

# COVID-19 frequently asked questions for parents and carers

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# Schooling in Term 1

How has the Department of Education prepared for schooling in Term 1?

The Department's [Operational Plan for Managing COVID-19 in Schools](#) sets out how we are managing COVID-19 in schools and early childhood education and care. It aligns with the [national approach](#) for return to school. Please refer to this plan for detailed information.

What will Term 1, 2022 look like in Tasmanian schools?

Face-to-face learning will continue in schools and early childhood education and care, with COVID-safe measures in place. There is a clear process in place to manage COVID-19 cases in schools. Regular school activities – like school photos, music and swimming lessons and excursions – will continue in a COVID-safe manner. However, if the situation changes, this will be re-visited on a school-by-school basis. For details, please refer to the [Operational Plan for Managing COVID-19 in Schools](#).

Do I need to send my child to school?

Yes. If your child is well and not a [close contact](#), they should be attending school. School attendance is important for improved learning and health and wellbeing outcomes. Your child does not need to be vaccinated to attend school – although it is strongly [recommended for children aged five years and older](#). The Department of Education has a clear plan in place and maintaining a safe learning environment is our top priority. For details, please refer to the [Operational Plan for Managing COVID-19 in Schools](#).

## COVID-safe measures in schools

What measures are you taking to keep kids safe at school?

Proactive measures are in place to limit the impact of COVID-19 in our schools. These include:

- **Vaccination:** Children aged five years and older are encouraged to be vaccinated. Vaccination is not mandatory for a child to attend school, and schools will not treat students differently based on their vaccination status. All Department of Education staff, including volunteers and contractors, are vaccinated.
- **Face masks:** All teachers will wear face masks while indoors. If required, teachers may remove their masks to assist with clear communication when teaching (for example, to meet the needs of students with disability). Face masks do not need to be worn by primary school students, however students can wear them if they would like to. Secondary school students must wear face masks while indoors (medical exceptions apply).
- Face masks must be worn by all visitors on indoors school sites.
- All schools are well stocked with face masks.
- **Ventilation:** Ensuring good air flow helps minimise the transmission of COVID-19. Schools will increase natural airflow by opening windows and doors. All schools have received air purifiers to

assist with ventilation, and further provisions will be made to account for the cooling weather later in the school year.

- **Outdoor learning:** Schools will take advantage of outdoor learning opportunities where possible.
- **Physical distancing:** All adults will keep a physical distance of 1.5 metres from each other. Where possible, students will also be supported to physically distance. Schools will also continue to limit unnecessary mixing between class/student groups, unless it would be required for learning.
- **Hygiene and cleaning:** All schools will continue increased hygiene and handwashing, with soap and other sanitising products available in all schools. All schools will continue increased COVID-19 safe cleaning, with additional disinfection of regularly used surfaces, such as water fountains.
- **Safe site management:** Non-essential visitors will be limited, and must follow site access requirements and Public Health directions. COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended. Schools will regularly review their COVID-19 safety plans.

### How do I collect Rapid Antigen Tests for my child?

Students will continue to have access to Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for the remainder of Term 1. Parents/Carers can use a RAT if their child has COVID-19 symptoms.

Parent/Carers will have ongoing access to replacement RATs through their school to ensure they always have some on hand in their home.

It's important to note that if you have run out of school issued RATs, and your child has symptoms, please do not attend school to collect a RAT. Instead, we encourage you to reach out to the Tasmanian Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738 to obtain a RAT.

Please refer to Public Health's easy-to-follow [instructions](#) on how to use a RAT.

If a negative result is returned, and your child is feeling well, they can attend school.

If your child tests COVID-19 positive, you must immediately let your school know, and [complete the Public Health form](#). You must follow [Public Health advice](#). During your child's isolation period, if they feel well they can access learning via the Virtual Learning Centre, and return to school if they have no symptoms after seven days

If someone in your household tests COVID-19 positive, you must immediately let your school know that your child is a close contact and [follow Public Health instructions](#). Your child can access learning via the Virtual Learning Centre when isolating at home for seven days.

### What cleaning processes are in place in schools?

Frequent cleaning of schools will continue in 2022, particularly on high-touch surfaces.

### Do schools have enough handwash?

Yes. Schools have a sufficient supply of handwash.

