



NSW RETURN TO SCHOOL ROADMAP
AS OF 8 NOVEMBER

This roadmap provides guidance set by NSW Health and the NSW Department of Education on school restrictions.

As of 8 November 2021, all NSW schools will operate under Level 3 restrictions

Learning Delivery Model

To provide a safe learning environment for students, minimise opportunities for transmission and enable the most effective contact tracing and containment measures in the event of a COVID-19 case, schools will be required to adopt a cohort model.

The principles of student cohorting are to:

- minimise unnecessary physical interaction between students on school grounds;
- ensure that students learn and play only with those in their cohort, wherever possible;
- minimise opportunities for transmission and enhance contact tracing; and
- minimise the potential for widespread infection across the school and wider school community.

For a large school, cohort can refer to a whole year group e.g. all of Year 6. In a small school, cohort can refer to a group of students over several year groups e.g. all student in Kindergarten to Year 2. This will be determined at the school level to best suit the school's needs.

Level	Restriction Description Summary
4	Remote learning from home.
3+	When stay-at-home rules are still in place but other community vaccination and transmission conditions are met, students will return to school in a staged way. This is a staggered return for prioritised cohorts, with no mingling or on-site activities.
3 All Schools	Areas across NSW that are removed from stay-at-home rules will return to school under Level 3 settings. Schools returning through the full return model should refer to the Level 3 guidance for schools.

Primary Schools - Stage 3

Area	Requirement
School Start Times	Principals will consider staggered school start times and drop off locations to minimise mixing of students.
Student Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit mingling of any cohort (staggered). • Assemblies and presentations are allowed outdoors on site, with cohorts separated and physical distancing in place.
Years to Return to School	All year groups may return at the same time.
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will determine the mode of learning and cohort groupings to be implemented based on the return rate of students and COVID-Safe practices, ensuring all students have access to teaching and learning. • The preferred model at Level 3 is face-to-face learning. • Classroom teachers will ideally be the allocated teacher for one cohort to limit the potential exposure should there be a positive COVID case in the school. • Each cohort should be allocated a learning space, completing all lessons and break times with their allocated cohort. • In some schools (such as smaller schools, or those with a stage-based class structure), Principals may choose to amalgamate smaller classes to form one cohort, while adhering to class size policy. Students must then remain in this cohort.
Social Distancing	Students should maintain strict personal hygiene and physical distance wherever possible.
Playgrounds	Play equipment should be wiped down between use – see below in <i>General Guidelines – Cleaning</i> .
Masks (further information below in General Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks are mandatory for all staff indoors. • Masks are strongly encouraged for primary students when indoors. • Staff and students should bring their own masks where possible.

Secondary Schools - Level 3

Area	Requirement
School Start Times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools with secondary students should adopt a year-based cohorting model, which will determine their arrival, break and leave times, where possible. Schools may create smaller cohorts within year groups where subject choices and flexible timetabling allow based on the return rate of students and COVID-Safe practices ensuring all students have access to teaching and learning.
Student Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mingling of any cohort during breaks (staggered). Assemblies and presentations are allowed outdoors on site, with cohorts separated and physical distancing in place.
Masks (further information below in General Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks are mandatory for all staff when indoors. Masks are mandatory for all students Year 7 and above when indoors. Staff and students should bring their own masks where possible.
Social Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should maintain strict personal hygiene and physical distance wherever possible
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These measures will enable secondary school students and teachers to return to their normal timetable.

General Guidelines – Level 3

Area	Requirement
Drop-off and Pick-ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals should consider staggered school start times and drop off locations to minimise mixing of students. • Drop-offs and pick-ups should be staggered by cohorts, and schools are to use all possible entrances and exits to support the beginning and end of school days. • Parents and carers must follow their school’s advice regarding changes to student drop-off and pick-up. This includes staying in the car when dropping off and picking up children if it is safe to do so. This does not apply to drop off and pick up from outside of school hours care (OOSHC) as sign-in and -out procedures are required. <p>Parents and carers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain physical distance • Remain outside school grounds (except when providing care to vulnerable students and/or those with a disability) • Follow mask wearing requirements, in effect at the time. • Sign in using the Service NSW QR code when entering the school grounds.
Bus Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible students should be transported to school by private vehicle to minimise mixing enroute to school. • Students should be encouraged to sanitise their hands prior to entering and exiting transport vehicles. • Bus companies are responsible for employing and complying with COVID-Safe practices when transporting children to and from school. • Students should be encouraged to not eat or drink whilst using public transport as this might lead to groups of children seated together removing their facemasks at the same time, increasing the risk of transmission.
Masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks are mandatory for all staff, and for all students Year 7 and above when inside. • Masks are strongly encouraged for primary students when inside. • School mask supplies are a back-up only.
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allied health professionals, essential infrastructure workers and maintenance crews are permitted. • Fully vaccinated parents and carers will be allowed on site to support curriculum delivery, student wellbeing activities and school operations (for example reading support, canteens and uniform shops). Parents and carers must check in using the school check-in and show proof of vaccination on entry to the school site.

