

COVID-19 Safety Management Plan (COVID Safe Plan)

This **Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan)** applies to all Victorian government schools, and outlines some key health, safety and wellbeing hazards that schools should plan for. It links to the strategies described in the [School Operations Guide and the Health and Safety Advice for on site schooling in the context of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, and the central and regional supports available.

The Safety Management Plan is a prevention approach to COVID19 and in the event of a suspected or confirmed case the [COVID19 Management at Schools](#) advice should be followed.

Principals should consult with their local Health and Safety Representative(s) and Health and Safety Committee(s) (if applicable) to implement the recommended controls to the maximum extent reasonably practicable. Contact your [Regional OHS Support Officer](#) for assistance with local consultation if required. A [draft agenda](#) has been developed for Health and Safety Committee (HSC) meetings to assist in facilitating consultation and identifying and managing risks.

The [advice on COVID-19 for schools](#) is evolving over time and therefore the [OHS guidances and supports](#) will be continually reviewed and updated as required.

The **OHS Advisory Service** continues to be available to provide support, for instance, if there are local issues in implementing the latest guidance, for suggestions on establishing effective controls, or difficulty accessing support resources. If you require immediate assistance, please call 1300 074 715 or email safety@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Employees are encouraged to use [EduSafe](#) to report hazards, incidents and mental and physical injuries to ensure effective and timely resolution of OHS issues, as well as escalation for further supports when required. EduSafe reports are being monitored to ensure that support can be provided.

If you or your family need that little bit of extra support, personalised over-the-phone or video counselling is available 24/7 through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This service is available to all all school staff and their immediate families (aged 18 years and over).

This plan covers four key areas of risk ('hazard types'):

- Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control)
- Working Alone, in Isolation or from Home
- Occupational Violence and Aggression
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions
<p>COVID Safe Plan:</p> <p>Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control)</p>	<p>Staff, students and others on site may come into contact with an individual currently unaware that they have COVID-19, and subsequently contract the virus from them.</p> <p>It is not feasible to achieve physical distancing at all times, for example, when caring for unwell students or students with complex needs.</p> <p>Local supplies of personal hygiene products may be limited.</p> <p>Misuse of hand sanitiser including ingestion</p>	<p>Refer to the School Operations Guide for advice on working remotely and physical distancing: classrooms, learning spaces and offices.</p> <p>Refer to the School Operations Guide for information on temperature checking of students and how to administer temperature checking.</p> <p>Provide information, training and instruction health hygiene. Refer to maintaining good health hygiene and guidance for face coverings in schools, as well as DHHS guidance on face coverings and masks. Ensure staff access the Working Safely in Schools during COVID-19 webinar.</p>	<p>Circulate the latest advice to parents (in multiple languages if appropriate), staff and students (where appropriate), including displaying on-site signage.</p> <p>Consult with HSR and/or OHS Committee about the implementation of controls.</p> <p>Discuss implementation issues for on-site service provision, including planning recesses and lunchtimes, use of alternate spaces to increase physical distancing and supervision of hygiene products.</p> <p>Each morning schools shall check the temperature of students attending site.</p> <p>Where required use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment</p>

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		<p>Contact the OHS Advisory Service for more detailed risk assessments if required in relation to students with complex needs.</p> <p>Refer to School Operations Guide for guidance on use of shared equipment and other school activities (e.g. playgrounds, shared resources and excursions).</p> <p>Refer to ChemWatch to access hand sanitiser safety data sheet. Ensure adequate supervision and safe storage of supplies.</p> <p>Visitors to school grounds should be limited to those delivering or supporting essential school services and operations (e.g. student health and wellbeing services, specialist curriculum programs, maintenance workers) and capital works personnel, in accordance with public health directions.</p> <p>Record the attendance of employees, students and visitors through visitor sign in, student attendance records and staffing records (attendance records for capital works should be managed by the principal contractor).</p> <p>Minimise contact with delivery personnel.</p>	<p>(including face coverings) and don and doff appropriately.</p> <p>Display posters reminding people to wear masks, distribute information about safe use of face coverings.</p> <p>Conduct regular inspections of the workplace to check that recommended risk controls are implemented and working effectively.</p> <p>Use teaching strategies and communications resources to remind students to wear face coverings and practice good hand hygiene.</p> <p>Remind staff of importance of only attending school when required to for onsite delivery.</p> <p>Ensure contractor sign in requirements are followed by all visitors attending site.</p> <p>Escalate issues to the OHS Advisory Service if issues cannot be resolved locally.</p>

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		<p>Refer to School Operations Guide for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education settings (page 16) which contains a video on donning and doffing PPE.</p> <p>Refer to personal hygiene products, including sourcing and DET Purchasing Guidance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).</p>	
	Staff and students may contract disease by touching surfaces contaminated with COVID-19, following exposure from someone with the virus.	Refer to environmental cleaning services . Also access to cleaning supplies and services . For playgrounds please refer to School Operations Guide	Oversee liaison with local service providers for tailored implementation at specific site/s.
	Vulnerable Workforce (higher risk of serious illness).	Refer to School Operations Guide	Ensure consultation with your staff, and incorporate into workforce planning.
	A confirmed case (or a close contact of a confirmed case) may occur among staff, students or the school community.	Refer to Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19) . Also advice regarding unwell students and staff .	<p>Circulate expectations to the school community, and communicate the protocols to staff.</p> <p>Refer to Communicate with your school community resources</p> <p>Stay in contact with affected staff or families remotely.</p>