### Do schools have enough rapid antigen tests (RATs)?

Yes. Schools have sufficient supply of rapid antigen tests (RATs), with provision to replace that supply as needed. Parents and carers should ensure that as the RATs provided are used that they seek replacements from their school at their earliest convenience.

When there are group or school outbreaks, Public Health may advise on more frequent use of Rapid Antigen Tests by students and staff. When this occurs, schools will provide these additional RATs and communicate to parents/carers on their intended use.

### Do schools have enough face masks?

Yes. Schools have a sufficient supply of face masks with supplies to be replaced as required.

### Do schools have COVID-19 safety plans?

Yes, all schools have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place. Schools regularly review their COVID-19 safety plans, and have clear procedures in place to manage any confirmed COVID-19 cases. You will receive information directly from your school should there be a closure. School closures will also be listed on the [Alerts webpage](#).

### Should students be sharing food and drinks?

No, students must not share food and drinks. Avoiding sharing food and drinks is a good hygiene practice that will help slow the spread of COVID-19. Principals may restrict or limit activities in schools to comply with [Public Health advice](#).

### Can the school water fountain be used?

Yes, school water fountains can be used. Frequent cleaning of schools will continue in 2022, particularly on high-touch surfaces.

### How will materials/items that have been off-site be handled at school?

Any materials/items that have been off-site (for example toys, books, learning materials, overnight bags, or personal items) will be allowed at school, but hands must be washed before and after touching or handling them. The number of people handling these items should be limited.

## Face masks

### Will students need to wear face masks at school?

Students in primary schools are not required to wear face masks, however they can wear them if they would like to. If you have a 12 year old who is still in primary school, they do not need to wear a mask at school – but they must to wear one in public settings, as per [Public Health advice](#).

Secondary school students must wear face masks, while indoors on site (medical exceptions apply).

Will parents need to wear face masks at school?

Face masks are mandatory for all visitors while indoors on site. Medical exemptions apply.

Will face masks be provided for children?

If a child does not have their own face mask, the school will supply them with one.

Should a certain type of face mask be worn?

Surgical masks are recommended, but cloth masks are also safe to wear. Please refer to [Public Health's mask wearing advice](#) for more information.

Will Primary School students who are 12 years old be required to wear a mask when on school excursions or attending events off school grounds?

Whilst at school they do not need to wear a mask however they would need to wear one in public settings, as per [Public Health advice](#).

Please refer to <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/face-masks> for more information on the requirements outside of a school context.

## Vaccination

Do students need to be vaccinated to attend school?

All children, regardless of whether they've been vaccinated or not, can attend school.

[Public Health strongly recommend COVID-19 vaccination](#) for everyone aged five years and older.

Students do not need to be vaccinated to attend school. Students will not be separated into groups of those who are vaccinated and unvaccinated.

Do parents/carers need to be vaccinated to attend school sites?

[Public Health strongly recommend COVID-19 vaccination](#) for everyone aged five years and older.

Parents and carers do not have to be vaccinated to enter school sites, however, they must follow site access requirements and COVID-safe behaviours.

If a parent is also a volunteer, they must be vaccinated. Volunteers must hold a Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP) card and sign in using the volunteer register.

Do school staff need to be vaccinated?

Yes. All Department of Education staff, including volunteers and contractors, must be vaccinated.

## Physical distancing

Does my child need to follow physical distancing rules at school?

Physical distancing rules do not apply for students in schools, as per Public Health advice. All adults will maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres from each other.

How is physical distancing managed on school buses?

As public transport is deemed an essential service, buses are exempt from physical distancing rules. However, students are encouraged to physically distance where possible. This may include:

- walking or cycling if undertaking a short trip
- keeping a physical distance of 1.5 metres from other passengers when queuing at bus stops
- choosing a seat away from others where possible – members of the same household may sit together
- not occupying the first row of seats nearest to the driver.

To support physical distancing, students should practice the following:

- when queuing at bus stops, maintain physical distancing from other passengers;
- always comply with requests from the driver; and
- practice good hand hygiene. If possible, use hand sanitiser before you board and after you disembark.
- Students are also encouraged to get a Greencard or multi-trip tickets for cashless payment.

