COVID-19 Safety Risk Review

This **Safety Risk Review** document applies to all schools, and outlines some key health, safety and wellbeing hazards for which schools should plan. It links to the controls prescribed by the latest health and safety guidance, and the supports available. It is designed to support the ongoing revision of the COVID Safe Plan, in conjunction with the School Operations Guide.

School leadership should consult with local Health and Safety Representative(s) and Health and Safety Committee(s) (where applicable) to implement the recommended controls as far as reasonably practicable.

The MACS OHS team and Diocesan education offices are available for Principals and School Leaders to contact for information, support and guidance.

Schools are encouraged to use CEVN or their local school incident report process to report hazards, incidents and injuries, as well as escalation for further supports when required.

This plan covers four key areas of risk, listed as 'hazard types':

- Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control) – page 2

- Working Alone, in Isolation or from Home – page 15

- Occupational Violence and Aggression – page 16

- Mental Health and Wellbeing – page 16

See page 18 for the Risk Matrix used to assign a Risk Rating.

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Risk Rating	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions	Residual Rating
Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control)	Additional personnel onsite; personnel may contract disease through social interactions. Congregation of non-school essential personnel.	H	Refer to health and safety measures for return to onsite learning in the **School Operations Guide** context of COVID-19: ● *Promote COVIDSafe Activities:* – *Adapt, modify or defer higher-risk activities* – *Reinforce COVIDSafe Behaviours* – *Managing safe school arrival and departures including multiple entries and consider staggered starts* – *Ensure physical distancing* – *Face masks in schools* Vaccinations and Vaccination Champions - As part of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination roll-out, all school staff and all students who are eligible can receive a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine. - The Vaccination Champion program will train and support trusted staff in your school community to share credible information about the vaccines with staff, students and parents/carers. - These staff members will be trained to help their school community understand the importance of COVID-19	Directions on mandatory COVID-19 vaccination now apply to authorised workers, residential aged care workers, construction workers, workers in health care settings, school and early childhood staff. This includes principals, teachers, administration and education support staff, including casual relief teachers (CRTs) and pre-service teachers, as well as students undertaking Structured Workplace Learning and work experience. All school staff are required to be fully vaccinated unless a medical exemption applies. Staff must receive a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 25 February 2022 if eligible, or within 3 months and 2 weeks of receiving a second dose. They will be required to show evidence of their vaccination status. These requirements will apply to students undertaking Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) or work experience. Schools should liaise with workplaces to ensure that students aged 12 years and two months and over meet the vaccination requirements of where they are undertaking work experience or SWL. School students are not required to show proof of vaccination to attend school camp (that is, to stay with an accommodation provider) or to attend activities that occur outside of the accommodation facility in another venue as part of the school camp activities.	M

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Risk Rating	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions	Residual Rating
			vaccines and well as how to access them, helping to keep schools safe by: • increasing vaccine confidence • increasing uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations • supporting any vaccine related activities at your school.	Schools are not required to check the vaccination status of external staff at external venues. Staff working at school camps must comply with the relevant vaccination requirements of the venue. Formals, graduations, and other ceremonies (including events held off school premises and/or with parents/carers and other guests) can take place, however they must align with community settings. Density limits of one person per four square metres no longer apply to staff areas such as staff lunchrooms and areas accessed by the public, such as reception areas, however physical distancing should be maintained. The density limit of one person per four square metres should be applied to any spaces and activities being attended by parent/carers and other visitors. For public areas, signage must be displayed to indicate the maximum number of members of the public that may be present in the space at a single time. Upon arrival at the campus or office, staff, students, visitors and contractors to be reminded to 'stay home if unwell'. They will be asked to confirm if they or anyone at home have: - experienced fever or flu-like symptoms, such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue	

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				- experienced shortness of breath - returned from overseas in the last 14 days - been in close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19. If upon arrival or during the day anyone exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, they will be immediately isolated. An incident report will be completed and the person encouraged to self-isolate until they can be tested and receive the result. For all school settings: • Teachers will be required to always wear masks indoors when not actively teaching or communicating with students. Masks are not compulsory for teachers and staff outdoors. • Students in Grade 3 and above must wear a face mask indoors at school, including specialist schools), and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) programs, unless a lawful exception applies. Students must wear face masks even if vaccinated. Students are not required to wear masks outside. • For composite classes that include students in and above Grade 3 and below Grade 3, those below Grade 3 are strongly encouraged to wear masks.	

