



Coronavirus:

Staff FAQs: Return to learning at school

8 MAY 2020

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

For Tasmanian Government schools:

From Monday May 25 2020:

- Kindergarten to Year 6 students will return to learning at school
- Year 11 and 12 students will return to learning at school
- Students in Year 7 to 10 will continue to learn at home.

From Tuesday June 9 2020:

- Year 7 to 10 students will return to learning at school

2. What is expected of staff during this transition?

We recognise the huge amount of work school staff and teachers have put into supporting our students to learn at home. Supporting your wellbeing through this change in delivery is a priority, and we are providing clear guidance to schools to maintain health and safety at all times. As always, if you feel you require additional support throughout this time, please remember that the Employee Assistance Program is available to you and can be contacted on 1300 687 327 or by email at eap@convergeintl.com.au.

Continued staff commitment and flexibility is important in supporting the transition back to school based learning. Regular communication with parents and students has been critical to the success of the learning at home model and ongoing communication will continue to remain a priority as we transition back.

3. Will learning from home continue for students prior to their return to school on their allocated date?

Yes. Students will still continue to be supported by schools with their learning at home until they are scheduled to return to school.

4. What if a student wants to return to school before their allocated date?

It is important that students continue to learn at home. This is important to support the Tasmanian community in its fight against the spread of COVID-19.

Children who cannot be supervised or supported to learn from home during this time can continue to attend school, as per the current arrangements.

5. Is it expected that students will attend school from their allocated date?

Yes. Once students resume learning at school, they will no longer be supported by their school with learning at home. Schools will not be required to support dual delivery of learning at home and school based learning.

6. What arrangements am I required to make for students where parents are choosing not to send them to school?

Some parents or carers may wish for their child to continue learning at home due to concerns about COVID-19.

As is currently the case, parents will be required to communicate with the school about their child's absence from school.

The teacher is not responsible for providing an alternative learning program where parents elect to keep their child home, except if they are vulnerable due to COVID-19 health related concerns.

Schools could choose to maintain elements of their learning at home program for students, or provide other supports, if this was feasible.

Resources to support learning at home can be accessed on the Department of Education website at <https://www.education.tas.gov.au/learning-at-home/>.

While there is no expectation to provide additional support to students learning at home, it is important to maintain contact with them and a connection with the school, to support their eventual return to school-based learning.

7. Will we be expected to support learning at home for students that are unable to attend school as they are vulnerable due to COVID-19 health concerns?

Yes. In these situations students will still continue to be supported by schools with their learning at home. As is currently the case, parents will be required to communicate with the school about the

child's absence from school. When they contact the school with this information you should discuss the support the school can provide to assist you with learning at home.

8. Why are primary and senior secondary students returning first?

In line with public health advice it is important that we take a phased approach for students returning to school-based learning, to ensure we are continuing to manage the movement of people on our sites, as we gradually lift restrictions in line with Public Health advice.

Research shows the importance of early learning in setting up children for lifelong learning and success.

By allowing our primary schools to return, we can better support our young children through teaching and learning to become confident, involved learners and effective communicators.

At the same time, we can support many whole school communities to return to school-based learning together, rather than splitting primary schools up into different year groups returning at different times.

The senior secondary years are also important, with many students making decisions about, and undertaking the pre-requisite course work for the pathways they will take after school.

9. Is it safe for staff and students to return to school?

Yes. The decision to return to school through a phased approach is informed by public health advice at both a national and local level.

Schools are identified as safe places for students and staff, and evidence suggests that they present low risk in relation to the spread of COVID-19.

Maintaining health and safety for students and staff on our school sites is a priority, and schools are implementing practices to support social distancing between adults, and maintaining strict hygiene protocols, based on public health advice.

The greatest risk of transmission in the school environment is between adults. Therefore, it is important that all adults maintain physical distancing between themselves and each other at school.

A range of preventative measures will continue to be in place in schools including:

- students and staff who are unwell must not attend school
- adults must not gather in and around school grounds, car parks, entrances and outside classrooms
- social distancing of 1.5 metres is required by all adults
- Public Health advice is that social distancing between children is not required in schools provided they are well. However, for extra precaution, social distancing will still be encouraged where practical, provided it does not impact on education provision
- increased cleaning frequencies of high-touch surfaces
- staff will continue to engage in regular handwashing and hygiene protocols, including regularly washing hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser and covering coughs and sneezes

- Keep the maximum capacity of meeting rooms to no more than one person per 4 square metres
- Designate additional spaces for staff to use as break rooms

10. Can vulnerable staff continue to stay home/work from home?

Yes – the Department will continue to support those staff who are vulnerable to COVID-19.

11. Will PPE be available for teachers?

Public Health advice is that additional PPE is not required in schools to care for children that are well. Where PPE is usually used in the routine care of a child, particularly as part of conducting a specialised health procedure, this will continue.

12. How can schools be sure there are enough hygiene products?

The Department has arranged for additional supplies of hygiene products, such as hand wash and sanitiser, to be available for schools throughout term 2. The Department will continue to work with schools to understand supply issues and ensure that schools remain adequately stocked.

13. What will school look like when students return?

Schools will continue to actively manage routines and protocols in and around the school site. Social distancing measures will be in place, with a focus on adults, and it is important that these are followed.

Based on public health advice social distancing is not required for students during classroom activities, although schools may consider implementing strategies to support this area.

There will continue to be a number of activities that will not occur during Term 2 including camps, excursions and assemblies. These restrictions will be reviewed based on public health advice.

14. Can we recommence Launching into Learning programs?

Launching into Learning on school sites will not be offered during Term 2. Launching into Learning may commence from Term 3 on a site by site basis, subject to public health advice. Schools will continue to provide a variety of online and take home options for families to continue engaging in LiL programs.

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

The Department of Education has established protocols, based on following the advice of public health, if a confirmed case is identified in a school. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school, the school may need to temporarily close to allow time for public health to conduct contact tracing and deep cleaning to be undertaken, to ensure the safety of staff and student prior to reopening.

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