All school bus operators will continue frequent cleaning of bus interiors, particularly on high-touch surfaces. Drivers also wear masks and comply with Public Health advice.

## Responding to COVID-19 cases

What do I do if my child tests COVID-19 positive?

If your child has tested COVID-19 positive, it's important you immediately notify your school and [Public Health](#), and comply with [Public Health advice](#). Your child must [isolate](#) for a minimum of seven days. They can leave isolation seven days after the date the positive test was taken unless they're still experiencing symptoms. During this isolation period, if your child feels well, they will be supported by a teacher to learn at home via the Virtual Learning Centre. Anyone living in the same household would be considered a [household close contact](#) and need to quarantine for seven days and get tested for COVID-19.

## What happens if there is a confirmed COVID-19 case at our school?

There is a clear process in place to manage COVID-19 cases in schools. Similar to other illnesses, if there is a case in your child's classroom, monitor your child closely for symptoms. If your child is unwell, please keep them home and get them tested. Schools will communicate directly with families if there's a case at school. Public Health will work closely with schools if there are increased cases in classrooms. For details, please refer to the [Operational Plan for Managing COVID-19 in Schools](#).

## How do I use a rapid antigen test (RAT)?

If your child has [COVID-19 symptoms](#), you can use a rapid antigen test (RAT) supplied by your school to test for COVID-19. Take care to read the instructions on the RAT. If you need additional support, refer to these steps provided by [Public Health](#).

There are different types of RAT kits available. Be sure to follow the instructions provided within the test kit.

Some general guidelines to follow when using a nasal RAT are:

1. Carefully read the instructions that came with your test before you start.
2. Wash your hands
3. Open packaging
4. Wipe the swab around the inside wall of the nose 2cm deep in a circular motion five times or for 15 seconds in each nostril.
5. Put the swab in the solution tube. Mix well. You may need to squeeze the swab or break the stick off as well – read your test instructions.
6. Put the cap on the tube
7. Put drops in the sample window of test. Your test kit instructions will tell you how many drops. Do not move or lift the test kit.
8. Start a timer. Wait for exact time as state in test kit instructions. Do not move or lift sample window of test.
9. Read the result.

An picture guide of how to take a nasal RAT is available at [Infographic-How-to-do-a-nasal-RAT.pdf \(coronavirus.tas.gov.au\)](#)

Further information is available on the Tasmanian Government's COVID-19 website at [www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au](#).

## What is a school contact?

A school contact is not the same as a close contact as defined by [Public Health](#).

School contacts are children, students and staff who spend more than four hours (over a 24 hour period) in the same room as a case during the cases infectious period, regardless of face mask use.

Schools will communicate directly with families if there's a case at school and if your child is a school contact.

## When will a school close?

Cases will be managed within schools, which will remain open subject to Public Health advice.

## How will learning continue if there is an outbreak in my child's class?

If your child needs to isolate at home, their learning will be supported. Every effort will be made to support your child, and the core curriculum will be delivered at home. We are prepared for any learning at home periods, and our workforce planning will ensure all learners have access to a teacher. If an outbreak occurs – which under the [Return to school plan](#) will be considered when five or more cases occur in students and staff from a class within a seven day period – the school will communicate directly with families. In most cases, if this situation occurs, students and staff would be tested immediately, and then every two to three days – quarantining only if they have symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test result.

## What if my child is unwell?

The most important action you can take is that if your child is [unwell](#), you should keep them home and ensure they [get tested](#).

It is important for your child to remain at home if they are unwell and displaying symptoms, even if they test negative.

## What if my child has COVID-like symptoms due to another condition, can they attend school?

Hay fever and some other respiratory conditions that occur from time-to-time (such as asthma) produce symptoms similar to COVID-19. A child experiencing intermittent hay fever (or another condition) and displaying symptoms needs to stay home and have a RAT for COVID-19.

If the RAT is negative and symptoms continue, a second RAT must be conducted 24 hours later, or a PCR test.

If the second RAT or PCR test remains negative, a student may return to school if they feel well. If symptoms change or increase in severity, a student may need to see their treating medical practitioner for review.

This approach is based on [Public Health advice](#).

Please note there are further arrangements in place for children that have a Medical Management Plan that have ongoing COVID-like symptoms that occur daily to be managed. Please contact your school or support school to discuss these.