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				• When attending outdoor school camps and excursions, face masks are not mandatory, unless physical distancing cannot be maintained. Face masks must continue to be worn when indoors on camps and excursions. • Everyone over eight years old must wear a face mask when travelling to and from school on public transport, taxis or ride share vehicles. • School staff must wear a face mask in all indoor settings, except where removal of a face mask is necessary for effective communication. • Visitors to schools aged eight and above must wear a face mask in all indoor spaces, unless a lawful exception applies. • Students in Prep to Grade 2 are strongly recommended to wear a face mask indoors at school or an OSHC program. A face mask must cover the nose and mouth. Face shields, scarves or bandanas do not meet these requirements. There are a number of lawful reasons for not wearing a face mask, including for staff and students who are unable to wear a face mask due to the nature of their disability, medical or mental health condition. Parent/carers of a student/s who meet the criteria for an exception must provide their approval in	

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				writing for their children to not wear a mask to the school. There is no requirement for a letter for medical exception for not wearing a face mask from a medical practitioner. Outside of lawful exceptions, schools must treat any deliberate and persistent noncompliance with the face masks direction as a serious matter. Usual school procedures for dealing with non-compliance with school rules should be followed. Visitors, including parents and carers, entering school buildings must comply with vaccination requirements, density limits, face mask requirements, QR code check-ins and practise respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene. Please refer to the **School Operations Guide** for further information. Encourage students, staff and contractors/visitors to bring their own face mask, and also check to ensure there are enough single-use face masks available for staff, students or visitors who do not have their own or for masks that get damaged/soiled. Eliminate or minimise the necessity of using shared equipment at this time. Such items may include shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, and musical	

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				instruments. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use. Risk can be further minimised with users wiping down items where appropriate, for example using a disinfectant/detergent wipe or cloth. Circulate the latest advice, including displaying onsite and gate signage. Regularly assess staff in attendance at the workplace to maximise physical distancing and reconfiguration of spaces. Replace higher risk activities with online/virtual alternatives. **Exemption for essential workers to return to work following a close / household contact** Under these settings, school staff who are household contacts will also need to take the following steps when attending school during their isolation period: • undertake a daily rapid antigen test for five days and return a negative result prior to • attending work each day and report the result to their school daily (tests will be provided by the school) • always wear a mask, including while teaching and in the company of others, except for when eating or drinking. Using a P2/N95 mask, or TGA-approved P2-equivalent mask, is strongly recommended.	

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				• not enter shared break or work areas including staff rooms • when travelling to and from work the staff member must not carpool and should, where possible, avoid public transport • work in areas where transmission risk is lower (outside where possible and safe, or in large, well-ventilated spaces) • other than when attending school, staff must quarantine in accordance with public health requirements • Schools will be supplied with rapid antigen tests and P2/N95 masks, or TGA-approved P2-equivalent masks to provide to staff who are working in this category.	
	Being aware of all personnel movements on and off site	H	Establish a process to record the attendance of staff, students, contractors and visitors.	Use of school sign in and out protocols for ALL personnel that enter site. QR code check ins **are required** to be used by all visitors on school site (including other workers, contractors, external MACS staff and building and maintenance staff, and all parents who enter school buildings when on school site.	L
	Staff and students may contract disease through social interactions. Physical distancing is unable to be maintained (for example, in specialist school settings).	E	Refer to health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the **School Operations Guide** context of COVID-19: – *Provision of routine care and first aid*	Circulate the latest advice, including displaying onsite signage. Implement physical distancing in) areas accessed by the public, such as reception and areas accessed by staff (staff rooms and lunch	M

