

Victorian Chief Health Officer message to Victorian schools and their communities



Reaching over a month of no community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Victoria, and reaching the next phase of eased restrictions is a significant milestone for Victoria and school communities. It

has followed an incredible effort by parents and carers, and by our teachers, staff and students.

Throughout the pandemic, Victorian schools have rapidly and successfully adapted to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission, embedding COVIDSafe principles by reinforcing good behaviours, creating safe spaces, adapting activities and responding quickly to coronavirus (COVID-19) risk.

School communities – students, parents and carers – have shown resilience and adapted to changes when asked. Well done and thank you.

Given the current very low risk of COVID transmission in the community, continued high rates of testing and wastewater monitoring, and continued observance of health and safety measures in schools; those with medical vulnerabilities or their carers can feel reassured that they can safely return to working and learning on school sites, to enjoy the benefits of doing so.

Should cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) increase again in the community, I am confident that with COVIDSafe plans in place, alongside our ability

to quickly identify and respond to cases, schools remain safe places for all staff and students. I also continue to be reassured by evidence that children are less impacted by the virus and are less likely to develop severe illness.

With schools now able to largely resume normal activities and welcome parents and other vital members of the school community back onto their grounds, it is crucial everyone remains vigilant and stays home when unwell, performs regular hand hygiene and maintains physical distancing from others when practical. Schools should consider how they can continue to pursue strategies that contribute to reduced transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), such as outdoor learning, into 2021.

Schools and parents continue to have an important role to promote and ensure testing when a child or staff member has any symptoms, no matter how mild, and then stay home. Getting tested and staying home until results are known, remains critical to maintaining zero community transmission.

Adj. Clinical Prof. Brett Sutton
Victorian Chief Health Officer