## What support will my child receive if they're required to quarantine or isolate?

If your child needs to isolate at home, their learning will be supported.

Learning at home via the Virtual Learning Centre with the support of an online teacher will continue if students need to isolate due to COVID-19. If your child is a household close contact, they can do online learning while isolating at home for seven days. If your child is a COVID-19 case, they can undertake online learning if they feel well, and return to school if they have no symptoms after seven days.

### What if I choose to keep my child at home, even if they're not sick?

All children who are well should attend school as they normally would. Normal attendance procedures apply, and regular school attendance is important. We know some parents and carers are feeling anxious as we see COVID-19 cases in the community, but attending school regularly is important for improved learning, and health and wellbeing outcomes. It is okay for children to attend school if they're not vaccinated, or not fully vaccinated. The health and safety of students, staff and the wider community is our highest priority. Measures are in place in our schools, libraries and Child and Family Learning Centres to create a COVID-safe learning environment.

### What if there isn't enough staff to supervise students?

Proactive strategies are in place to ensure there are enough staff in schools. If needed, relief teachers, recently retired teachers or other departmental staff will be called on. For further details, please refer to the Operational Plan for Managing COVID-19 in Schools.

### What happens if a parent or carer is being tested or a confirmed COVID-19 case?

If a parent or carer is being tested or a confirmed COVID-19 case, please follow [Public Health advice](#). If someone in your household is a confirmed case, your child would be considered a close contact if:

- They live with or stay overnight in the same premises as the confirmed case; or
- They have spent more than 4 hours in a residential setting with the confirmed case during their infectious periods over a 24-hour period.

If this is the case, you need to follow the [Public Health advice](#) for close contacts. If your child needs to quarantine at home, and they're feeling well, their learning at home will be supported.

### Is a child who is a close contact required to quarantine for an additional period of time after a household contact tests positive during isolation?

No. Close contacts of people with COVID-19 are required to quarantine for seven days from the date **the first case** in the household tests positive. This will not be extended if other people in the house later test positive and become new cases in the days after the first case tests positive in the household.

Close contacts are required to be tested for COVID-19 on Day 1 and 6, as well as whenever they display symptoms.

If a close contact tests positive for COVID-19 they will need to isolate in accordance with [Public Health requirements](#).

Children can leave quarantine and return to school on Day 7 if they have met all the [Public Health requirements for leaving quarantine](#).

Close contacts will not receive communication from Public Health when it is time for them to leave quarantine.

If the child is not immunocompromised and has recovered from COVID-19 for a period of four weeks, they are not considered to be a close contact. For detailed advice from Public Health see their [advice for contacts](#) webpage.

Can I keep my child at home if they, or someone in my family, has pre-existing medical conditions?

Parents and carers must provide written advice if their child or someone in their family is medically compromised. They should then talk to their school about how their child can continue their learning.

Where can I get tested?

Refer to [Tasmania's COVID-19 website](#) for information on COVID-19 testing.

Do I need evidence for my child to return to school after they have recovered from COVID-19?

No. You are not required to provide evidence of a negative test after a child has recovered from COVID for them to return to school, so long as they are well and do not have symptoms.

Public Health [advice](#) is that individuals can leave isolation seven days after the date of their positive test result, unless they are still experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

You should receive a 'release from isolation' message from Public Health, but you don't need to provide evidence of this message to return to school. As long as your child is well, they can return to school seven days after their positive test result regardless of whether they have other household members isolating.

If your child continues to display symptoms of COVID-19, they should isolate for a further three days and seek medical advice if symptoms continue.

When they return to school, children must continue to follow other COVID-safe measures including wearing a mask if they aged over 12 years in a high school or college.

Those who have recovered from COVID-19, and are not immunocompromised, do not have to undergo a rapid antigen test if there is a group or school outbreak for 28 days following their positive case. They also do not have to isolate if they are deemed a close contact (i.e. from a household member) within those 28 days.

## Site visitors

Can parents and carers go onto school sites?

Yes, parents and carers can enter school sites but must follow all site access requirements and COVID-safe measures, including only entering if feeling well, wearing a mask while on the school site indoors, maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres between adults, frequently handwashing and hand sanitising.