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			– *Adapt, modify or defer higher risk activities* – *Promote COVIDSafe Activities: Use of school facilities and playgrounds* – *Reduce mixing between groups and create workforce bubbles* – *Reinforce COVIDSafe Behaviours: Ensure physical distancing* – *Practice good hygiene* – *Avoid interactions in close spaces* – *Face masks in schools* Physical Distancing poster Completion of COVID Safe plan Staff who may be medically vulnerable are to seek advice from their medical practitioner regarding onsite attendance.	rooms). Display signage or posters to reflect the new limits. It continues to be recommended that staff should avoid working across multiple sites as much as practical, noting there will be some workforces who will need to work across multiple schools (i.e. health and wellbeing staff and casual relief teaching staff). Professional development and staff meetings should be held in online and remote options in the first four weeks of term one where feasible. Staff who are attending school under critical workforce exemptions should not attend face-to-face meetings. Staff should reduce as far as possible the use of common areas such as staff rooms. Staff should eat and drink outside wherever possible and practicable. Indoor events will remain subject to the obligations such as caps and density quotients. All eligible adults must be fully vaccinated. Outdoor events can be held with up to 500 people, with a density quotient of one person per two square metres applied. Rearrange, remove or cordon off furniture in common areas to ensure physical distancing, stagger seating so staff are not facing one another on break.	

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				Conduct regular visual inspections of the workplace to check that recommended risk controls are implemented and working effectively. Escalate issues to the regional leadership consultants or the Diocesan office if issues cannot be resolved locally.	
	A confirmed case (or a close contact of a confirmed case) may occur among staff, students or the school community. Persons attending site whilst unwell.	E	Refer to health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the **School Operations Guide** context of COVID-19: – *Respond to COVID-19 Risk: Management of an unwell student of staff member* – *Reinforce COVIDSafe Behaviours: Stay home when unwell* – *Required actions for suspected cases of coronavirus in staff*	Circulate information about COVID related symptoms to all members of the school community. Communicate the need to stay home to staff and students if feeling unwell, are awaiting a test result or have a positive test result. Communicate and display the isolation procedure for staff and students if they become unwell at school.	M
	Staff and students may spread or contract disease by touching. Lack of awareness of infection control measures.	E	Refer to health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the **School Operations Guide** context of COVID-19: – *Reinforce COVIDSafe Behaviours* – *Promote COVIDSafe Activities* – *Create COVIDSafe Spaces* Training: School and Early Childhood Infection Prevention and Control During Coronavirus (COVID-19) Reduce your risk of coronavirus- Poster Wash your hands regularly - poster	Location of hand sanitiser stations throughout the worksite including entry points and occupied rooms Ensuring rubbish bins are available to dispose of paper towels Ensuring adequate supplies of soap and sanitiser Ensuring staff and students have information on how and when to wash and sanitise their hands correctly	M

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			Cover your cough and sneeze - poster Be a Soapy Hero! - poster	Ensure staff are trained in relevant infection control measures. The School and Early Childhood Infection Prevention and Control During Coronavirus (COVID-19) training module should be completed. Display appropriate infection control signage/posters. Consider adjusting how staff and students interact within the built environment to reduce contact with certain surfaces. For example, a simple measure such as keeping a door open will reduce the need for multiple people to touch the door handle.	
	Local supplies of personal hygiene products may be limited. Misuse of hand sanitiser including ingestion.	H	Ensure the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is obtained from the manufacturer for the hand sanitiser and any additional cleaning products used within the school. Ensure adequate supervision and safe storage of supplies.	Chemicals to be listed on SDS register and SDS located in easily accessible location. Hand sanitisers to be located in fixed positions at entry/exit points in well supervised areas.	L
	Staff and students may contract disease by touching contaminated surfaces.	E	Refer to health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the School Operations context of COVID-19: – *Reinforce COVIDSafe Behaviours: Practice good hygiene* – *Create COVIDSafe Spaces: Keep surfaces clean* – *Promote COVIDSafe Activities: Use of school facilities and playgrounds*	Liaise with local service providers for tailored implementation at specific site/s. Consider adjustment of school timetables and use of specialist rooms and shared facilities. Consider local staggering of break times and separating different classes or year levels when outdoors.	H

