



Saint Augustine's College COVID-19 Boarding Risk Management Plan

1 BACKGROUND

Following the recent Queensland Government announcement that Year 11 & 12 students will return to school from Monday May 11, it is hoped St Augustine's College can reopen its boarding school to allow equitable access for its boarders. This plan was undertaken with advice from staff at Cairns Tropical Public Health and was developed by school staff and an occupational hygienist.

The plan uses the key criteria from [the AHPPC Statement on risk management for re-opening boarding schools and school-based residential colleges](#), to ensure all aspects of the safe return of boarders are covered.

All responses and queries may be directed to:

Matthew Brennan (College Principal): mbrennan1@cns.catholic.edu.au

John Brimstone (Director of Boarding): jbrimstone@cns.catholic.edu.au

2 PLANNING FOR THE RETURN OF STUDENTS

St Augustine's College, Cairns (SAC) has 46 seniors (Year 11 & 12) boarders – 33 boys and 13 girls. Of these students, the school is expecting up to 8 female and up to 27 male boarders to return. Boarders and their families will be communicated with upon approval of this plan, and

travel plans will be made in consultation with the school to ensure the safe arrival of boarders, including measures such as airport pickups.

There is relatively low number of students returning, due to a number of reasons, including a considerable number of boarders from PNG and the Torres Strait, the latter of whom are in lockdown and unable to return.

INTER-STATE STUDENTS

SAC has potentially 9 students returning from interstate, and these students will apply for a Qld Border Entry permit. Where self-quarantining is required at the direction of Qld Health, these students will need to be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian for the duration of their self-quarantine period. This self-quarantine will need to be undertaken at an approved hotel in line with Qld Health guidelines.

3 ACCOMMODATION AND SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 YEAR 11-12 FEMALE BOARDERS

Female students will be housed in the Chavoin residence. Chavoin has 16 quads of 4 rooms. The return of up to 8 senior female boarders will see these students in a separate quad each, easily surpassing the AHPPC guideline.

Large common areas for watching TV etc. will allow ample physical distancing during recreational time.

3.2 YEAR 7-10 FEMALE BOARDERS

The following table displays the rooming capabilities for Year 7-10 female boarders should they return from the 25th May. As with the senior boarders, with a low number of returning students, adequate rooming is not considered to be an issue.

Year	Anticipated number of returning boarders	Number of rooms	Showers	Toilets
7-9	11	28	8	3
9-12	14	28	8	3

3.3 YEAR 11-12 MALE BOARDERS

The François residence holds 35 single rooms, which will allow SAC to comfortably house the potential 27 senior male boarders in a single room each. With outdoor patios and large TV common areas, physical distancing a venue density rules will be easily adhered to.

3.4 YEAR 7-10 MALE BOARDERS

The following table displays the rooming capabilities for Year 7-10 male boarders should they return from the 25th May. As with the senior boarders, with a low number of returning students, adequate rooming is not considered to be an issue.

Year	Anticipated number of returning boarders	Number of rooms	Showers	Toilets
7	7	28	8	3
8	12	28	8	3
9	11	36	6	3 + 4 urinals
10	16	36	6	3 + 4 urinals

4 HYGIENE FACILITIES

Shower and toilet ratios may be found in the preceding sections. Although this is not a 1:1 ratio, this is still more than what most businesses and even hospitals adhere to. Given the shared toilets during the school day, and the relatively lower risk profile of those under the age of 19, this is not anticipated to be an issue.

Although the ratio of showers to students is high, any additional risks will be minimised by shower schedules, where students will have a shower cubicle assigned to them.

Additional environmental cleaning includes twice daily cleaning and disinfecting, undertaken in accordance with the [Interim infection prevention and control guidelines for the management of COVID-19 in healthcare settings](#).

5 CATERING PROCESSES AND MEALTIMES

The dining area is catered by the Boarding Services Team of the College, with years of experience and an accredited HACCP food plan. This plan may be made available upon request. The catering facilities are immaculate, modern and professional, with industrial dish cleaners to sanitise all cooking and eating equipment, cutlery etc. Disposable cutlery is also available if required.

