

Victorian Chief Health Officer message to Victorian schools and their communities



I would like to take this opportunity to thank students, staff, teachers, parents and carers for ensuring a safe and successful start to the 2021 school year and to thank you

for your cooperation during the short period of remote learning in February during the circuit breaker restrictions.

As Term 2 commences, schools continue to be able to operate with a largely normal program of activity, enabling important on-site activities to return, such as school open days and working bees, with appropriate health and safety measures in place.

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

While we have seen outbreaks emerge in Victoria, we have also witnessed our capacity to respond quickly to limit the impact of these outbreaks.

Given the current very low risk of COVID-19 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 to continue to safely work and learn on school sites, and enjoy the benefits of doing so.

It is crucial, however, for everyone to remain vigilant by staying home when unwell, performing regular hand hygiene, wearing a mask when required and maintaining physical distancing from others when practical.

Should cases of 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.

The school community continues to have an important role to promote COVID-19 testing when a student or staff member has any symptoms, no matter how mild, and ensuring they remain home until they are well. Getting tested and staying home until results are known is critical to limiting community transmission.

Adj. Clinical Prof. Brett Sutton
Victorian Chief Health Officer

