

RETURN TO SCHOOL PLANNING MEETING

FAQs | COVID- 19 in 2022

STAFF TRAVEL	
Q	Are staff permitted to travel interstate for work/ leisure purposes.?
A	<i>CEWA advises that no work-related travel should occur in Term 1. Should a member of staff decide to travel for personal purposes, and they are unable to return to work due to COVID travel restrictions, they will be required to take LSL, annual leave for support staff or LWOP.</i>
Q	Can school tours/ interstate travel take place?
A	<i>CEWA advises that no tours/ camps/ excursions/ exchanges take place in Term 1 that require interstate travel.</i>
Q	With the recommendation on staff travel, is travel within each region (Kununurra to Broome for example) permissible or is it all travel?
A	<i>Local travel within the region is permitted, however, all staff must give due consideration to the travel advice issued by WAPOL. In the event of a COVID outbreak, the Kimberley Region may have further travel restrictions implemented as a protective measure for vulnerable communities.</i>
FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS	
Q	Are masks required to be worn when teaching?
A	<i>Masks can be removed when giving instruction, if the teacher is comfortable to do so. Masks must be worn immediately once instruction is completed.</i>
Q	What requirements are in place for teachers travelling from an impacted region to an alternative WA Region?
A	<i>Any individual travelling from a WA region where face coverings have been mandated are required to wear the face covering in the new region for two weeks. This is still the case if no mandate is in place for the location.</i>
Q	How do country schools access masks? Will they be distributed to regional areas?
A	<i>At present secondary schools are mandated for the wearing of face coverings. Masks will be couriered to schools that are beyond the metro region.</i>
Q	To be exempt from wearing a mask due to physical or mental illness, is a medical practitioner's certificate the minimum form of evidence required?
A	<i>Yes, according to the Directions (No 8), a medical certificate is sufficient. For students, it may be worthwhile to record this information via Seqta so that the Principal has full visibility over such instances. Including notes on Seqta for the exemption status of parents would also be useful.</i>
Q	When staff are working alone in an office for an extended period of time, are they required to wear a mask?
A	<i>The Directions (No 8) specify that an individual is not required to wear a face covering where they are "working in the absence of others in an enclosed indoor space." The face covering must be worn at the point where another person enters the indoor space. Consider the requirement of adequate ventilation in the office that is ensuring the safe entry of the second staff member to the office - where the occupant has not been wearing a mask.</i>
STUDENT ATTENDANCE	
Q	Is a school required to provide remote learning for a child whose family are choosing to keep their child at home?
A	<i>The Minister for Education has publicly stated that children must attend school unless they have a valid and certified reason. Where a parent simply chooses not to send their child, they are in breach of the Education Act. CEWA advises to inform the parent that remote learning cannot be supplied to their child unless on verifiable medical grounds; this certification needs to be obtained from a medical practitioner. Students who are immune-compromised or have vulnerable family members may be offered the opportunity to participate in remote learning. ACARA recommends that students impacted by quarantine requirements are facilitated to partake in remote learning programs.</i>

