

Learn • Trust • Respect • Sense of Humour

15 October 2021

### **New rules for students wearing masks at school**

Dear parents,

As you know, students will soon begin a Staged return to onsite learning to school as announced under the Roadmap.

To support this, the Victorian Chief Health Officer has announced new rules around mask wearing to keep everyone at school safe.

We know that returning to school will look a little different this time and it's important that we support you and your children with effective ways to keep everyone safe and well.

One of the most important and effective things we can do to help keep students in the classroom is to wear masks to help minimise COVID-19 transmission risk.

When worn properly, masks can play an important role in reducing the transmission risks of Covid-19 that could happen from common activities in school.

\* From 18 October 2021, face masks will be required for all school students in Grade 3 and above indoors including at Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) programs, unless a lawful exception applies. Face masks can be removed while outdoors at school for primary students.

\* Face masks will be strongly recommended for Prep to Year 2 students.

\* For students with a disability, parents and carers should speak to the child's doctor or regular health professional about the best methods to encourage mask wearing. Students and parents can also contact the Disability Liaison Officer program for more information.

\* Students with a medical condition or disability that make wearing a face covering unsuitable are not required to wear a mask.

\* Face masks are required for students in Year 3 to Year 6 unless an exception applies. Exceptions include students with a physical or mental disability where their disability means it would not be suitable. Parent/carers of a student/s who meet the criteria for an exception must provide their approval in writing for their child/ren to not wear a mask to the school.

We will try to maximise outdoor learning where possible and offer more recreation and breaks wherever practicable to further support students.

We can work together to support students by having conversations around the importance of masks in preventing COVID -19 transmission and remind them that it's only for a few days a week.

We have seen through remote learning that friendships are important. We can work together to remind students that wearing masks means they can see their friends and be at school together more often. We also protect our friends and keep them safe.

We encourage you to discuss wearing masks with your children to keep kids in the classroom and minimise COVID-19 transmission risk. The Raising Children Network has resources that can help you with having conversations with your children about wearing masks. <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/coronavirus-covid-19-guide/face-masks-coronavirus-children>

**How we can help:** We will have masks available for families who need support with this.

**How you can help:** Help your child to personalise their mask with an individual pattern and ensure that masks have the child's name written clearly on them.

Thank you for your ongoing support in the implementation of these important steps that enable us to return to onsite learning. We look forward to welcoming your children back into the classroom.

Andrew Bergmeier  
Principal