

Operating guidelines for **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Term 2, 2020



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Government of South Australia
Department for Education

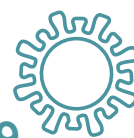
OPERATING GUIDELINES FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Term 2, 2020

These operating guidelines have been developed to support the operation of South Australian public schools, preschools and early childhood services from the start of Term 2, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department for Education will continue to follow advice provided by SA Health and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) regarding the operation of schools, preschools and early childhood services during the pandemic.





National Principles for school education response to COVID-19

The following principles are guiding decision making nationally in relation to the operation of schools, preschools and early childhood services:

- 1** Our schools are critical to the delivery of high quality education for students and to give our children the best possible start in life. Our education systems are based on the recognition that education is best delivered by professional teachers to students in the classroom on a school campus.
- 2** During the COVID-19 crisis alternative flexible, remote delivery of education services may be needed.
- 3** Our schools must be healthy and safe environments for students, teachers and other staff to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of education to students.
- 4** State and Territory Governments and non-government sector authorities are responsible for managing and making operational decisions for their school systems respectively, subject to compliance with relevant funding agreements with the Commonwealth.
- 5** Decisions regarding the response to COVID-19 in the schooling sector must continue to be informed by expert, official, national and state-based public health and education advice, consistent with these national principles.
- 6** All students must continue to be supported by their school to ensure participation in quality education during the COVID 19 crisis.
- 7** The health advice consistently provided by the AHPPC is that attendance at a school campus for education represents a very low health risk to students. The advice also notes that appropriate practices must be employed at schools, like at other workplaces, to provide a safe working environment for school staff, including teachers, and that the specific AHPPC advice regarding school campuses should be followed.



Schools, preschools and early childhood services will remain open

The Department for Education will continue to follow the advice from SA Health and Australia's expert health body, AHPPC.

The current advice is that schools, preschools and early childhood facilities should remain open.

With low rates of infection in South Australia, parents are encouraged to send their children to school in term 2.

If parents choose to keep their children at home, remote learning will continue for those students learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Schools, preschools and early childhood sites will only temporarily close, as directed by SA Health, if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19. The site will be thoroughly cleaned and reopened on advice from SA Health. During that time, schools will provide remote learning options for students.

Continuity of learning

At the end of term 1, teachers and leaders prepared work for students learning from school and students learning from home. This preparation means our schools are ready to respond to changes to school operations during all stages of the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring every student continues to receive a quality education from professional educators.

Learning from home and learning from school guidelines are on [EDi](#).

Parents are encouraged to send their children to school from the beginning of term 2.

Remote learning will continue for those students who are vulnerable, have chronic medical conditions and whose parents choose to keep them home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Remote learning may also be required in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 at a Department for Education site or a particular region where students or teachers are required to self-isolate or the school site is temporarily closed for cleaning and contact tracing.

An additional layer of support has been developed to assist teacher programming. Two Week Units of work are designed for students to complete over 2 weeks and contain lessons and activities across every year level in English, Maths and Science.

While the units are aligned to the Australian Curriculum, they shouldn't replace the current school curriculum. Teachers can adapt or embed these units to support current programs for students learning onsite or at home. New units will be available every fortnight during term 2.

[Our Learning SA](#) can also be used to support teachers in their planning. Our curriculum development team have curated over 650 resources across every learning area and every year level. On the website, you'll also find an Advice for Families page and resources are also available to support families who are choosing to continue their child's learning at home.

Students

From the beginning of term 2, students are encouraged to return to school.

Students who are unwell must remain at home. Parents or carers of children at school who are unwell will be contacted and asked to collect them as soon as possible. Students should not return to school until they are well and symptom free.

Where families elect not to send their child to school, the child must be learning from home, and remote learning will be provided by the school.

Where children are not at school, parents and carers are responsible for the child's learning, safety and wellbeing at home.

Parents and carers of children and young people with complex medical needs are encouraged to consult their health practitioner when deciding if they should attend school. The school will work with parents and carers and the student's health care team to ensure they have an appropriate plan in place to support the student at school or home.