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Working Alone, in Isolation or from Home	The home work environment may cause injury (noise, lighting, thermal comfort, and slips, trips and falls).	<p>Refer to working alone, in isolation or from home policy and procedure. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHS guidance for working from home • ergonomic advice • tips for working from home safely and productively. <p>Encourage staff to access the DET Virtual Gym and structure timetables (where possible) that allow staff to regularly stretch and move during the day.</p> <p>Advice and support (including ergonomic advice via videoconference) is available to all staff via the OHS Advisory Service.</p> <p>Assist staff in following the advice and support for employees exposed to family violence.</p>	<p>Promote the OHS advice and support to staff.</p> <p>Where possible, encourage and allow time for keeping active while working from home – i.e. times when staff are encouraged to stand up and stretch, or take a short break from their workstations.</p> <p>Enable reasonable access to available school equipment.</p> <p>Proactively plan with staff who have a known pre-existing injury.</p> <p>Establish protocols for regular check-ins with staff.</p>
	Staff may suffer musculoskeletal disorders by adopting static postures while using laptops, portable devices or personal computers.		
	Increased isolation (on-site and/or at home) may increase risk of injury.		
	Exposure to family or gendered violence.		

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<p>Occupational Violence and Aggression</p>	<p>Online, over the phone or other remote threatening or aggressive behaviour by students, parents/carers, school staff or other members of school community.</p>	<p>Refer to the Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy, which covers online and on-site behaviour.</p> <p>If using a mask at risk of being pulled, ensure it will release easily.</p>	<p>Ensure onsite staff are ready to manage the students that will be attending.</p>
	<p>On-site violence, bullying or harassment by students, parents/carers, school staff or other members of school community.</p>	<p>Also, refer to Creating Respectful School Communities (including template Statement of Values), the Respect for School Staff local policy template, and resources available through Respectful Relationships and Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support.</p>	<p>If using a mask when working with students at risk of pulling it, use ones that will release easily, e.g. with hooks over the ears rather than a scarf, bandanna or mask that ties round the back of the head. Regularly and explicitly teach students not to touch or attempt to remove others' masks.</p>
	<p>Staff experiencing stress or anxiety stemming from exposure to increasing onsite or online occupational violence and aggression from parents.</p> <p>Many parents/carers are likely to be anxious during this time.</p>	<p>Proactive and open communications with parents and carers is important to prevent an escalation in behaviours. Refer to Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for parents, carers and guardians, and to the communications support pack.</p> <p>Escalated referrals will be managed by the Employee Wellbeing Response Team, and Complex Matter Support Team.</p> <p>Refer to the mental health and wellbeing advice on the OHSMS Covid page, and the relevant policy and procedure.</p>	<p>Set expectations for behaviour with the school community, and promote appropriate ways for parents to raise their concerns.</p> <p>Discuss extra supports or strategies for staff who engage with anyone known to present a risk.</p> <p>Encourage staff to report incidents in eduSafe and IRIS as appropriate, debrief, and seek escalated support (e.g. through EAP) if required.</p>

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Mental Health and Wellbeing	Leaders managing the anxiety and mental health of others – including students, staff and members of the school community	Refer to the mental health and wellbeing advice on the OHSMS COVID-19 page , and the relevant policy and procedure .	Consult (check-in) with your staff on how they are feeling with the current situation, encourage managers to be flexible. Where working from home is required, establish communication processes. Have regular conversations to provide as much clarity and flexibility as possible about tasks, priorities and the way work can be delivered (e.g. pre-recorded lessons). Allow time for staff to access the relevant information, instruction and training, such as the wellbeing webinars. Encourage staff to use EAP and other supports and resources available. Ensure there are adjusted return to work strategies for people on sick leave or Workers' Compensation leave.
	Staff experiencing changes to workload (increase/decrease) from modifications in tasks and priorities.	Encourage staff to access the wellbeing webinars currently available. Refer to the Return to Work Coordinator Portal .	
	Balancing non-work related demands (e.g. caring responsibilities).	Refer to the Principal Health and Wellbeing services on the OHSMS COVID-19 support page .	
	Staff experiencing disengagement and low morale regarding clarity of tasks, team roles and evolving priorities.	Refer to DET Flexible Work Policy .	
	Staff experiencing uncertainty, stress, anxiety from the transition to an altered working environment e.g. working from home.	Refer to School Operations Guide Video-counselling is available via the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all staff and their adult family members.	
	Staff experiencing uncertainty and anxiety about the COVID-19 risks to their personal health (especially if working onsite).		
	Staff experiencing isolation and changes in levels of support from leaders and colleagues as a result of the changed arrangements.		

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	<p>Aggravation of stress caused by pre-existing conditions (e.g. existing mental health conditions, disabilities, vulnerable cohorts and staff on leave, including Workers' Compensation or sick leave, etc.).</p>		