If a parent is also a volunteer, they must be vaccinated. Volunteers must hold a Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP) card and sign in using the volunteer register. COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for everyone aged five years and older.

Schools will make local decisions on site access and will communicate any requirements to their school community.

While there is no time limit to remain on school sites, parents and carers are encouraged to only visit when necessary and for a short period of time. *Stop, Drop and Go* is preferred where appropriate.

Parents and carers do not need to do a rapid antigen test (RAT) before entering school sites if they have no symptoms. If displaying symptoms, parents and carers should not enter school sites, even if testing negative.

### Can volunteers attend schools?

Yes, volunteers can support schools as they normally would, however, they need approval from the principal first; they must be vaccinated; and must follow all COVID-safe measures at school.

If a parent is also a volunteer, they must be vaccinated.

Volunteers must hold a Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP) card and sign in using the volunteer register.

### Are contractors and other visitors allowed on school sites?

At this time, non-essential visitors will be limited.

Contractors are allowed but must be vaccinated and must follow to all COVID-safe measures at school.

Contractors must hold a Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP) card and sign in using the visitor register.

### Can community groups use school facilities?

Yes, schools sites/facilities can still be used for external events with a COVID safety plan in place.

## School activities

### Can my child borrow library books?

Yes. Library books can still be borrowed – just ensure you've washed your hands before and after handling them.

### Can school sport and competitions take place?

School sport and competitions may take place if deemed essential to student core learning and outcomes with COVID-safe measures in place. Schools can make local decisions on this matter. If the situation changes, this will be re-visited on a school-by-school basis.

### Can parents and carers attend intra-school carnivals?

Large school community face-to-face gatherings are not to occur in Term 1.

Intraschool sports carnivals will only take place where they have been determined to be essential to core student learning.

Intraschool carnivals, during school hours, that are organised by schools, should not have spectators in attendance e.g. parents and carers.

This applies to intraschool carnivals both on school sites and at other locations.

Are rehearsals and performance allowed for instrumental music programs, ensembles and choirs?

Large school community face-to-face gatherings are not to occur on-site in Term 1.

School music will continue with COVID-safe measures in place. If the situation changes, this will be re-visited on a school-by-school basis.

Can students travel cross-campus?

Yes, if necessary.

Can students attend other school sites?

Yes. If students are required to attend another school for an essential curriculum-related reason (for example, auditions or placements), this is permitted.

Can home visits still go ahead?

Yes. Schools and Child and Family Learning Centre staff can undertake home visits where essential and ensure COVID-safe measures are in place.

Can schools hold parent/teacher meetings?

Yes. Parent/teacher meetings can continue with COVID-safe measures in place.

Will school photos still go ahead?

Yes. School photos will continue with COVID-safe measures in place. If the situation changes, this will be re-visited on a school-by-school basis.

Do parents need to pay school levies in 2022?

Yes. However, the Student Assistance Scheme (STAS) is available to families who hold a Health Care Card or equivalent which provides levy waivers to eligible families. For more information visit the [Department of Education website](#) or contact [stas@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:stas@education.tas.gov.au).

Can interstate and international school trips still go ahead?

All interstate and international school trips are postponed at this stage.

### Are Launching into Learning sessions going ahead?

LiL sessions will not be held indoors on school sites for Term 1.

LiL teachers will focus on outreach strategies to connect with families, including:

- facilitating outdoor LiL sessions, for example at local parks
- encouraging participation in the Great Start online LiL sessions
- encouraging participation in Child and Family Learning Centres (CFLCs) and Libraries Tasmania early learning sessions
- COVID-safe behaviours will apply to all sessions

### Are Child and Family Learning Centres (CFLCs) still open?

Yes. Child and Family Learning Centres are still open with COVID-safe measures in place.

### Are schools still allowing their facilities to be hired for external events?

Yes. Schools can still be used for external events with a COVID safety plan in place.

### Can physical education classes still go ahead?

Yes. Physical education classes will continue with COVID-safe measures in place. If the situation changes, this will be re-visited on a school-by-school basis.

### Will the canteen still be open?

Yes. The canteen will still be open with COVID-safe measures in place.

### Are playgrounds and sandpits still able to be used?

Yes. Playgrounds and sandpits can still be used with COVID-safe measures in place.