General Guidelines – Level 3 (cont)

Area	Requirement
Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff providing essential support for student wellbeing are permitted on site, such as counsellors and CEO staff.
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open or well-ventilated spaces reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This includes keeping windows and doors open.
Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current cleaning regimes will continue on school sites. Target areas include high-touch areas and other hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and movement areas. Enhanced cleaning is delivered as part of the daily cleaning of schools.
Canteens	<p>Canteens can operate where appropriate hygiene measures are in place, as long as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They can ensure that they are accessed by one cohort at a time Physical distancing is in place Canteen staff follow normal COVID-Safe protocols around vaccinations and testing.
Community Use	<p>Community use will be allowed outside of school hours, per general community settings and with a COVID-19 Safety Plan, including any specific plans required under Public Health Orders. This includes School Council meetings and external hire.</p>
Excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day excursions are allowed outdoors (and indoors where sole use of the premises is available). Incursions are allowed indoors and outdoors where cohorts are kept separated.
Shared Spaces	<p>Shared spaces, such as changing rooms, libraries, school halls and other communal areas, may only be used by one cohort at a time, with adherence to strict personal hygiene protocols and physical distancing requirements.</p>
School based Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dance and/or drama are permitted in line with COVID-Safe practices within classes/cohorts both indoors and outdoors. Mixing of classes is not permitted (except for HSC assessment purposes with COVID-Safe practices in place). Bands, ensembles and classes will be allowed within cohorts and only for instruments that do not rely on breath as these pose a higher transmission risk. If unsure, consider whether the instrument could be played with a mask on. If yes – this instrument is allowed. Masks must be worn if playing instruments indoors. Masks are not required if playing instruments outdoors. Physical distancing must be maintained at all times. Other instruments, as well as singing and chanting, are not permitted in Term 4 Schools must implement COVID-Safe arrangements for exams to minimise mixing between students, ensure that students are appropriately spaced and that exams are conducted in well-ventilated rooms and spaces. Community use is allowed outside of school hours (including P&C meetings) with COVID-safe plans in place. Dancing, bands, ensembles and classes will be allowed within cohorts (wind instruments are not permitted).
Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School sports are allowed including access to indoor and outdoor pools within cohorts. Inter-school sports are permitted outside school hours.
Uniform Stores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniform stores can operate uniform shops if the workers are fully vaccinated.

<p>End of year celebrations, formals, graduations, orientations, transitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduations and formals are allowed within cohorts, either on school sites or at external venues – with COVID Safe plans in place and social distancing adhered to. • Refer to end of year graduations, formals and events guidelines. • Transitions and orientations are allowed in a COVID-safe way that minimises mingling between students, this includes allowing parents on site who are fully vaccinated to accompany students.
<p>VET</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic schools who choose to accommodate professional experience placements will only support final year and penultimate year pre-service teachers. • Professional experience placements are voluntary for all schools. • Schools should provide face-to-face learning opportunities for pre-service teachers where possible and mixed delivery learning opportunities where face-to-face is not possible. • VET work placements could resume wherever possible in line with Public Health Orders. Some industries where vaccinations are mandated may decline to take a placement student unless that student is fully vaccinated. NESAs have advised that students who cannot complete their VET work placement due to COVID-related impacts will still be eligible for the HSC. Any placements must be subject to appropriate risk assessments and confirmed with Executive Director or delegate • Trade schools, VET and TAFE courses should continue to be delivered virtually where possible. Training that cannot be delivered virtually or online can be delivered face to face as long as their training complies with COVID-safe practices and NSW Public Health Orders. • Some school-based apprenticeships and traineeships training can recommence with conditions. Refer to the Training Services website for more information. • White card training is permitted. Delivery can be online; however, providers must conduct courses in real-time. • Work experience should be deferred.

General Guidelines – Level 3 (cont)

Area	Requirement
Banned Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Singing, chanting, group repetition and choirs (except for HSC preparation)• Instruments that rely on breath or require a mask to be removed to be played, as well as singing and chanting, are not permitted in Term 4.• Emergency drills.• School performances, productions, concerts, speech nights and award presentations.• Overnight excursions, camps, field trips and principal-endorsed activities for students.• International excursions.• Student visits to aged care facilities.• Community events (fetes, grandparents' days etc.).• Playgroups.• School holiday programs (noting that vacation care programs on school sites may continue under current guidelines).