

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Tuesday, 12 May 2020

GETTING OUR KIDS BACK INTO THE CLASSROOM

Victorian government school students will begin a phased return to classrooms before the end of May, following advice from Victoria's Chief Health Officer that it is safe for the community to do so.

Since the beginning of Term 2, most children in Victoria have been learning remotely, limiting the number of people moving around our state every day to help slow the spread of coronavirus.

The Government thanks parents, teachers and staff for their incredible efforts in helping deliver remote and flexible schooling this term and, in doing so, playing a vital role in flattening the curve of this pandemic.

These efforts, and the biggest testing blitz in the country, mean Victoria is now in the position to begin moving back to face-to-face learning in the classroom.

From Tuesday 26 May, all Prep, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students, specialist school students, as well as VCE and VCAL students will return to on-site learning at government schools. The next fortnight, and a pupil free day at all schools on 25 May, will give staff, schools and families time to prepare for the change.

Vulnerable students in years 3 to 10, and children in those years whose parents or carers cannot work from home, can continue to attend school on-site as needed during this period.

Students in the broader year 3 to 10 cohort will continue to learn remotely until Tuesday 9 June, to give the Government and the Chief Health Officer time to monitor and evaluate the effects that the return to school by other year levels has on the increased movement of people and transmission within the community.

The Government will invest up to \$45 million for enhanced cleaning that will occur every day at every school across the state for all of Term 2 and Term 3. This will help to reduce the spread of viruses and germs in schools and will include the cleaning of frequently used high-touch surfaces.

All Victorian school staff will be prioritised for voluntary coronavirus testing for a two-week period from both mobile and fixed testing sites, starting today. This will enable school staff to seek testing during the preparation period before the return to on-site schooling.

Schools will be encouraged to implement a staggered drop-off system to reduce the number of adults congregating outside the school at any one time, as well as staggered break times to manage the number of students mixing across year levels. Schools will also implement social distancing measures for all adults.

The strict health protocols that are already in place will be followed if a member of the school community tests positive for coronavirus.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"As a father of three kids who have been learning from home, I know this has been a really challenging time for many families but thanks to everyone's efforts in sticking to the rules and getting tested, we're now able to start getting our kids back into the classroom."

"Having most of our kids learning from home has made a big contribution to limiting the number of people moving around the community and reduced the spread of the virus."

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Quote attributable to the Minister for Education James Merlino

“We know remote learning has been challenging, but our principals, teachers, support staff, students and families have done an outstanding job making it work.”