STUDENT HEALTH	
Q	Is there an expectation that schools should be taking students' temperatures?
A	<i>No, in fact we would need to be careful that we only took a child's temperature with the permission of the parent. We also have to be mindful that a temperature is only one indication of a potential infection, so a normal temperature does not exclude COVID.</i>
Q	If a child has a cough, sore throat etc are they expected to get a COVID test?
A	<i>Symptoms of COVID can be varied, including asymptomatic. A cough or a sore throat could indicate that a person is infected; however, these may be signs of other illness. Children displaying any COVID symptoms should be encouraged to get a COVID test. Any student or staff member who is unwell should not attend to school. If there has been a positive close contact, the Department of Health will advise that the child receives a PCR test.</i>
Q	Can school nurses use R.A.T. tests?
A	<i>At present, R.A.T. tests are not a component of the Government's Return to School Plan. If this is implemented by the CHO, directions will follow on how R.A.T. tests can be administered and by whom.</i>
Q	Will we be getting information to share with parents regarding CEWA schools' current status on air filtration requirements?
A	<i>Please refer to Memo - Ventilation in schools available HERE</i>
Q	Can we have some professional guidance around how to best "ventilate" classrooms given most schools would use reverse cycle air conditioners designed to operate with doors and windows closed?
A	<i>Audit data to be provided by KMPG will support our schools in understanding the most effective way of ventilating school spaces in accordance with current requirements. A sticker system will be developed and deployed to ensure ease of reference for all when using school classrooms/ offices and learning spaces.</i>
Q	As changerooms are not well ventilated, should students wear PE kit to school on their designated PE day rather than utilise the changing rooms?
A	<i>This is at the discretion of the Principal, as you are most familiar with the facilities/ventilation available at your school.</i>
Q	Can staff refuse to supervise a positive student?
A	<i>Yes. Principals should identify in advance of a positive case those staff members who are willing to supervise a COVID positive student while awaiting pick up from a parent. These staff should be provided and must wear appropriate PPE.</i>
TEACHING & LEARNING	
Q	With regard to teacher workload, are teachers expected to do both remote and face to face learning if they have a number of children in their class who are medically compromised.
A	<i>Teachers would be required to support the learning needs of the students in their classes, including those who may be medically compromised and required to learn from home. The Principal is encouraged to consider strategies that might support the workload of the classroom teacher.</i>
Q	Regarding teachers that are asked to quarantine for 14 days, is this sick leave? Covid leave? Do these teachers need to provide work for their students? Attend to online lessons? Or are they on 'leave'? If they have not accumulated sufficient sick leave what happens?
A	<i>Please refer to the Scenario Matrix Workforce Management Term One 2022 resource available HERE. If a staff member is isolating at home and is otherwise fit, the staff member may be requested to deliver on-line learning to his/her students or complete other professional duties</i>
Q	If I have a close contact to a COVID+ case living with me in my home, but we are not symptomatic, am I considered a close contact, and am I still able to work, or am I also required to isolate?
A	<i>The current health direction only requires the close contact to self isolate. Therefore, as you are not the close contact, the regulation doesn't apply to you, so as long as the close contact living with you can effectively isolate from you. For instance, if your home allows you to limit contact (e.g restricting the close contact to an upstairs area, or bedroom with access to their own shower and toilet, and the wearing of masks whenever they left their room or living area, then you are not precluded from attending work.</i>

SCHOOL BASED ACTIVITIES	
Q	Are physically spaced singing rehearsals/orchestra held in an outdoor area allowed to go ahead?
A	<i>Activities of this nature are permitted to go ahead, especially when catered for outdoors.</i>
Q	If we lose teachers/EAs and cannot find relief, how many students can we logistically have together?
A	<i>Class maximums would still apply as we have not received any Government directions to the contrary. However, in exercising an immediate duty of care for students, a principal may make short term arrangements where classes are combined and/or supervised by non-teaching staff.</i>
Q	If we are holding a school community welcome back event, after school hours, with over 500 attending parents who sign in with QR code, do we need to check that they are vaccinated?
A	<i>No, proof of vaccination is not required for attendees to a school-based event for the school community. This is still the case if the event is held outside of the normal school day.</i>
Q	Can we get Rapid Antigen Tests (R.A.T.) organised and delivered to schools in remote areas with no relief? It will assist with testing and getting teachers back to school rather than isolating when not needed.
A	<i>Further insight into the use of R.A.T. tests will be made available once the CHO has provided his directions. We are awaiting Government advice on the provision of RATs.</i>
Q	For Parent Teacher Interview evenings, do parents have to show proof of vaccination? (There will be more than 500 parents coming along, but at staggered times.)
A	<i>No; where parents are attending on ad-hoc basis, proof of vaccination is not required. Further, as a school based event, parents would not need to show proof of vaccination</i>
Q	Are children included in the numbers for events for over 500 attendees, such as a Welcome Back Night?
A	<i>Those aged 15 and below are not included in the attendee numbers for events.</i>
Q	Are school bands and choirs able to rehearse and perform at Mass and assemblies?
A	<i>Yes; both school and extra-curricular activities are permitted to proceed, as normal.</i>
PARENTS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS ON CAMPUS	
Q	What are the sign in requirements for parents?
A	<i>Parents are expected to complete the normal requirements of the school, A parent is not required to sign-in to the school if they are simply picking up or dropping off their child. If they are volunteering for class-based activities or working with children, they must sign-in to the school. Parents who are working with children in Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten classrooms must also sign-in via the Contemporaneous Record.</i>
Q	Do parents who come each week to sit at outside courts to watch training have to show vaccination status as they are regularly attending school grounds?
A	<i>If parents are on site regularly attending the school in the capacity of a volunteer (more than once per week) then they must be vaccinated. If they are outside watching sport, then no, they are not required to be vaccinated.</i>
Q	Due to the uncertainty surrounding vaccination status of parents, would it be appropriate/possible to not allow parents onto the school grounds as the school year begins?
A	<i>There would be no basis to exclude parents given that our hard borders will still be in place. If parents were to enter any building or classroom, they would need to be wearing a mask.</i>
Q	Must parents who come on roster be double vaccinated?
A	<i>Not if they volunteer on the school campus once per week. More than once per week would require proof of vaccination to the school.</i>
Q	How do we support staff who may have concerns regarding community members not being vaccinated and having access to school grounds and events, such as assemblies.
A	<i>Schools are required to enact the CHO Directions in accordance with the Public Health Order. Masks are required, this with the vaccination rate of the school staff, adequate ventilation, social distancing of adults and other mitigation strategies result in non-vaccinated members being a lower risk to the broader community, especially as those unvaccinated would only be on campus for a short periods of time.</i>

