

Dear parent and carers,

As promised, I am writing with additional information about the return of students to our school. campus. First, a reminder about the dates for our phased return.

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| **Commencing 25 October**  **(Week 4)** | * Early childhood centres (ECEC) * Preschool and kindergarten * Years 1 and 2 * Year 6 * Years 9 and 10 * Out of school hours care (OSHC) |
| **Commencing 1 November**  **(Week 5)** | * Years 3, 4 and 5 * Years 7 and 8 |
| *From weeks 1 to 4 of term, onsite supervision and care continues to be available for vulnerable children and young people whose parents are essential workers.* | |

Drawing on national and local health advice we have developed a return to school plan which has three key priorities:

* the health and safety of staff and young people,
* the mental and emotional well-being of students and staff, and
* ensuring continuity of learning.

Below is an outline of [ACT Health Guidelines](https://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1861600/09.-Health-Guidelines-for-Schools-and-ECEC-including-OSHC.pdf) that schools are required to implement to ensure effective COVID-19 measures are in place.

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| **Use of Check in CBR app** | All staff and visitors must check in using the ‘Check in CBR' app. Parents and carers cannot enter school grounds except for an essential reason. Visitors must call to make an appointment, or in advance of attendance. All visitors must report to the front office. |
| **Student illness** | Staff and students who are unwell are not able to attend school. Students who present unwell will be required to go home. |
| **Hygiene** | Schools will maintain and promote appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene practices. Students will need to wash hands and use hand sanitisers throughout the day. Students will not be allowed to share food or drink. |

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| **Masks** | Staff, visitors, and students\* in years 7-12 must wear a face mask on campus. Students in years 3-6 are encouraged to wear a mask if they are comfortable doing so. Students in Preschool to year 2 are not required to wear a mask. Masks may not be suitable for students with a disability or medical condition and schools will make allowances for those students not to wear masks.  *\* Students will be required to wear their personal masks. Masks will be available at school for those who require them. Disposable masks need to be changed every four hours.* |
| **Physical Distancing** | Physical distancing between children and young people is not always possible, particularly in single classrooms and school environments. It is however important for limiting the transmission of COVID 19. To promote physical distancing, we may adjust learning programs, breaktimes, our timetable as well as pick up and drop off arrangements. More specific information about what this means for your child is included below. |
| **Environmental cleaning** | Our school cleaning program includes regular cleaning of high touch services, frequently used objects, and play equipment. |
| **Ventilation** | All schools have been assessed to increase fresh air circulation and this may involve changes to ventilation, modified HVAC system settings and maximising the use of outdoor learning spaces. |
| **Managing suspected cases** | We are prepared to respond to a positive COVID-19 case on campus, should the need arise. ACT Health will provide direction to the school and community, which may result in a full or partial school closure. A student who presents with symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated with suitable supervision, and parents will be required to collect their child. Symptomatic students will be required to wear a mask. |
| **Will schools have routine testing for COVID-19?** | Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should get tested immediately. ACT Health is not recommending routine COVID-19 testing of children, young people  or staff using rapid antigen testing. |
| **Wellbeing supports** | Wellbeing and learning supports, such as face to face appointments with the school psychologist or access to a Learning Support Assistant, will recommence with the return to school.  For parents and carers of students with a medical vulnerability: if you wish the school to make reasonable adjustments for the safe return of your child, you must consult a GP and provide medical advice to that effect. Where adjustments can’t be made, the school will support your child to learn from home. |

To further support the ACT Health Guidelines our school is making the following adjustments.

