

Supporting students with disability

Information for parents and carers

This resource aims to support parents and carers of students with disability

The Government is coordinating efforts across agencies to ensure that all Tasmania's children and young people are safe, well and actively engaged in learning. The Department of Education works with other agencies to support vulnerable students to access, participate and engage in their learning.

Schools will continue to work closely with parents and carers to support students and young people with disability. Students who have individualised learning plans will continue to be supported. Parents and carers can contact schools to discuss their child's individual learning plan and medical action plan (where appropriate).

Our priority is for schools to support learners to come to school and learn under the supervision of their classroom teacher. When students with disability need to learn from home they will be provided with a Learning Pack to compliment online learning options.

School Support and Wellbeing teams support the wellbeing of all students, with a particular focus on those students with diverse and complex needs requiring coordinated support.

Keeping COVID-safe

To keep our learners and staff as safe as possible, COVID-safe measures are in place in our schools in line with Public Health advice:

- Students, staff and visitors must stay home if unwell or if they have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Parents and carers can go onto school sites, however, their time spent on-site should be limited and related to the activity they are participating in. They must practise COVID-safe behaviours and follow any access requirements the school has in place.
- While face masks are no longer mandatory at schools, unless an individual is directed to wear a face mask by Public Health, there may be times or situations where a school requires masks to be worn. All students, staff and visitors are encouraged and supported to wear masks should they choose to. Each school has a supply of single-use surgical face masks for staff and students. Staff will wear face masks when working closely with students are vulnerable to COVID-19.
- When physical distancing cannot be maintained or staff members need to work closely with a medically vulnerable child with their learning or support needs, school staff at time might wear P2/N95 masks and protective eye wear as additional safety measures.

- All schools practise increased hygiene and handwashing. Handwashing and sanitising products are available in all schools. All schools will continue increased COVID-safe cleaning, including additional disinfecting of high touch point surfaces. How learning materials and classroom resources are used in a COVID safe way is considered. Additional safety and cleaning measures are put in place to enhance the safety of our learners.
- Vaccination continues to be the best way to reduce the severity of COVID-19 symptoms and the likelihood of contracting the virus. Students are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated. Schools will continue to work with the Department of Health to support and promote community vaccination clinics and to help increase vaccination and booster rates in children.

COVID-19 case management

COVID-19 case management is guided by Public Health advice. Schools are well prepared to respond to increases in COVID-19 cases and are supported by a central support team including a dedicated coordinator for each Government school. Schools work closely with Public Health to monitor cases of COVID-19 in Support Schools and may at times take different approaches to other schools to help keep vulnerable students safe.

If the level of COVID-19 cases in a school exceeds identified thresholds, the school communicates directly with families to provide instructions specific to their children. 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.

Students and staff will continue to have access to rapid antigen tests (RATs). Parents and carers should use a RAT if their child has COVID-19 symptoms or are a close contact and need to test daily with a RAT before attending school. If needed, schools support parents and carers to complete RATs with their children by providing different options of nasal swab and saliva RATs, including 'lollipop' versions where available.

How can I stay informed?

- For information about COVID-19 safety in schools, visit education.tas.gov.au/COVID-19.
- For information about COVID-19 in Tasmania, go to coronavirus.tas.gov.au or call the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.

For information about COVID-19 in Australia, go to health.gov.au or call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.