



**Catholic  
Education**  
Diocese of Cairns

*Learning with Faith and Vision*

# **Post-lockdown operating guidelines for Cairns LGA schools**

12<sup>th</sup> August to 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

These operating guidelines are designed to support school leaders in determining what measures are required in a post lockdown period. Post lockdown refers to the period after a lockdown, where there is still some foreseeable risk of community transmission, so a heightened level of COVID safety is required.

This document is kept intentionally brief and will work in conjunction with the COVID-19 Operating Guidelines. If there is inconsistency between the Operating Guidelines and this document, this document will provide overriding advice for the duration of the post lockdown period.

## 2 STUDENTS

Students will return to face-to-face teaching as per normal, in line with the following measures:

- All students over 12 years of age, staff and visitors, including parents, carers, family members, volunteers and contractors, are required to wear a face mask when on school premises or when travelling on dedicated school transport. Mask wearing is a public health direction, so parents will be expected to provide their child with a mask. Schools will retain a supply for those who have misplaced their mask. Guidance for student and staff is provided [here](#).
- There is no requirement for a student under 12 years of age to wear a face mask, but if they wish to do so, they will be supported.
- Venue density requirements of 1 person per 4m<sup>2</sup> are not enforced for classrooms, but every effort should be made to maximise physical distancing between students. This may include moving desks and chairs to accommodate this.
- Ventilation should be maximised where possible. This includes opening of windows and doors, but providing for students who may be at risk of running.
- Students who are in self-quarantine will continue to abide by Qld Health directions, and schools will have continuity of learning measures in place for these students. Remote learning should also be provided for vulnerable students who are unable to attend school.

## 3 STAFF

All staff (with provisions made for vulnerable staff in the proceeding section) may return to work, in line with the following:

- Staff who are in self-quarantine under a public health order will continue to abide by health directives. If they are well and able, work from provisions should be made for these staff member.
- All staff and visitors, including parents, carers, family members, volunteers and contractors, are required to wear a face mask when on school premises or when travelling on dedicated school transport. Face masks are required when teaching also. Mask wearing is a public health direction, so staff will be expected to provide their own face mask. Schools will retain a supply for those who have misplaced their mask. Guidance for student and staff is provided [here](#). For staff, a mask should only be removed when communicating with a child, student or person who is deaf or hard of hearing, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication. For staff working with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, face shields are available.
- Staff travel between Cairns LGA and other Diocesan regions is at the discretion of the principal, limited to essential work only. This would not include professional development etc. Remember that we are

trying to contain any potential spread to within Cairns LGA only, so sticking to essential work (including teaching and pre-service teachers) only is important.

- Physical distancing of 1 person per 4 square metres in all staff area is required. Staff must maintain a minimum of 1.5m for other adults at all times.

### 3.1 VULNERABLE STAFF

Staff who are vulnerable should discuss options with their principal to allow working from home, where possible. The current Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) advice defines vulnerable people as:

- First Nation staff 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- people 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions. The most current definition of 'chronic medical condition' is on the Department of Health website
- people 70 years and older
- people with compromised immune systems (see Department of Health website).

Other staff who may be medically vulnerable, including those with chronic health conditions, should seek their own medical advice and provide this to their principal so appropriate arrangements can be put in place.

## 4 SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

School activities such as instrumental music, choir, performances, dancing and PE classes and may resume, subject to the following:

- The activity forms a part of curriculum
- Students are not mixing with other year groups
- The activity is conducted on school site, or external venue not in use by public (closed swimming pool, council oval only in use by school)
- All inter-school activities are strictly prohibited

Other activity specific restrictions may be found below. The restrictions listed below are in addition to the previous three points.

### 4.1 INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM, ENSEMBLES, CHOIRS AND OTHER PERFORMANCES

Instrumental music programs, ensembles, choirs and other stage performances must adhere to one person per 4 square metres. COVID cleaning procedures for shared wind instruments should be strictly observed. No choir risers are to be used at this time.

