



Re: Face masks in schools

Dear Parent/carer

With Victoria's vaccination rates now rising rapidly, and fast approaching published thresholds for the easing of restrictions, the Victorian government has launched its [Roadmap to deliver the National Plan](#).

The Roadmap will see Victorian students return to school in a staggered fashion, with all Year Levels returning to onsite learning during the week of Monday 11 October 2021 in regional Victoria, and Monday 18 October 2021 in metropolitan Melbourne.

To reduce the risk of students catching and spreading COVID-19 and to keep as many schools open when students return, a range of measures have been put in place.

These include:

- vaccination of young people 12 -19 years olds
- vaccination of teachers and school staff
- ventilation of indoor spaces
- cleaning
- regular use of hand sanitiser
- increased use of outdoor spaces and
- wearing of masks for all teachers and children from Grade 3 and up.

Victoria's Chief Health Officer has mandated that all students in Grade 3 and up must wear a mask while they are indoors at school.

As with all such requirements, these decisions are not made lightly, and are made on the basis of the best available evidence and in the interests of keeping Victoria as safe as possible.

When worn properly, masks can play an important role in reducing the transmission risks of COVID-19 that could happen from common activities in school.

We know COVID-19 can be transmitted amongst children, and between children and adults. When teachers, staff, and students consistently and correctly wear a mask, they help protect themselves and others from COVID-19.

In many countries overseas where children wear masks indoors at school there is less COVID-19 infection among those children who wore masks compared to schools where they do not. It is important that schools and the school community adhere to all the COVIDsafe measures, not just the introduction of masks.

The Victorian Chief Health Officer has stated that the mandated wearing of masks will continue to be reviewed and will not be forever. As soon as it is safe to do so, the requirement will be lifted.

All Victorian students are required to follow the directions of the Chief Health Officer. Your support in ensuring your child complies with these legal directions is appreciated.

Sincerely

David Howes
Deputy Secretary
Schools and Regional Services