and there is an expectation that schools will remain open for the delivery of face-to-face learning wherever possible subject to the implementation of detailed covid planning and covid mitigation strategies.

SPECIFIC CHANGES FOR TERM 2

The following information regarding changes to COVID protocols in schools for Term 2, was provided by Independent Schools Tasmania.

1. From the commencement of Term 2 the approach for managing cases of COVID-19 in schools will move away from outbreak-based management toward symptoms-based testing.
2. Parents will be provided with RATs so that, if their child exhibits symptoms they should administer a test. If the first test is negative then a second RAT or PCR test should be administered the following day, and the child should not attend school during that time. Should the second test also register a negative result the child may return to school, subject to them being well and non-symptomatic. The same timeline/process should also be followed by symptomatic staff at a school.
3. From the commencement of Term 2 the College will contact Public Health for guidance where there are concerns such as:
 - a. Significant transmission event
 - b. Concern about increasing numbers of cases in class / year group or across the school.
 - c. When cases in staff are such that the school is unable to meet its operational requirements.

STRATEGIES

These mitigating strategies have led to the College's 2022 Return to School Plan having the following eight key actions:

- I. All staff and regular visitors being **Fully vaccinated**
- II. All adults and Penquite-based students wearing **Masks** indoors; for Elphin-based students, masks indoors are optional but encouraged
- III. Ensuring that **covid Symptomatic People do not enter the campuses**
- IV. **Physical distancing** of people when on campus
- V. Practicing good **Hygiene**
- VI. Ensuring spaces are adequately **Ventilated**
- VII. Thorough **Cleaning and disinfecting**; and
- VIII. Following **Respiratory etiquette**

I. VACCINATION

After a consultation period in December 2021 involving staff representatives, College Leadership and a representative of the Independent Schools Union, Scotch Oakburn College adopted a mandatory covid vaccination policy for all employees and adult visitors to the College (parents, volunteers, contractors, etc).

Exceptions to the requirement for adults to be fully vaccinated, as per the policy, are for:

- Transient visitors who remain on campus for less than 4 hours.
- People who have a medical exemption from vaccination. This must be provided at the time of entry to the campus or earlier.

BOARDING HOUSE

Evidence of vaccination may be required on entry. Unvaccinated adults are permitted, provided their stay on campus is less than 4 hours.

II. MASKS

Current Government protocols require all staff/adults and secondary students to wear a fitted face mask (worn over the nose and mouth) when indoors. Given the College's structure, it is a requirement for all **Penquite-based students**, Year 6 and above, and all College staff and visitors to wear a well-fitted mask at all times when indoors.

All students, Elphin and Penquite, and adults must wear an appropriate mask when travelling on an College bus, to and from school and when on excursion. This includes boarders travelling ¹ between the Boarding House and the Penquite Campus. People aged 12 and over must wear a well-fitted face mask on public transport/buses and the College encourages this practice for students of all ages.

Exceptions to the wearing of masks indoors, by either Penquite-based students and adults, are only available as follows:

- Where a medical exemption exists to the wearing of a mask, with the details of this to be provided to the College.
- When vision of the full face and/or clearly understood articulation is required for teaching and learning to be effective. This is at the discretion of the teacher responsible for the class at that time.
- When rigorous exercise is being undertaken (for example, in the College Fitness Centre or HPEC).
- When actively eating or drinking.

The wearing of masks for all Junior School or Elphin-based students is optional, although encouraged and supported by the College.

There will be clearly marked bins provided around each campus, specifically for the disposal of face masks.

BOARDING HOUSE

Students will be required to wear masks in common areas where adults are more likely to be working. The Boarding House will be zoned: amber zones (wear mask and physically distance where possible) and green zone (conditions associated with traditional family zone).

Visiting adults are required to wear a face mask when indoors.

III. SYMPTOMATIC PEOPLE – COVID POSITIVE PEOPLE

COVID SYMPTOMATIC PEOPLE

People who are symptomatic and/or unwell are not to come to school.

Anyone with cold and flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, tiredness/lethargy, shortness of breath, loss of sense taste or smell etc) are to stay at home, out of the College population, and organise to be tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.

- People who test negative to COVID:**
Anyone who is symptomatic AND test negative to COVID on a daily basis, can return to school as soon as they are non-symptomatic.
- People who test positive to COVID:**
As per Public Health guidelines, any person who tests positive for COVID-19 can return to school after a seven (7) day isolation period if they do not have any covid-like symptoms, such as temperature, fever, headaches and body aches.

Any student who presents at school with cold and flu-like symptoms or develops symptoms during the course of the day will be isolated at school and their parent contacted to pick them up.

Students who are absent from school for any reason can stay up to date with their learning by accessing their class Dash page(s) and emailing their teacher(s) for clarification, etc, if needed. If the majority or a whole class is absent, (or the teacher) the teacher may choose to utilise MS TEAMS to run the class online.