### Can school camps still go ahead?

School camps and overnight excursions won't occur in Term 1 unless they are essential course requirements.

### Can excursions still go ahead?

Yes. Excursions can continue with COVID-safe measures in place.

### Can students still undertake work experience?

Yes. Students can continue to undertake work experience provided all parties (students, parents and carers, schools and workplaces) are supportive. It will be subject to the normal procedures, including risk management and assessment practices and obtaining parental approval. Site requirements at the workplace will also be considered.

### Are swimming and water safety programs allowed to run?

Yes. Swimming and water safety programs can continue with COVID-safe measures in place. If the situation changes, this will be re-visited on a school-by-school basis.

### Are Department of Education pools still open?

Yes. School pools are still operating with a Pool Safety Plan in place.

### Can School Association Committee meetings still go ahead?

School Association Committee (SAC) meetings can go ahead with COVID-safe measures in place. However the meetings should held be online where possible.

SAC members are considered volunteers and must be vaccinated to attend meetings on site. They must also hold a Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVVP) Card and sign in using the volunteer register.

SAC members that are not vaccinated can participate in meetings remotely (online).

### Can school assemblies still go ahead, and are parents allowed to attend?

Large gatherings are not recommended at this stage.

### Can schools hold larger school-based activities?

Large gatherings are not recommended at this stage.

### Can school celebration and social events still go ahead?

Large gatherings are not recommended at this stage.

# Support for students with disability and medically vulnerable

What support is available for my child with disability or who is medically vulnerable?

Individual learning and medical plans for students with disability that have complex health needs will be updated if required by schools, in consultation with parents and carers. Parents may also proactively contact their school to discuss their child's needs.

My child cannot wear a mask, what should they do?

We acknowledge that there will be some students who, through no fault of their own, are not able to wear a mask at times. Please discuss this directly with your school principal prior to school starting.

## Early childhood education and care services

Can I send my child to early childhood education and care services?

Yes, childcare programs and Out of School Hours Care will operate with COVID-safe measures in place.

Are there any changes to childcare fees?

There was a return to the full Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy system in July 2020. The Government doesn't set childcare fees. Services set their own fees. Parents then pay the gap between the total of the fees charged for a session of care minus the amount of Child Care Subsidy paid for the care session. Families experiencing financial hardship may be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy. Refer to the [Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment website](#) for more information.

Are children in early childhood education and care required to wear face masks?

No.

Where can I find out more about early childhood education and care services?

Please refer to the [Education and Care website](#) for parent frequently asked questions.

## Kinder

What will Kinder look like?

Kinder will operate as normal, with COVID-safe measures in place. Parents can help their child settle into their day. Please contact your school for additional details and arrangements.

## Years 11 and 12

How will senior secondary students be supported?

Face-to-face learning will continue with COVID-safe measures in place. Years 11 and 12 students will have access to a wide range of courses through Virtual Learning Tasmania and online tutorials in English and Maths.

Schools will be provided with central support to monitor student participation in learning online and develop strategies for supporting the transition to face-to-face learning.

Can vocational placements and school-based apprenticeships continue?

Yes. Vocational placements and school-based apprenticeships will continue with COVID-safe measures in place. Site requirements at the workplace will also be considered.

## Learning at home

How does learning at home work?

If your child needs to isolate at home, their learning will be supported. Every effort will be made to support your child, and the core curriculum will be delivered at home. We are prepared for any learning at home periods, and our workforce planning will ensure all learners have access to a teacher.

For details, please refer to the [Operational Plan for Managing COVID-19 in Schools](#).

What is a Virtual Learning Centre?

Where possible, schools will support learners to come to school and learn under the supervision of their classroom teacher. When this is not possible, schools will communicate to parents about the resources to support learners and this may include the Virtual Learning Centre. Access to this Centre will be available from the start of the school year, and parents can speak with their school about access to this learning if they wish to before school starts.

Resources and equipment packs have also been developed for students in internet 'black spots' or facing other barriers to online learning.

Are there any resources available to support parents with learning at home?

Yes. Please refer to the [learning at home parent tip sheets](#) and [supporting learning information](#). Remember – you are not expected or required to be an expert or trained educator. You know your child's strengths and interests, so you can create reasonable learning expectations with support from your child's school.