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| **Drop off and pick up** | **Coming to School**  We encourage students to walk or ride to school to ease the congestion in our car park where possible. Support staff will be at the Tunnel to escort younger students to class if needed, from 8.30-9.15am  K,1,2 students will congregate on the Blacktop with a teacher on duty, until the bell goes. Yr 3,4,5,6 students will congregate on the Basketball court/Senior playground equipment, until the bell goes.  When the bell goes children will move directly to their classrooms and be greeted by their teacher.  LATE ARRIVALS: After 9.30am, please present at the open Window in the Admin Building for a later slip, then enter via the Tunnel and go directly to class, giving the teacher your late slip.  **Arrival at school:**  **Preschool** have three separate entry and exit points with immediate access to their classroom.    **Kindergarten and Yr 1** will enter and exit via the Tunnel.    **Year 2, Pods 11 and 12** will enter and exit via the side Hall pathway.    **Yr 5, 6KN, 6JD, 4MG and 4PS** will enter and exit via the Oval/Basketball Court gate.  **6RD, 4RO, 3AS and 3BS** will enter and exit via the bike rack gate.  **8.30 - 8.55 - Wet Weather** - head straight to class for quiet activities.  **Riding to School**  Children riding bikes to school will enter and exit via the bike rack gates. Those students must take the quickest route to either the junior or senior designated space.  **Heading home at the end of the day:**  The explanation for families to maintain social distancing is critical. **Please leave site immediately after collection.**   * **Kindergarten students** will be lined up at the front of the walkway to the preschool grassed area. * **Yr 1 students** will be lined up in front of the Admin Building, with their teachers. The expectation for families to maintain social distancing is critical. Please leave site immediately after collection. * For older students, please consider a ‘part way point’ for them to meet you outside of the school grounds. * If car pick up is your method, via the pickup zone, your child needs to know this and line up near the Hall. Please have a large A4 label attached to your left-hand windscreen with child/ren’s name (staff can look and call names for children to come swiftly to the car)      * Your family may identify a new meeting point for pick up, the oval is a sensible option where you can socially distance. * **PLEASE DO NOT PARK AND LEAVE YOUR CAR IN THE DROP OFF ZONE.** |
| **Hygiene routines** | **Hand Sanitiser**  Hand sanitiser will be located and regularly used:   * In every classroom and learning space entrance. * Staff room * All office spaces * Canteen * At every Entrance gate, students will be encouraged to ‘sanitise and walk’ upon arrival to school   *If your child has sensitivities to Hand Sanitiser, please alert the teacher and make own arrangements to provide your own sanitiser.*  **Washing Hands**  Washing hands will occur at all eating times, before going outside to breaktimes and before returning inside to learning areas. Students will be encouraged to sanitise before exiting at end of day. |
| **Teaching and learning** | **‘Cohorting’** refers to keeping students and teachers of the same year level together, without close contact to other students and staff.     * All teachers within the Pods, remain the same. * Executive Teachers/Deputies will be allocated certain year levels to visit and supervise. * Specialist teachers have been designated to individual year level cohorts:   Kindergarten – Mr Elks  Yr 1 and Pod 12– Mrs Starr  Yr 2 – Mrs Edwards  Yr 3 – Ms Collins  Yr 4 and Yr 5 – Mr Joy  Yr 6 and Pod 11 – Mr Shaw.  **Curriculum**: The first two weeks back at school our teachers will prioritise a focus on “Connecting Again” through an Arts-based and Social Emotional focus as well as re-establish routines and expectations. After the two-week transition back onsite, the regular learning program will resume.   * Whole school information will be shared via email, newsletter and SeeSaw. * Bands/violins will be held in Library Courtyard. * Library will be closed (this space is needed for several other organisational/safety requirements) * Lunchtime clubs will not occur in Term 4   **Student Support Services:** students will still be cared for and supported through any behaviour management by class teacher and Executive staff. |
| **Break times** | **Break times**: Our recess and lunch breaks have been staggered to minimise cross over of different age groups, as well as introducing a new play area for K-2 students – the ‘grassy knoll’ behind Pod 2.  Preschool – remains the same. 8.45 am start. 2.45pm finish.  **K,1,2** – Recess 11.05 am- 11.30am - each year level will be scheduled for daily rotation of: Blacktop, Blacktop Sandpit, Junior playground and Grassy Knoll (same for lunch)  **Yrs 3,4,5,6** – Recess - 10.30 - 10.55am - Each year level will be scheduled with daily rotations for: Hall Sandpit area, basketball court, Senior playground and oval (same for lunch)  **K,1,2** – Lunch 1.15 - 1.55pm  **Yrs 3,4,5,6** – Lunch 12.30 - 1.10pm  Recess and lunch breaks remain inside for Wet Weather days. |
| **Before and After School Care** | Communities @ Work are aligning their Communities@Work COVID Response Plan, Health Guidelines provided by the directorate, and advice listed in the Pandemic Model Policy provided by CECA, to ensure the health and safety of all is maintained within an OSHC environment. |
| **School canteens** | * The Canteen will be open for pre-orders only. * Baskets of filled orders will be collected by students to deliver to their own class daily. * Counter sales will not occur. * Ordering can be accessed as per regular practice. * Please head to myschoolconnect.com.au |

We will continue to review and adjust these measures based on the most up to date advice from ACT Health.

Remember, all adults and children aged 12 years and above are eligible for vaccination. If your child is eligible but not yet vaccinated, we encourage you to book them in by calling the COVID-19 vaccination line on 5124 7700 daily between 7am-7pm. Bookings can also be made with some [GP clinics and pharmacies](https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility?lang=en).

We understand that there has been considerable change and uncertainty for our students during the pandemic, and as we transition back to school. I’d remind you that you and your child can book an appointment with our Telehealth Support Service on 02 6205 1559 between 9.00am and 4.30pm weekdays. For more information about the return to schools, I’d recommend visiting [the Education Directorate’s website.](https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/covid-school-arrangements)

You can keep up to date with the latest health information, advice and resources on the [ACT’s COVID-19 website](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au).

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and understanding as we return to face-to-face schooling.

We look forward to seeing all our students back at school.

My regards,

Kate Smith

Palmerston District Primary School