With the return of students, all meals will be prepared individually for each student by staff, removing the need for bain-maries, self-serve areas and communal food serving containers. There is no requirement to stagger mealtimes, as the eating hall is 400m², which will easily hold the potential 35 students who may return. Large tables will accommodate 4 students per time, which will easily adhere to 1.5m physical distancing requirements.

Hand sanitiser is provided at the entrance, and boarders are required to sanitise or clean their hands prior to, and after eating.

6 CLASS TIMES

Class times will be conducted in observance of the 24th April [AHPPC Advice on reducing the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools](#). This involves a range of measures, including hand sanitisers and hand cleaning facilities throughout the school, increased environmental and situational cleaning routines, and venue density/physical distancing measures maintained where practicable for students. As there is the potential for boarders to be in the same room as another non-boarding student for more than 2 hours, it will be heavily recommended to all staff and students to download the Australian Federal Government COVIDSafe app to assist in contact tracing should a confirmed case eventuate.

7 CLASSROOM PROCEDURE INTERFACE WITH DORMITORY PROCEDURE

It is understood that the COVID-19 infection risk profile for students is relatively lower than the general population, but the likelihood is somewhat magnified due to the communal living arrangements of the boarders. This is why classroom procedures around physical distancing, venue density, environmental cleaning and personal hygiene will be mirrored as much as possible between classrooms and boarding facilities, to reduce confusion around perceived double standards.

8 STUDY REQUIREMENTS

Where study is required outside of general classroom times, students have a desk in their own room on which they may study. This will be the recommended place for additional study. The library is approximately 850m², although a venue density would allow more than 200 persons, this will be capped with an occupancy limit of 35 and student number in this space will be monitored to ensure venue density rulings are observed.

9 ENTRY AND EXIT TO THE SITE

9.1 STAFF

As per normal procedure, school staff will be required to sign in and out when leaving the College grounds during the day. Staff will be discouraged from leaving the site at recess and lunch times, to reduce the risk of potential COVID-19 exposure during these times. There is the potential for increased risk during these times, as staff may be short of time, and may not be as cautious with general COVID-19 safe behaviours.

9.2 VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS

Visitors and contractors to the site will be forbidden unless essential. Essential visits may include deliveries, maintenance and servicing works, and routine care such as school counselling, occupational therapy etc.

Visitors and contractors will be subject to the usual sign in and sign out procedures and will be made aware of hygiene and physical distancing requirements. Access to students will be in accordance with the purpose of the visit, and in line with Blue Card guidelines.

School based apprenticeships will be postponed due to the "uncontrolled" nature of the student's external workplace and the return to boarding.

9.3 FAMILY VISITS

With the exception 9.2, no visitors to boarding students will be permitted except for immediate family, with family visits on a need only basis in liaison with Director of Boarding. Visits to be conducted at outdoor facilities on College grounds.

9.4 STUDENTS

Students are forbidden from exiting the site during school hours. Until further notice any venturing outside of school grounds after school or during the weekend for boarders will be prohibited, unless accompanied by a school representative. Leave with a parent will be approved by the Director of Boarding, and only if essential. Use of public transport will be prohibited.

10 VISITORS

Please see [preceding section](#).

11 OFF CAMPUS VISITS

Please see [preceding section](#).

12 POLICY AND POSSIBLE GAPS

SAC follows a myriad of policies, some of which are mandated by Catholic Education -Diocese of Cairns head office (CEC), and others which are developed and implemented at a school level. COVID-19 and related policies and guidelines are developed by the CEC office, with input from Education Qld and Qld Health. These are then contextualised where appropriate to meet the local operational needs of the school.

These are constantly being reviewed (on a daily basis in line with our risk management monitoring and review procedures) and will be updated accordingly should gaps present themselves.

Some additional measures that have been implemented are an additional 20 days paid COVID-19 leave for staff, to encourage staff to stay at home if they are ill (does not need to be a confirmed case), as well as mandatory health screening from a GP for any staff returning to work if they have been outside of the Cairns Diocese, similar to what LGAs in the western region of Qld have implemented.

