

Frequently asked questions for parents

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Term 2, 2020 COVID-19 arrangements—Parent factsheet and frequently asked questions

As Queensland is continuing to see a low number of COVID-19 cases and a positive response to physical distancing measures, changes have been made to the arrangements for state schools in Term 2, 2020 to allow more students to return to school in a phased approach.

The following information is provided to assist parents and carers.

What are the new arrangements and when do they take effect?

From **Monday 11 May 2020**, Queensland state school students in Kindy, Prep, Year 1, Year 11 and Year 12, will be able to return to school and Community Kindergarten.

Children of essential workers, vulnerable children and children in designated Indigenous communities will continue to be able to attend school for supervision.

What about children in other year levels?

Students (Years 2–10) will continue with the home-based learning model.

If low transmission rates continue, students in Years 2–10 will be able to return to school from **Monday 25 May 2020**. Confirmation of this next step will be made by 15 May 2020.

Is it expected that children in Prep, Year 1, Year 11 and Year 12 attend school from 11 May 2020?

Yes. Schools will resume regular teaching and learning for students in these year levels as part of the phased return to school.

It is acknowledged that some parents of Prep, Year 1, Year 11 and Year 12 students may still wish to keep their children home from school due to concerns about COVID-19 and due to student health concerns. This is an acceptable decision and your child won't be marked as being absent, rather that they are learning from home.

In these cases, parents and carers remain responsible for their children. This includes ensuring their children stay at home and continue their learning by accessing material such as those provided for parents on the [learning@home](#) website.

As is currently the case, parents will be required to communicate with the school about their child's absence from school. This includes when a parent chooses to keep their child at home due to concerns about COVID-19 as well as when a child is ill. When you contact the school with this information you may also wish to discuss any support you may need to assist you with your child's learning at home.

Parents and carers of students with health support needs are encouraged to consult their health practitioner when deciding if their child should attend school.

Why are only Kindy, Prep, Year 1, Year 11 and Year 12 students returning to school?

As part of the easing of restrictions applied under the COVID-19 response, schools will commence a phased return to regular schooling.

We want to take the earliest possible action to allow students to resume on-site learning and early years students (Kindy, Prep and Year 1) and students in their senior years (Years 11 and 12) have been identified as the first cohorts to return to back to school.

These year levels have been chosen for a number of reasons. Research clearly shows that the early years of schooling is when the building blocks for learning occurs. By allowing our young children to return to Kindy, Prep and Year 1 we can continue to provide them with the teaching and learning that enables them to grow into capable and confident young people.

We also know that the senior years of schooling are important as young adults make decisions about the pathways they will take after school. In addition, 2020 is the first year of Queensland's new Senior Assessment and Tertiary Entrance (SATE) reforms and it is important that our senior students continue their learning at their school during this significant year.

Children of essential workers and vulnerable children from other year levels will continue attending school sites as they have done since the commencement of Term 2.

What will happen with students in Years 2–10?

Years 2–10 will continue under the home-based learning model. Teachers will continue to deliver prepared lessons and materials for these students via home-based learning, as they have since the start of Term 2.

If low transmission rates continue, students in Years 2–10 will be able to return to school from Monday 25 May 2020. Confirmation of this next step will be made by 15 May 2020.

Parents can also access a range of additional resources at the [Learning Place](#) (this requires your child to use their student ID and login details) and [learning@home website](#), which includes details about [learning@home TV programs](#).

Parents and carers continue to be responsible for student safety and wellbeing at home or elsewhere.

Is it safe for students in Kindy, Prep, Year 1, Year 11 and Year 12 to attend school?

The decision to return to school for these year levels is informed by [advice](#) provided by the Australian Health Principal Protection Committee (AHPPC) and discussions with Queensland Health about a phased return to regular schooling.

Schools are identified as safe places for students and present low risk in relation to the spread of COVID-19.

The following measures will continue to be in place in schools:

- students and staff who are unwell must not attend school
- physical distancing of 1.5 metres is required by all adults
- adults must not gather in and around school grounds, car parks, school gates and outside classrooms
- parents should use stop, drop and go or similar facilities rather than walking their children into school
- students will engage in regular effective handwashing and hygiene protocols, including regularly washing hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser and covering coughs and sneezes
- increased cleaning frequencies of high-touch surfaces such as light switches and door handles
- technology such as video conferencing used for gatherings, meetings and assemblies
- school swimming pools remain closed and excursions, camps, trips and interschool activities are postponed at this time.

Has this decision to transition students back to school been supported by health advice?

Yes. Queensland's Chief Health Officer has provided advice and been involved in the decision making that has enabled the Government to make this decision.

The Chief Health Officer has provided her support for the staged return to school, including recognising the importance of commencing with a return to school-based arrangements for children at either end of the student cohort (Kindy, Prep, Year 1 and Year 11, 12 students).

The Chief Health Officer has also agreed that the staged return to school over several weeks, if low COVID-19 transmission rates continue, will provide critical time for schools to develop and implement arrangements to ensure the transition can be made safely for teachers, support staff, parents and carers and students.

Will schools need to change routines or operations with some students returning?

Schools will continue to actively manage routines and protocols in and around the school site. Social distancing and physical distancing measures remain in place and it is important that schools continue to practice these measures.

While the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee advises that physical distancing is not required for students during classroom activities, schools may implement additional strategies including:

- using larger, alternative locations or classrooms within the school
- designating drop-off/pick-up points for parents in spacious areas
- making use of outdoor learning spaces
- staggering lunch breaks, start and finish times and other activities to reduce the volume of movement.