Instrumental music programs, ensembles and choirs are able to rehearse in the school environment provided the following safety protocols are in place:

- at least 1.5 metres between singers/players in all directions and no more than 1 person per 4m<sup>2</sup>
- choirs or bands that usually use a stage may need to move down to the hall floor to ensure physical distancing. Podiums/platforms with risers should not be used.
- where possible, choir practice should be held outdoors. If it is not possible to hold practice outdoors, open windows and doors or ensure air conditioning is on.

- ensure students clean hands before and after the lesson
- ensure instruments are not shared
- students should not face each other when singing or playing wind instruments
- students with wind instruments should have their own spit rag, which is placed under the instrument while it is being played. The spit rag should not be handled by anyone else and should be kept by the student in a zip-lock bag or container.
- a log of attendance should be kept.

Inter-school and external venue rehearsals or performances are not to be undertaken at this time.

#### 4.2 PE CLASSES, SPORTING ACTIVITIES AND GENERAL PLAYGROUND PLAY

- Restricted to non-contact activities only.
- Physical distancing of 1 person (including students) per 2 square metres.
- Students encourage to maximise physical distancing where practicable

### 5 SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

Whole of school physical assemblies, other school gatherings and face to face group staff meetings are not permitted during the post lockdown period. Schools should provide suitable electronic alternative for meetings and assemblies, such as Zoom.

No public events are to be held during a post lockdown period.

### 6 TICKETED AND SEATED EVENTS

Not permitted. See previous section.

### 7 PROVISION OF FOOD/TUCKSHOPS

May resume as per normal with volunteers and staff. No buffets or shared utensils are permitted during this time. All tuckshop staff to wear masks.

### 8 EXCURSIONS AND CAMPS

Excursions and camps are not permitted during this time.

### 9 HEALTH SUPPORT PROCEDURES

All Cairns Catholic Education schools must continue to implement student health plans.

Advice from the Chief Health Officer indicates staff should undertake a visual assessment of the student to ensure there are no visible signs of being unwell prior to any procedure being undertaken:

- if the student appears unwell, do not continue with the procedure, follow existing guidance for unwell students/COVID-19 suspected cases, and advise parents as soon as possible
- where a student appears well, carry out the procedure with the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as per the table below.

Where a student has excess saliva, a risk assessment should occur in each case (as it should each time there is a procedure) to ensure that the risk of body fluid exposure is minimised and correct PPE is used (for example the addition of a gown if it is required).

It is always important to ensure that [hand hygiene](#) is carried out at the correct points of the procedure as per the [5 moments of hand hygiene](#).

Queensland Health advice has been used to inform the PPE as outlined in the table below.

Specialised health procedure	PPE
Blood glucose measurement	Gloves
Insulin pen injection or needle and syringe	Gloves
Enteral feeding	Gloves
Nasogastric feeding	Gloves
Colostomy/ileostomy care	Gloves. Plastic apron if risk of splashes (staff may choose)
Clean intermittent catheterisation	Gloves. Plastic apron if risk of splashes (staff may choose)
Continuous oxygen administration	Gloves
Administration of buccal midazolam	Gloves
Cleaning of soiling	Gloves and plastic aprons
Use of asthma reliever medication with spacer	Nil unless coughing then gloves, mask goggles/face shield*
Oral and nasal suctioning	Gloves Long sleeved fluid resistant gown mask Goggles/face shield
Tracheostomy care	Gloves Long sleeved fluid resistant gown mask Goggles/face shield

During COVID-19, this additional PPE should be considered for asthma if the student is coughing.

Schools should purchase PPE from their regular suppliers. If regular supplies are not available, then please contact the [CE WHS Manager](#).

## 10 PLAYGROUNDS AND SCHOOL FACILITIES

Use of school facilities for external parties should not be permitted during the post lockdown period. This includes bootcamps, P&F meetings etc.

Playgrounds restricted to student use only. Playgrounds may continue with regular cleaning regimes. Daily inspections for general cleanliness and foreign bodies etc. should continue.