13 VULNERABLE STUDENTS

SAC has two categories of vulnerable students, those vulnerable from a social welfare perspective, and those at risk due to existing medical conditions.

13.1 VULNERABLE STUDENTS

There are currently no boarders who would be considered 'vulnerable'.

13.2 AT RISK STUDENTS DUE TO MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Students with medical conditions are required to have their health action plans updated to ensure advice is current in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff are made familiar with the relevant information, with a focus on risk reduction and emergency response.

Generally, the school wide hygiene, cleaning and distancing aspects are ample, but medical directions to reduce the risk for students will be followed where required.

The College also boasts a state-of-the-art health facility, with registered nurses, consultation rooms and separate male and female wards, as well as an isolation room.

14 VULNERABLE TEACHERS OR OTHER STAFF

Vulnerable staff have been made aware of their increased risk profile, and every accommodation has made to allow working from home. Identified at risk staff include those specified by Qld Health including those over the age of 70, over the age of 65 with chronic medical conditions, staff with compromised immune systems, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 50 years and over. In addition to this, and to err on the side of caution, we are including pregnant women in the vulnerable group, in accordance with guidance from The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Other staff who have cardiovascular disease, diabetes, asthma etc. are accepted as vulnerable staff upon receipt of written confirmation from their medical practitioner.

In consultation with staff, where they cannot possibly work from home, the strictest hygiene and physical distancing measures are adhered to, to ensure their ongoing safety.

15 CLEANING REGIMENS

Increased environmental cleaning regimens have been in place for some months now, with a focus on cleaning and disinfecting of high touch items and surfaces. A rough frequency and cleaning guide may be provided if requested. This is a minimum requirement guide, and additional measures such as cleaning after sneezing etc are in place.

Boarding toilets and showers are subject to a twice daily clean, mid-morning and at night after final showers. Cleaning is undertaken in accordance with the [Interim infection prevention and control guidelines for the management of COVID-19 in healthcare settings](#), as provided and recommended by Qld Health for educational facilities.

16 EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR COVID-19

The college has many flyers and posters up, espousing the need for rigorous hand hygiene, social distancing and coughing & sneezing etiquette. Teachers have taken students through the available material to ensure that they understand the basic transmission concepts and infection risks. Training materials and information, as well as COVID-19 videos are available on the CES staff portal. All of the information has been carefully selected to ensure it is free from the plethora of misinformation available.

17 INDOOR/OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS

As mentioned in [Section 3](#), there are ample indoor and outdoor recreational areas for students, which will allow the much needed relaxation for students, whilst adhering to venue density and physical distancing requirements. While the facilities are adequate from a venue density perspective, the safety of staff and students is reliant upon the implementation of physical distancing measures, and boarding supervisors will always be on hand to ensure that boarders are using areas in a COVID-19 safe manner.

Respective HOR would maintain their rostered 48hrs to cover lion's share of supervision. Live-In staff would be utilised to cover any shortfalls in supervision (if not all their 13hrs weekly perhaps a substantial portion of it).

Additional measures include the re-arranging of furniture to promote physical distancing, as well as a focus on natural ventilation.

18 LAUNDRY AREAS AND OTHER ANCILLARY AREAS

Laundry and other ancillary areas are subject to increased daily cleaning regimes. Additional sanitising of bedding and clothing is not undertaken, as current advice does not require this, however a focus has been on more frequent cleaning, with bedding laundered on a regular basis. Staff hygiene and protection is an overriding concern here, with cleaning and laundry staff supplied with appropriate PPE for the tasks required.

19 OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLANS

In consultation with the Cairns Tropical Public Health Unit (TPH), it is understood that in the event of a confirmed case, TPH will advise the College of the next steps, including isolation and shut down requirements. Two local cleaning companies have already been sourced who are capable of performing a deep COVID-19 clean, with the use of electro-static "fogging" machines.

The school has updated contact details for students, staff, parents and the greater school community, and access to a media trained communications team should a confirmed case

eventuate. As mentioned, staff and students have been advised to download the COVIDSafe app, to assist TPOH in contact tracing.

Needless to say, a larger focus of the College is ensuring that there is no school based transmission through the rigorous hygiene, cleaning and distancing measures.