RAPID ANTIGEN TESTS (RATs)

The College provided all students with RATs for use if/when symptomatic. These are to be collected from Elphin Reception by parents of Junior School children and distributed to students in Years 6 – 12 by their Class Teacher, Form Teacher or Mentor.

A supply of RATs will be located at each reception for use by people who are symptomatic. Parent permission will be gained before a student undergoes a RAT.

The Boarding House will also have a supply of RATs for use as needed. Parent permission will be gained before a student undergoes a RAT.

COVID – POSITIVE PEOPLE

The College keeps an electronic record of all students and staff who have contracted covid. This information is kept confidential.

OTHER RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES

Staff and students with other respiratory illnesses, such as asthma, sinusitis, hay fever, etc, where symptoms may be confused with those typical of covid infection, are to provide a doctor's certificate identifying the symptoms typical of that respiratory illness so that those people can attend the College. Alternatively, people affected in this way should perform two (2) RATs per week to confirm their covid-negative status.

BOARDING HOUSE

Students and staff are asked to not return to the Boarding House if showing symptoms. Non-symptomatic close contacts of a confirmed case must take daily RATs for seven (7) day and wear a mask at all times when indoors.

There is daily monitoring of student symptoms in the Boarding House and use of RATs if symptoms are present.

IV. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

A very simple way of reducing the chance of being infected or passing on infection is to stand or sit back from other people in public or in the workplace. Hence, physical distancing between all people on campus is a key to preventing the transmission of the virus amongst our community.

Government guidelines state that physical distancing does not apply to students when at school. However, adults must still maintain 1.5 m between themselves and any other adults wherever possible. Posters placed around the campuses will advertise physical distancing.

ARRIVAL AT ELPHIN CAMPUS

Student arrival at school is potentially the most difficult scenario to ensure appropriate physical distancing. Consequentially, on the Elphin Campus, each Year Level has a designated gate/entry point that they are to enter the campus by.

On the Elphin Campus the drop off/pick up zones will continue near all gate/entry points and the relevant entry points for each Year Level are listed below. All students can arrive from 8:20am and enter the campus as per below:

- Gate 1: EL Erina: Erina Street Gate (Collection zone for BSC)
- Gate 2: EL Elphin: Elphin Road Gate (South at Jean Gardner Wing & collection zone for ASC)
- Gate 3: Prep: Elphin Road Gate (Main Driveway)
- Gate 4: Year 1: Elphin Road Gate (Main Driveway)
- Gate 5: Bus & Boarding Students: Elphin Road Gate (North – Crossing Lights)
- Gate 6: Years 2 & 3: Claremont Street Gate
- Gate 7: Years 4 & 5: Claremont Park Gate

Older siblings may enter through the allocated gate of their younger brother(s)/sister(s).

ARRIVAL AT PENQUITE CAMPUS

There are no specific entry requirements for Penquite students. As usual, late comers are to sign in at the appropriate reception on arrival. TCE students must sign in/out at Student Reception. As per normal, the drop off/pick up zones on both sides of Penquite Road will be operational and are encouraged for use.

DURING SCHOOL DAY

All students, whether during school hours or at the Boarding House, are at all times to restrain from any form of physical contact, e.g. greetings, gestures, hugs, handshakes.

Across the College:

- Desks will be appropriately spaced to ensure sufficient distance between each student as well as there being minimal chance of incidental contact between students,
- Students are to use only their own equipment (no sharing of pens, pencils, ruler, etc),
- If required, classrooms will be reallocated to ensure that larger rooms are used by classes with larger numbers of students,
- Practical subjects and shared spaces (e.g. HPEC, conneXions, Library, Music) – will need subject specific considerations.

RECESS AND LUNCHTIME

There are designated areas for year levels which ensures maximum space per student in the yard at break times and minimum mixing between Year Levels. In the Junior School students are to use only the designated Year Level outdoor areas in breaks. On the Penquite Campus, Middle and Senior School students remain on their campus; they are not to use the Penquite Road underpass unless necessary, returning to the appropriate side of the Penquite Campus promptly.

V. HYGIENE

To help control the spread of the virus during this pandemic, these protocols are to be observed:

- wash and dry your hands regularly and properly,
- wash and dry hands after removing your mask,
- always wash and dry hands thoroughly before eating,
- use hand sanitiser as required.

HAND HYGIENE

Hand hygiene is crucial to reducing the transmission of infectious agents. Hand hygiene includes washing hands with soap and water or cleaning hands with alcohol-based products (gels, rinses, foams) that can be used without water.

- If hands are visibly dirty and/or with respiratory secretions (phlegm, spit), wash them with soap (plain or antimicrobial) and warm water, scrubbing wrists, palms, fingers and nails for 15–20 seconds. Rinse, and dry with a clean, dry towel or paper towel.
- If there is no visible dirt, alcohol-based products with an emollient, might be preferred. They dry the skin less and can be more convenient.
- Always wash and dry hands after contact with other people, and before and after removing your mask, before and after removing gloves, and before touching your mouth, nose or eyes.
- In general, try to keep hands away from your face.

