



14 October 2021

PSA Schools members' bulletin: Roadmap to the return of face-to-face learning

On 6 October the NSW Premier announced a major adjustment to the return of students to face-to-face learning in NSW Schools.

The Road map provides for Preschool, Years K ,1 and 12 to return on 18 October, with all remaining year groups to return to school on 25 October. The Schools roadmap provided to the PSA can be read [HERE](#).

The Cohort model

The Department has prepared a multi-layered plan to support a safe learning environment for all students, staff and their communities. This is referred to as the Cohort model and the PSA has been consulted on its implementation. It is designed to minimise the chance of infection within the school or transmission in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19, and reduce the number of close contacts identified during contact tracing.

It relies on multiple control measures being in place so that, where operational needs limit what can be done, other measures continue to minimise the risk.

The PSA continues to have concerns about some elements of the model and will continue to advocate where members raise issues with their return to school plan.

Staff vaccination requirements

As per the Public Health (COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers) Order 2021, released 23 September 2021:

An education and care worker must not carry out relevant work on or after 8 November 2021 unless the worker has:

- * had two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, or
- * been issued with a medical contraindication certificate.

Providing evidence of vaccination

To meet the conditions of employment by 8 November:

- * staff will need to provide evidence that they have had two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine
- * principals or workplace managers must sight and verify vaccination status but do not keep a copy of this document.

Air ventilation

The department has sought external advice on ventilation in schools. You can read details of Schools Ventilation Audit Fact Sheet [HERE](#).

The PSA has serious concerns around elements of this audit, particularly its ignorance of the realities of classrooms and other school spaces around inclement weather, security, noise and other issues such as smoke during bushfire season.

The PSA will be pursuing this issue to ensure that the Department undertakes appropriate work to turn this abstract report into something that works practically, and safely, for our members.

Masks and face coverings

Masks or face coverings are currently required for Level 3, 3 plus and Level 4 schools in:

- * all indoor and outdoor settings for all staff
- * all indoor settings for students in Year 7 and above
- * all outdoor settings for students in Year 7 and above (note Level 3 plus and Level 4 schools only).

Primary school students are strongly encouraged to wear masks or face coverings.

The PSA continues to talk advocate to ensure all schools are provided with appropriate safety equipment and supplies, and end the wastage that has seen many schools having to deal with storing products they can't use.

Rapid antigen testing

The department is considering introducing the use of COVID-19 home-testing kits (known as rapid antigen tests). If deemed appropriate, it is understood they will likely be available from November.

The PSA will continue to consult on this issue and will provide further details when available

Response protocols for COVID-19 cases

If the school receives advice from a parent/carer or a staff member that a person who has recently been at school has tested positive for COVID-19, the school must immediately contact the Incident Report and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523.

Detailed requirements please refer to page 7 of the Schools Roadmap [HERE](#).

Check-in protocols

All staff and visitors attending a school site must comply with school protocols and check in using the applicable Service NSW QR code. We are aware of the media reports of delays with this

system and will continue to monitor this system as it is introduced to assist members with an issues that arise.

Staff and visitors to the school who do not have access to electronic devices for the purposes of QR check-in can:

- * authorise another person to provide their contact details on their behalf;
- * check-in using the school's Service NSW concierge webform;
- * provide their details to the school to be recorded in an appropriate manner for provision to NSW Health should it be required;
- * use their QR code check-in card.

Evolving schools visitor check-in system

On 7 October the PSA wrote to the department outlining PSA delegates concerns with the current check-in system. Click [HERE](#) to see a document outlining how it works.

On 12 October the Association received a briefing on the evolving check-in system with the emphasis on passing on the administration burden from schools to the user checking in. Schools will be presently receiving an update on this proposal with the Department confirming the Service NSW check-in system will resolve most of members' concerns over time and the check-in system will remain post the COVID 19 pandemic. A more detailed bulletin in relation to this system will follow once the detailed responses to the Association's letter of 7 October is received.

If members seek further assistance or wish to organise a Zoom meeting with their PSA organiser, please call Member Support Centre - 1300 772 679.

For now, keep safe!

Do you know someone who is not a member?

You can support the work of the PSA and delegates to get better outcomes for everyone just by asking your colleagues to [JOIN](#) the PSA.