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Risk Rating	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions	Residual Rating
			– *Use of woodwind instruments, singing, voice projection and dance* – *Cleaning and personal hygiene products*	Eliminate or minimise using shared equipment at this time. Such items may include shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, and musical instruments. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use. Risk can be further minimised with users wiping down items where appropriate, for example using a disinfectant/detergent wipe or cloth. Replace high-touch communal items with alternatives: - Swapping shared coffee and condiments for single serve sachets - Installing no touch amenities such as contactless taps, rubbish bins and soap dispensers - Avoid sharing of equipment such as phones, desks, headsets, offices, tools or other equipment - Provide staff with their own personal equipment, labelled with their name - Removal of reusable shared kitchen sponges/cleaning products to replace with paper towel dispensers For prep and younger student cohorts: - allocate individual zip lock bags for stationary - Removal of fabric/plush style play items	
	Contaminated surfaces – general cleaning	E	Refer to health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the **School Operations** context of COVID-19:	Liaise with local cleaning providers on increased cleaning requirements. Shared staff spaces cleaned at regular intervals.	H

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			– *Cleaning and personal hygiene products* – *Create COVIDSafe Spaces: Keep surfaces clean* **Enhanced School Cleaning Guideline** Ensure adequate supplies of cleaning products, including detergent and disinfectant.	Identify high touch surfaces (lift buttons, door and cupboard handles, kitchen counters, touch screens, shared work equipment). Provide information about workplace cleaning schedule and how to use cleaning products. Identify which products are required for thorough cleaning. Monitor supplies of cleaning products and regularly restock. Consider adjusting how staff and students interact within the built environment to reduce contact with certain surfaces. For example, a simple measure such as keeping a door open will reduce the need for multiple people to touch the door handle.	
	Contaminated surfaces – cleaning after a confirmed case	E	**CECV Infectious Cleaning Guidelines**	Prior identification of a resource that can provide Infectious Cleaning services in accordance with DH cleaning guidelines.	M
	Staff and students may contract disease through the air.	H	Refer to health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the **School Operations Guide** context of COVID-19: – *Create COVIDSafe Spaces: Promote outdoor air ventilation* – *Reinforce COVIDSafe Behaviours: Face masks in schools*	Install air purification devices in higher-risk areas in such as staff rooms, sick bays, music rooms and other high traffic areas. Turn on mechanical ventilation, where available and practicable, is to run systems during school hours including when rooms are unoccupied, and if possible ideally 2 hours before and after the use of a space. Where available, timers can be used to manage operation.	M

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Risk Rating	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions	Residual Rating
				Air conditioners may be used to provide thermal comfort, however if they cannot use outside air, then they need to be used with other ventilation strategies. Using more than one ventilation method creates greater opportunity to create a comfortable learning environment and maximising ventilation. Ensure all school staff and students in grade 3 or above wear a face mask at all times when indoors, including when attending an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program, unless a lawful exception applies. Monitoring use of fitted face coverings in all staff and students grade 3 and above, unless a lawful exemption applies. Note: For communication purposes, teachers and education support staff are not required to wear face masks while teaching, but those who wish to do so, can. Door jambs should be used to keep air circulating and avoid the need to close and open doors. Rearrange group activities to occur outdoors or in large indoor spaces. Provide training to staff on the correct use and disposal of face coverings and PPE, and on good hygiene practices and slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).	

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	Vulnerable Workforce (higher risk of serious illness).	E	Refer to health and safety advice for return to onsite learning in the **School Operations Guide** context of COVID-19: – *Staff who may be medically vulnerable*	Ensure consultation with your staff, and incorporate into workforce planning.	L
	Inadequate confirmed case response	H	Coronavirus reactive closure: steps for principals Coronavirus: School Closure – Reactive Communications Pack **School Operations Guide**: – *Respond to COVID-19 Risk: Management of an unwell student or staff member* – *School site closures* – *Required actions for suspected cases of coronavirus in staff* CECV Covid-19 Response Team	Process communicated to staff in staff meeting	M
Working Alone, in Isolation or from Home	The home work environment may cause injury (noise, lighting, thermal comfort, and slips, trips and falls).	M	Refer to the CECV – Agile working guidelines template.	Promote the OHS advice and support to staff. Enable reasonable access to available school equipment. Proactively plan with staff who have a known pre-existing injury. Establish protocols for regular check-ins with staff.	L
	Staff may suffer musculoskeletal disorders by adopting static postures while using laptops, portable devices or personal computers.	M			L
	Increased isolation (on-site and/or at home) may increase risk of injury.	M			L