Principals

Principals will continue to exercise their professional judgement and make local decisions, within the parameters and guidance provided by the department, to ensure operations suit their school context.

Principals must make sure staff and student safety and wellbeing remain the overall priorities for the school.

Principals will work with staff to ensure educational provision can continue at school with the students who are attending, and that students at home are maintaining appropriate access to learning. Priority is to be given to teachers preparing and delivering lessons, responding to students and giving regular feedback on their work.

Principals are expected to implement flexible working opportunities for vulnerable staff where possible, while balancing the needs of students learning at school.

Principals should use relief staff to assist in managing gaps in the workforce due to staff absences, vulnerable staff working from home, or to support the changes in operations of schools. Principals may consider whether vulnerable staff working from home are best placed to support students learning at home.

Principals are to provide clear, timely, regular communication and reassurance to parents and carers.



Staff

The health and wellbeing of our staff will be supported in a range of ways, including adjustments for vulnerable staff.

It's important that staff do not attend school, preschool or early childhood service sites if they are unwell.

Vulnerable employees

We must take every step to continue providing a quality learning environment for our children and young people. At the same time, we need to protect and support our employees who are considered to be more vulnerable in the circumstances.

Definition of a vulnerable employee

The employees considered to be vulnerable are:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- anyone aged 65 and over with a chronic medical condition
- anyone aged over 70
- anyone with a compromised immune system
- women who are pregnant, based on medical advice.

Flexible working for vulnerable employees

People who are considered vulnerable need to be supported to stay home. We will support [flexible working arrangements](#) to support these people to work from home.

We know it's not always ideal for teaching and other classroom based staff to work remotely. However, if this is required due to vulnerability, consider what meaningful work you can assign that will support the site operations from home.

If any site leader needs more guidance to determine how they can support team members in this situation, please speak with your education director.

Where it's not possible to work from home, for example for grounds people, employees must access appropriate leave entitlements.

It is the department's expectation that people in vulnerable categories who request to work from home or take leave are supported as soon as possible. This needs to be enacted locally between employees and leaders.



Other options for employees who are vulnerable

If working from home is not an option, there are other work options available, including leave arrangements.

Employees who meet the age criteria or who have an underlying medical condition or who live in the same household as a family member who has an underlying health condition:

- Access individual sick or carer's leave entitlements.
- If these leave entitlements are exhausted, access COVID-19 special leave with pay (capped at 15 days), then
- access individual leave entitlements (for example annual leave, retention leave, long service leave).

In the event that all leave entitlements are exhausted, options will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If an employee cannot immediately provide a medical certificate in relation to an underlying health condition, please use your discretion and facilitate appropriate flexible working arrangements to support the employee.

Employees who are pregnant and their doctor advises it is not safe for them to perform their normal duties:

- In the first instance we will consider if there is a safe job that you can be transferred into until the commencement of your maternity leave.
- Any request for transfer to a safe job should include a certificate from a medical practitioner confirming what adjustments are required for a job to be considered safe.
- If not practicable to transfer to a safe job in the workplace (which could include another public sector agency where appropriate), we will explore working from home options.
- If it is not practicable or appropriate to work from home, you will be provided with 'no safe job' leave. This means you won't need to access other leave entitlements or normal special leave with pay.

Refer to [leave arrangements for COVID-19](#) on EDi for more information.

Staff will continue to monitor the learning and wellbeing of their students, whether learning at school or learning at home.

School support staff will continue to be essential to supporting in class and remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The department has confirmed the availability of temporary relief teachers and is streamlining processes to engage them.

Business managers, administrative staff, cleaners, grounds staff and other school staff will continue in their usual roles to support the effective functioning of the school and may be directed to other duties as required.