Q	How do we respond to parents and community members who blatantly refuse to wear a mask and declare their anti-vacc status?
A	<i>Anti-masks: Remind them that they are welcome to present a medical certificate as an exemption to the mask requirement. Failure to comply could result in a refusal of access to the school classrooms. No masks are required for outside spaces, where social distancing is possible. Anti-Vaccination: listen patiently and remind them that they are not required to be vaccinated if an ad-hoc visitor to the school or simply picking up/dropping off their child.</i>
Q	Is a priest required to be vaccinated to deliver mass to students?
A	<i>Not if the priest visits only once per week. If the priest delivers mass or visits more than once per week (across one or more schools) he must be vaccinated.</i>
Q	Can an unvaccinated priest come on to school grounds (parish) to deliver his usual Friday mass.
A	<i>Yes, no vaccination requirement is currently in place for parishes/ churches/ chapels. However, if the priest is regularly entering school grounds (classrooms/ assemblies) he must be vaccinated (see question above) and abide by mask wearing requirements.</i>
Q	What are the vaccination requirements of the School Advisory Council Members
A	<i>This scenario will vary, dependent upon the level of involvement of the SAC member.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If the SAC member only attends school for the monthly meeting. This would be ad-hoc, so no vaccination needed.</i> • <i>SAC member attends monthly meeting, but volunteers in the school regularly, so is present more than once a week. They would require vaccination.</i> • <i>SAC member attends monthly meeting and regularly volunteers/ works at another school. They would require vaccination.</i> • <i>SAC member attends monthly meeting and on occasions may be in the school. For example, the Chair meets with the Principal on a day prior to the SAC meeting. Vaccination is required because the Chair is at the school on more than one day in that week, albeit that this may only be for one week in the calendar month (including event attendance).</i>
Q	Can a COVID positive student be picked up by someone who is not his/her parent?
A	<i>Yes, where express permission is given by the parent. It would be important to confirm with this person is aware that the student is COVID positive.</i>
OTHER	
Q	What does enhanced cleaning look like?
A	<i>The CHO has advised that use of detergent/ disinfectant products are sufficient in effectively sanitising spaces; high contact surfaces should be prioritised in cleaning regimes (light switches, device surfaces, desks). Many store grade cleaning products are sufficient for the purposes required. For a complete list of products approved by the TGA CLICK HERE. For information on enhanced cleaning, CLICK HERE</i>
Q	With regards to external venues (WPL, etc) are there any recommendations about the management of the vaccination certificates for students - should we collect and manage or should students deal directly with the external provider?
A	<i>The review of vaccination certificates are the responsibility of the Responsible Person or Site Manager. In this way, students aged 16+ will be required to liaise directly with the provider, as per current Directions from the CHO.</i>
Q	What does a complete P.P.E. kit include?
A	<i>A full P.P.E. kit would include: face mask, protective shield, disposable gloves, disposable apron.</i>
Q	Should start of year, whole school (staff, parents, students) P&F events (Sundowners) take place?
A	<i>This is at the discretion of the Principal; where the school communicates effectively each of the mitigation strategies in place to keep the community safe and where explicit compliance with the PHO Directions is followed, events could go ahead.</i>
Q	What requirements are needed for school events hosted at third party locations (hotels, cinemas, sports stadiums)?
A	<i>School events held off-site are subject to the proof of vaccination requirements in place for the off-site venue - schools are to liaise directly with the venue provider.</i>

Q	What happens if there is a COVID+ case in my school?
A	<i>Notify the Deputy Executive Director, Wayne Bull, (041 1988 793) immediately. Follow the directions of the Department of Health, ensuring that you have visitor registers readily available and as much information as possible into impacted year levels/ areas/ staff. Enact your 6 Step Plan and ask Wayne Bull for support if needed.</i>
Q	What requirements are in place for the playground at our school?
A	<i>Playgrounds are permitted to be open and should be cleaned once per week. Children should be encouraged to wash their hands once they have finished playing with equipment and before entering the classroom.</i>
Q	Our school hires out key spaces to members of the community. Is this still permitted?
	<i>For events outside of school hours, over 500 persons proof of vaccination is required for external adults and people 16 years of age and over. All events would need to comply with WA's Safe Transition Plan</i>