AT SCHOOL

- There is hand sanitiser in classrooms and break-out spaces, and soap in toilets.
- Posters placed around the campuses advertise hand washing.
- Even though the canteens/tuck shops are operating as normal, students are encouraged to be fully self-sufficient in terms of food and water/drink, bringing all they need for the day from home.
- There is to be no sharing or swapping of food or drink bottles etc.

- Drinking fountains that require contact to operate and that bring the mouth close to/touching the water outlet have been turned off.
- Subject to weather, eating outdoors is encouraged.

VI. VENTILATION

A College-wide audit of air quality and ventilation in learning spaces was carried out during Term 4 2021 and work to address areas of immediate need has been completed over the summer break. Facility developments in recent years have had fresh air circulation built into their design and consequently, most facilities have sufficient air flow to ensure the circulation of fresh air to occupants.

In below standard spaces, upgraded air-conditioning cassettes have been installed to introduce fresh air and create a positive pressure differential that will force air out of the rooms and so allow for appropriate fresh air circulation.

All windows have been assessed and the inoperable repaired, so that the majority of College windows can now be opened. Manual actions that are encouraged are opening windows and doors, weather permitting, and periodically moving the class outdoors.

VII. CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

The College has a detailed cleaning schedule identifying what areas are cleaned, when they are cleaned and by whom. There will be clearly marked bins provided specifically for the disposal of face masks. Students will be educated as to the importance of always disposing of masks in these bins.

- Sanitising of classrooms occurs regularly, as per the cleaning schedule.
- Toilets will be cleaned as per the cleaning schedule - twice per day in some locations.
- Cleaning/sanitising of high-volume touchpoints, such as desks, door handles, play equipment, handrails, and locker areas take place regularly.
- Play equipment, outside seats and sports equipment is cleaned and sanitised regularly.

VIII. COUGH ETIQUETTE

If you cough or sneeze, you should:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue rather than your hands.
- If there are no tissues available, cover your nose and mouth with your upper arm rather than your hands. Wash your upper arm (or sleeve) as soon as practical if you have sneezed or coughed into it.
- Dispose of used tissues in the nearest mask bin.
- Wash your hands afterwards or after touching used tissues.

EVENTS AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

I. COMMUNITY & PARENT GATHERINGS

The College recognises the importance of parental and community access to our facilities and the value of incidental conversations between parents and staff. However, the more people we have gathering on campus the greater is the risk that a significant number of our community will contract covid or have to isolate as a close contact, therefore increasing the disruption to the teaching and learning of staff and students. The College will have a staged reintroduction of parent gatherings on campus. All attendees will have to register online prior to attending events.

- One-on-one parent-teaching meetings can be conducted.
- Laneway@Elphin will recommence with specific details to be communicated separately.
- All live events will register a Risk Assessment pertinent to its circumstances, to be completed and approved prior to the event taking place.

Each event will be managed on its merits and the situation continually reviewed.

II. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The co-curricular program is an essential aspect of the holistic education of our students. In our efforts to 'educate with covid', all co-curricular activities will proceed in a covid-safe manner.

- The College adheres to all Government and Health Department guidelines around co-curricular activities.
- All competitor schools have been asked to inform their community of Scotch Oakburn's Policy requiring all adults to be fully vaccinated if remaining on-site for more than 4 hours.
- Bands and choirs continue to rehearse as per their normal schedule, however participants will physically distance wherever possible.
- All people over the age of 11 must wear an appropriate fitted mask indoors, unless partaking in physical activity and/or they have a medical exemption.

EXCURSIONS AND CAMPS

Excursions and camps are an important experiential aspect of the College's holistic education and student learning. All planned excursions and camps shall continue.

These programs are subject to their own detailed risk assessments and covid – safe guidelines developed for students and parents prior to the program.

COMMUNICATION

I. IN GENERAL

Education will be a key aspect to ensure this Plan is successful. It will ensure to the extent that is practicable:

- **People who are unwell do not enter any College campus.**
- All adults on campus for greater than 4 hours are fully vaccinated.
- All adults and Penquite-based students wear masks indoors.
- Physical distancing is maintained wherever possible,
- Good hygiene is practiced by staff and students.

II. COMMUNICATION RE A COVID-POSITIVE CASE

As is currently the case with communicable diseases such as head lice and gastroenteritis, in the instance where a student tests positive, that person's classmates and their parents will be notified as soon as practicable and urged to be vigilant for the presence of any symptoms. Should a student display any cold and flu-like symptoms they should stay away from school and be tested for covid, following the process as indicated in section (iii) Symptomatic People.

III. REVIEW OF THE RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN AND GUIDELINES

As the covid environment in Tasmania is a rapidly changing landscape, the College will regularly review the Plan and provide updates to the College community as required based on Tasmanian Public Health advice or guidelines.