Staff wellbeing

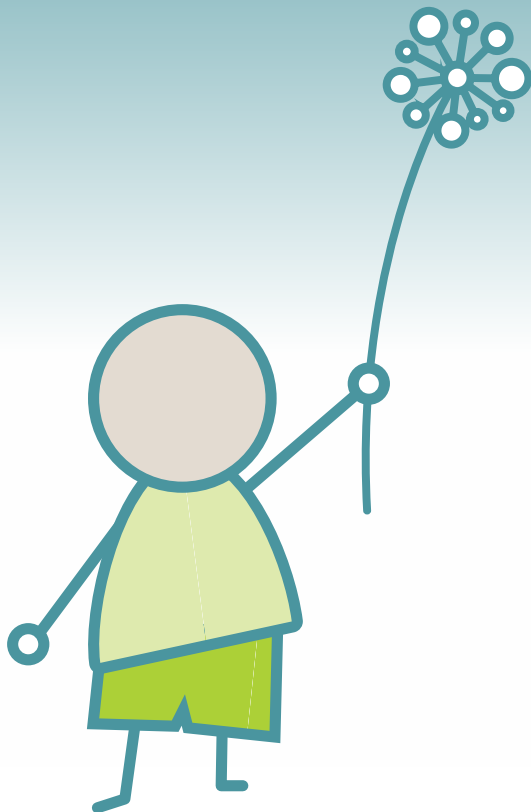
Maintaining your wellbeing at this time of uncertainty is very important.

There are resources and supports available, including our employee assistance program.

As always, please continue to monitor your own wellbeing and that of your colleagues and students during this time.

Read more about maintaining employee wellbeing during COVID-19.

Please also reach out to your leader if you need support.



Health and safety

Schools are defined as delivering essential services and are exempt from many of the directions of the Chief Health Officer, including those regarding mass gatherings and the closure of playgrounds and libraries. Where the Chief Health Officer does issue a direction that applies to schools, those directions will be communicated to schools as they arise.

It is extremely important that unwell students and staff members stay at home. Schools should put in place appropriate physical distancing measures, and hygiene practices as much as practicable to further support the safety of staff and students.

The department will continue increased cleaning schedules at all sites, and will centrally source hygiene products such as hand soap, sanitiser and tissues for those sites who can't source supplies through their usual means.

Do not cancel any of your existing orders. Continue to use your usual supplier for hand sanitiser, soap, toilet paper, paper towel and disinfectant products. It's important we continue to support our suppliers and businesses.

Personal protective equipment

The AHPPC has advised that additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), for example medical face masks, is not required to provide regular care for children or young people who are well, unless such precautions are usually adopted in the routine care of an individual child or young person. Good hygiene practices and environmental cleaning are more important for reducing risk.

It is not recommended non-medical face coverings be used as a mitigation strategy against transmission of COVID-19 or other similar communicable diseases, as the use of these masks has the potential to create more harm than good.

Standard precautions are advised when it is necessary to come into physical contact with someone for the purpose of providing routine care and/or assistance (for example, the use of gloves for nappy changing, toileting, feeding for those with a disability or complex needs).

Staff must always wash hands with soap and water, or use a hand sanitiser before and after performing routine care and other close interactions with students in the classroom environment, and ensure environmental cleaning where relevant. Schools should make hand sanitiser available at school entrances and in every classroom.

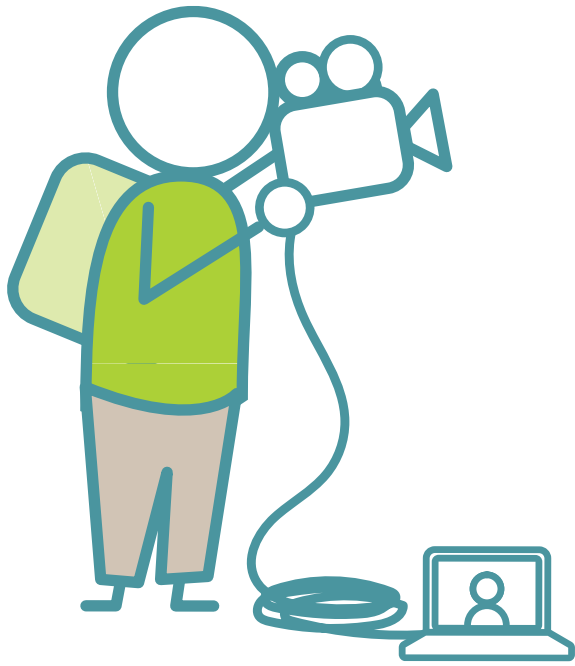
The AHPPC has also advised that schools are not required to conduct wide-scale temperature checking of students as there is limited evidence to demonstrate the value of such checks.