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Risk Rating	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions	Residual Rating
Occupational Violence and Aggression	Online, over the phone or other remote threatening or aggressive behaviour by students, parents/carers, school staff or other members of school community.	H	Refer to local Occupational violence or Codes of conduct. If required, create or update occupational violence policies and procedures using the following CECV templates and the Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines: • Parent-school relationship code of conduct template • Managing challenging and aggressive behaviours procedure template • Complaints policy template In the event of mental health and wellbeing concerns, utilise the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and contact your local Diocese or regional office with further queries. If required, create mental health and wellbeing policy using the following CECV template: Mental wellbeing policy template	Ensure onsite staff are ready to manage the resumption of onsite learning. Encourage parental and community support and understanding in the transition between learning from home and return to onsite learning. Set expectations for behaviour with the school community, and promote appropriate ways for parents to raise their concerns. Discuss extra supports or strategies for staff who engage with anyone known to present a risk. Encourage staff to report incidents, de-brief, and seek escalated support (e.g. through EAP) if required.	M
	On-site violence, bullying or harassment by students, parents/ carers, school staff or other members of school community.	H			M
	Staff experiencing stress or anxiety stemming from exposure to increasing onsite or online occupational violence and aggression from parents.	H			M
					M
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Staff experiencing changes to workload (increase/decrease) from modifications in tasks and priorities.	H	In the event of mental health and wellbeing concerns, utilise the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and contact your local Diocese or regional office with further queries. If required, create mental health and wellbeing policy using the following CECV template: • Mental wellbeing policy template	Consult (check-in) with your staff on how they are managing with the current situation, encourage managers to be flexible, and support workforce bubbles, outdoor spaces and remote contact between colleagues. Have regular conversations to provide as much clarity and flexibility as possible about tasks, priorities and the way work can be delivered (e.g. adapt, modify or defer high risk activities).	M
	Balancing non-work-related demands (e.g. caring responsibilities).	H			M
	Staff experiencing stress or anxiety regarding increased engagement with parent/carers in the delivery of learning from home.	H			M
	Staff experiencing disengagement and low morale regarding clarity of tasks, team roles and evolving priorities.	H			M

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Risk Rating	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions	Residual Rating
	Staff experiencing uncertainty, stress, and anxiety from multiple transitions in modes of teaching and learning delivery, and return to onsite arrangements.	M	Video and telephone counselling are available via the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all staff and their immediate family members. Contact your Diocesan office for further information regarding the Employee Assistance Programs available for your Diocese. Information, resources and webinars to support staff are available at: [Coronavirus (COVID-19) Wellbeing Resources](#)	When a transition occurs either to or from remote learning, consider how best to enable staff to respond to the transition and adjust their planning to suit.	M
	Staff experiencing uncertainty and anxiety about the COVID-19 risks to their personal health (especially if working onsite).	E		Talk with staff about how they can limit screen time and consult with staff about strategies for managing emails.	M
	Staff experiencing isolation and changes in levels of support from leaders and colleagues as a result of the changed arrangements.	H		Encourage staff to take scheduled screen breaks Encourage staff to take wellbeing time.	M
	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).	E		Consider pausing the introduction of any new initiatives or additional professional development activities Limit meeting duration and record meetings to enable flexibility in attending 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.	H

Risk Matrix

Consequence	Description
Negligible	No treatment required
Minor	Minor injury requiring first aid treatment
Moderate	Minor injury requiring treatment by doctor
Significant	Serious injury requiring specialist medical treatment or hospitalisation
Severe	Loss of life, permanent disability or multiple serious injuries

Likelihood	Description
Very Unlikely	Will only occur in exceptional circumstances
Unlikely	Not likely to occur in normal circumstances
Possible	May occur at some time
Likely	Expected to occur at some time
Very Likely	Expected to occur regularly under normal circumstances

		Consequence				
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Severe
Likelihood	Very Likely	M	H	E	E	E
	Likely	M	M	H	E	E
	Possible	L	M	M	H	E
	Unlikely	L	L	M	M	H
	Very Unlikely	L	L	L	M	M

Risk Level = L-Low, M-Moderate, H-High, E-Extreme.