Schools will continue to manage timetable arrangements locally. Changes are likely to be made to previous schedules as school staff deliver both home-based learning and on-site delivery. Schools will communicate with parents regarding any changes to their usual routines.

Are camps, excursions, school concerts and musicals able to proceed?

No. At this time, it is not planned for these activities to resume during Term 2 given the social nature of these events. These restrictions will be reviewed in light of ongoing health advice.

Will Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services be available?

OSHC services will continue to operate before and after school care where there is demand. This will include on-site OSHC or other services off site that cater for school age children, such as long day care or family day care. Parents are encouraged to contact their local OSHC provider to confirm arrangements.

What are the arrangements for Community Kindergartens?

Community kindergartens will resume operations from 11 May 2020 and parents should contact their Kindy regarding local arrangements.

Will tuckshops be operating at schools?

Schools or tuckshop providers will advise parents of local tuckshop operating arrangements.

What are schools doing to ensure the health and hygiene of students on-site?

Schools will continue to ensure high standards of health and hygiene are practiced on-site. Schools will continue to promote handwashing and hand hygiene and will use additional cleaning allocations to frequently clean high use touch points in and around the school.

Is there anything that parents and carers can do to assist?

Social and physical distancing protocols continue to apply to adults in a school setting. We can all help to restrict the spread of COVID-19 by adhering to these protocols.

Schools will be taking action to limit the number of non-essential adults entering schools, as well as implementing new procedures where required to limit the amount of adult to adult contact in and around schools.

This may mean different arrangements for pick-up and drop-off, on-line meetings between parents and staff rather than face-to-face, and different staff room arrangements for staff. Individual schools will make the appropriate arrangements for their community.

Parents can help by minimising the need to enter the school, not gathering inside or outside schools, working with school staff and with new protocols or ways of working in and around the school.

Parents can also assist by ensuring their child stays away from school if they are showing any signs or symptoms of illness.

What will happen if my child's teacher is unwell or a vulnerable worker?

Schools will manage staffing allocations as they normally do. If a teacher is unwell or unable to attend school due to their own health reasons, principals will engage supply teachers as required.

Will there be access to support for student wellbeing?

Yes. School staff will continue to be alert to the needs of students as we return to school. If parents are particularly concerned about their child's wellbeing they should contact their school.

Will my child still be able to access school transport arrangements?

Yes. Normal school transport arrangements will continue to apply for students in Prep, Year 1, Year 11 and Year 12.

Social distancing guidelines will be followed on school buses (where practical), at bus interchange locations, and at other shared transport services.

Transport operators will ensure that buses and surface touch points are cleaned according to COVID-19 cleaning and disinfection recommendations.

Due to the customised nature of delivery, specialist school transport (minibus, taxi or supported bus travel) requires:

- parents/carers to directly inform operators if students are not travelling
- school leadership teams to have electronic and hard copies of student travel arrangements for quick access
- school-provided, individual escort arrangements to continue being supported.

Are there changes to assessment and reporting?

Assessment and reporting for Term 2 and Semester 1 will be adjusted by schools to reflect the nature of learning over this time. If you require more information regarding assessment and reporting for your child, please speak to your child's teacher.

The Queensland Curriculum Assessment Authority (QCAA) has also provided [Principles and advice for P-10 during COVID-19 disruptions \(PDF, 182KB\)](#) to address common curriculum questions, teaching and learning, assessment and reporting, along with their frequently asked questions.

How do I deliver lessons while I am working from home?

We understand that parents of students in Years 2 to 10 may be working during the day while at home.

It's important to note that parents are not required to deliver lessons—teachers and school staff continue to be responsible for delivering the curriculum.

For parents supervising their children, 2 to 3 hours of learning each day will usually be plenty, with a range of additional activities that may be provided to keep children engaged.

There are no set hours for supervised learning time—this could occur early in the morning, or across your work lunch break—and older children may be able to manage their own learning time.

What if one parent is an essential worker outside of the home but one parent is working from home?

For students in Years 2 to 10, if there is a parent at home who is available to supervise their child, students will complete learning and activities in their homes.

Parents are strongly encouraged to talk to the school principal if they have any concerns.

What if I don't have a computer for my child to use?

Students in Years 2 to 10 who are continuing with home-based learning will continue to participate in their learning as they have done for the last 2 weeks, utilising hard copies of materials and televised educational programs where they do not have access to a computer or the internet.

How will schools help my child if they fall behind during the pandemic?

Parents are not required to deliver lessons—teachers and school staff continue to be responsible for the curriculum during this time.

Principals, teachers and support staff will be working to deliver learning for students both at home and at school, and can be contacted for support as they normally would.

How will these changes affect boarding school students?

State school-operated residential boarding facilities remain closed.

In consultation with principals, students who have returned from boarding schools (state, Catholic or Independent) to designated Indigenous communities may attend the local school to continue their learning where possible and if staffing is available.

The student's learning program will be provided by the school at which the student is enrolled.

The local school will provide (where possible):

- appropriate staff to provide supervision, as determined by the principal
- internet access
- resources such as pens, paper, and printed materials as required.

Other boarding facilities will only operate where current health authority advice allows them to do so and with the strictest cleaning and hygiene measures.

What will happen in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19?

The Department of Education has established protocols if a confirmed case is identified in a school. The department follows the advice of Queensland Health and works with state schools. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school community, the school may need to temporarily close to allow time for public health authorities to conduct contact tracing and deep cleaning to be undertaken, to ensure the safety of staff and students prior to reopening.

Please note as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, plans are subject to change.

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