Thermometers may continue to be used as a first aid tool for schools, preschools and early childhood services when a child presents as unwell.

Standard precautions should be adopted when providing first aid, for example gloves and an apron to use when dealing with blood or body fluids/ substances.

Always wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after providing first aid.





Technology and devices

To ensure continuity of learning, the department has sourced devices and internet wifi dongles for students in years 11 and 12 who do not currently have access to devices through their school or at home. These devices will be rolled out to identified SACE students (through the recent survey of leaders) at the beginning of term 2. These devices will allow senior secondary students to continue learning remotely in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 at a site or temporary closure, such as the one recently in the Barossa region.

The department is also working with school leaders across the state to identify a further order of priority by which students will receive devices and/or home internet solutions where they require it, and where both the student and the school can make best use of them.

If your school or preschool has devices (iPads, laptops etc.) available for in-school use, please lend these out to students who need to learn from home, prioritising access to those students with the greatest need.

For all staff and students who are provided devices or ICT equipment to be used at home, insurance settings do not cover these items for damage or replacement. Repair or replacement costs in these circumstances are therefore a business expense. If costs associated with damage or repair of devices create financial difficulties for sites, please contact Tim Elliott via tim.elliott@sa.gov.au to discuss additional support on a case-by-case basis.

Video conferencing

For those students who continue to learn at home, it is important that schools are taking necessary precautions to keep students safe online and protect their privacy when using video conferencing tools. A number of reports of security vulnerabilities and privacy concerns have already surfaced over common platforms like Zoom.

The [video conferencing guide for schools \(PDF, 252.9 KB\)](#) provides you with information about available tools, your responsibilities and how to maintain online safety when using video conferencing tools.

Learner Management System (LMS) options for schools and preschools

Information about the LMS options available to support teachers and students with continuity of learning during this time is available on [EDi](#).

Recording attendance

Staff working arrangements

From beginning of term 2, all schools and preschools are required to report on staff working arrangements in HRS daily. Guidance of how to do this will be provided before the start of term.

This information, along with daily student attendance data, will help the department provide meaningful support to schools and preschools by, for example, providing additional support through TRTs or support staff where staff absences are high or the number of vulnerable staff is high in particular sites or regions. This will help us mobilise a casual and relief workforce quickly if needed to maintain appropriate student/staff ratios and ensure the continuity of learning.

Student attendance

From the beginning of term 2 it is mandatory for all schools to record student attendance data in EDSAS by 4pm each day.

Preschools will submit daily attendance on a weekly basis through EYS in Term 2.

More information about recording student attendance can be found on [EDi](#).

Student support services

Student Support Services will provide ongoing support to schools and preschools in Term 2 with a focus on priority 1 services as described in the [catalogue of services](#). The multidisciplinary approach to services will continue in the context of COVID-19.

Many of our student support services can be delivered using online technology and we will do our best to maintain essential services during this time. Please continue to send through referrals and connect with student support services to get support for your school, preschool and students. The focus for services will continue to be supporting student learning, wellbeing and behaviour.

A new social work duty line will start operating from term 2 to complement the existing services offered.

Leaders and teachers will be able to speak with a social worker on 1300 620 673 from 9am to 5pm on weekdays or via email on education.socialwork@sa.gov.au

Visit [EDi](#) for more information



School buses

School buses, both yellow and contracted services, will continue to operate as per normal routes and timetables.

Enhanced cleaning protocols have been put in place for all buses and student transport services, including taxis for students with disabilities.

More information

The department is working closely with SA Health to ensure we have access to the latest advice on how to keep our staff, our students and community safe.

If you have any questions about managing coronavirus in the workplace, please call the department's COVID-19 information line on 8226 2000 (8am to 5pm) or email education.WHS@sa.gov.au

You can also call the government's coronavirus health information line on 1800 020 080. The line operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.





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