## 11 CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

No change

## 12 PARENTS

Not permitted, but schools will have local arrangements in place to manage pick up and drop off times and will communicate these with their school community. Allowances should be made for parents and carers of Prep and Year 1 students where practicable, and for parents and carers of higher needs students.

## 13 CONTRACTORS, EXTERNAL WORKERS, CES STAFF AND VISITORS

Only essential contractors and visitors should be permitted onsite. This may include couriers, emergency work, scheduled preventative maintenance, regular tutors and student support services. Guest speakers, consultants, CES workers (with exception of student support) etc. are not permitted. The questions should be: *Is this service absolutely essential to the functioning of the school, or can it be postponed?*

## 14 CLEANING

Schools must resume daily cleaning for used school facilities, including classrooms, staffrooms and toilets. A focus should be on high touch surfaces.

Disinfectants used for COVID cleans will need to be either a bleach solution as per the [COVID cleaning guide](#), or a disinfectant [approved for COVID use](#) by the Therapeutic Goods Administration. The preference is still for a quaternary ammonium compound (QUAT) based disinfectant such as [Sigura hospital grade disinfectant](#), due to its longer surface protection, and non-hazardous nature.

Use of a QUAT disinfectant will enable once a day cleaning, whereas other disinfectants and bleaches will require multiple cleans per day.

## 15 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency evacuation drills such as fire evacuation, bomb threats and lockdowns will need to be postponed during the post lockdown period.

## 16 USE OF SHARED EQUIPMENT OR LOANED RESOURCES

Shared equipment such as ITD resources, musical instruments and sports equipment used within the school, or equipment loaned to students to take home, will require appropriate cleaning and hygiene management practices including:

- washing hands or using hand sanitiser prior to cleaning or using equipment
- cleaning equipment prior to and after use
- cleaning of equipment prior to leaving the school grounds and upon return.

Some simple strategies may be introduced to assist with the disinfecting of shared or loaned resources. When devices such as laptops and tablets which have been taken home are returned to the school, these should be sanitised with alcoholic wipes prior to being put back into circulation within the school community.

With equipment such as board games, toys and sporting/playground equipment where cleaning may not be practicable, these may be used on a rotating roster of Monday, Wednesday and Friday, with another group of equipment to be used on Tuesday and Thursday. This will give equipment 48 hours between use, which is sufficient time for any coronavirus that may be on the surface to deactivate.

Further information regarding cleaning and disinfecting of curriculum specific equipment and PPE such as those used in science and IDT is available in the EQ document [COVID-19 cleaning of equipment for practical subjects](#).

## 17 LIBRARY BOOKS AND SCHOOL READERS

Libraries are an integral part of our schools, and current health and safety advice around hygiene, physical distancing, venue density and environmental cleaning would still be applicable here. Some specific guidance is provided below, which may be contextualised to meet the needs of the school.

- It is recommended that schools establish occupancy limit on libraries (using the 4m<sup>2</sup> venue density rule), to ensure they are not too crowded. Schools may consider timetabling of years to access during breaks. For example, a primary school may allow Prep to Year 3 access during recess, and Years 4-6 at lunchtime, then alternate this the next day. Whilst there is some flexibility on the 4m<sup>2</sup> ruling for students, libraries have the potential to become crowded if access is not carefully managed, hence the recommendations here.
- Classes to be held in the library should be timetabled to ensure venue density rules are met
- Encourage online reserving, to reduce handling of books during browsing
- \*Hand sanitiser should be kept at entry/exit points, and staff and students must clean their hands when entering and leaving
- \*Board games, shared devices etc must be cleaned after use, or at the end of the day.
- \*Library book covers to be wiped with disinfect or alcohol wipes upon return or left aside on shelf for two days.
- \*Staff to maintain high levels of hygiene

\* Regardless of the local context, points marked with an Asterix (\*) would be a bare minimum requirement and must always be adhered to.