How will students with disability and vulnerable students be supported with learning at home?

The Department of Education has continued to support a number of students and young people with disability to continue to learn throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including making adjustments to learning and implementing medical action plans where appropriate.

Students with disability with complex health needs will continue to be supported on an individual basis, working closely with parents and carers as necessary. This could include additional medical advice within the student's medical action plan.

Schools are working directly with the family to update the student's individual learning plan.

What if we're unable to access learning materials?

Every reasonable effort will be made to provide material to the students where appropriate.

Will Gifted Online programs be available?

Gifted Online programs are scheduled to begin after week 5, COVID impacts permitting. In the interim there are options for gifted students in the VLC to access learning programs at a higher grade level to meet extension needs. There are a range of supports and resources in place in schools for students to be able to access extension programs including some past CANVAS Gifted Online courses.

## Wellbeing support

What support is available for student wellbeing?

It's normal to feel overwhelmed and anxious about everything you're hearing about COVID-19. It's important to talk to your child about COVID-19 and what you can do as a family to help slow the spread. [Emerging Minds](#), [Beyond Blue](#) and [Red Cross](#) offer useful tips for parents on talking to children about COVID-19. [Wellbeing support](#) for students, parents and carers is also available.

It's important to exercise regularly to maintain physical and mental wellbeing. Establishing daily routines is important too, by incorporating healthy meals and snacks and maintaining a regular bedtime. Please seek professional help if needed.

Support services include [Kids Helpline](#) on 1800 551 800, [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14 and [Beyond Blue](#) on 1300 224 636.

The wellbeing of learners in Government schools will also be supported by:

- each school's Support and Wellbeing team monitoring students' wellbeing and determining the required supports to meet each student's individual needs
- the online *Wellbeing Check-in*, designed for students in Years 3 to 12, whether they are at school or learning from home
- the Department's Professional Support Staff teams, including school psychologists, social workers, speech and language pathologists and school nurses who will continue to provide both face-to-face and online support, for students learning on site and from home as required
- the Virtual Learning Centre where students and families will be able to access wellbeing resources.

I'm feeling anxious about COVID-19 in schools. Where can I get support?

This may be an anxious time for parents. Know that there is a clear plan in place to manage COVID-19 in schools and early education and care services. Proactive measures are in place to keep schools COVID-safe. For details, please refer to the Operational Plan for Managing COVID-19 in Schools.

Always make sure you get your information from a credible source. The Department of Education or your school will provide updates to families as soon as new information becomes available. [Wellbeing support](#) for students, parents and carers is also available.

How can I access professional support staff (social workers, school psychologists, speech and language pathologists) and school health nurses?

School health nurses, social workers, school psychologists and speech and language pathologists continue to work with schools and students to support their wellbeing needs. Please contact your school to seek support or a referral to professional support staff and/or school health nurses.

## Further information

Where can I find out more about COVID-19?

For the latest information visit:

- [Tasmanian Government Coronavirus website](#)
- [Australian Government Department of Health website](#)
- [Tasmanian Government COVID-19 vaccination website](#).

For general COVID-19 enquiries, contact the [Tasmanian Public Health Hotline](#) on 1800 671 738.

For vaccination information, contact the [National Coronavirus Helpline](#) on 1800 020 080.

For Catholic or Independent school related COVID enquiries, contact [Catholic Education Tasmania](#) on 03 6210 8888 or [Independent Schools Tasmania](#) on 03 6224 0125.

If you can't find an answer to your school related COVID enquiry [here](#), contact the Department of Education COVID Support Hotline at [COVID19support@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:COVID19support@education.tas.gov.au) or on 1800 816 057.

If you need support translating or interpreting this information, contact the [Translating and Interpreting Service](#) on 131 450. [Alternative language versions](#) and [accessibility information](#) is available.

Advice for staff is available on the [Department of Education's intranet](#) (link accessible only by staff).

Is there a Department of Education COVID hotline for parents to call?

Yes. If you can't find an answer to your school related COVID enquiry [here](#), contact the Department of Education COVID Support Hotline at [COVID19support@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:COVID19support@education.tas.gov.au) or on 1800 816 057.