

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Perth and Peel Region COVID-19 Lockdown



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
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TO	SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
FOR	SCHOOLS IN PERTH AND PEEL REGION
SUBJECT	COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
DATE	26 APRIL 2021

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND VISITORS

Are parents/carers allowed on school sites?

- Yes, providing they:
 - wear a mask at all times (subject to exceptions in the Safe Transition for Western Australia Directions);
 - practice 1.5 metres physical distancing between adults, where practicable; and
 - adhere to exemplary hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Are visitors, service providers and therapists allowed on school sites?

- Yes, providing they:
 - report to reception and sign in;
 - wear a mask at all times;
 - practice 1.5 metres physical distancing, where practicable; and
 - adhere to exemplary hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Are third-party providers able to use school facilities?

- Yes, provided they:
 - report to reception and sign in;
 - wear a mask at all times;
 - practice 1.5 metres physical distancing, where practicable;
 - adhere to exemplary hand and respiratory hygiene practices;
 - undertake regular cleaning of these facilities; and
 - develop and implement COVID-safe plans.

Are before and after school care (Out-of-School Hours Care) able to open on school sites?

- Yes.

Are schools required to use the safeWA app?

- No, the use of the safeWA app is optional. However:
 - schools may choose to use Q-Codes and the app alongside usual sign in procedures;
 - if a principal is considering implementing the safeWA app, they are encouraged to consult with their school boards/councils and community prior to implementation;
 - all visitors to schools must sign in using normal school operating procedures; and
 - schools must ensure that they are able to provide contact tracing information if requested by Western Australian Health Department staff.
- NOTE: Schools will not have access to data stored on the safeWA app. This information can only be accessed by Western Australian Health Department contact tracing staff.

Can school canteens operate?

- Yes, school canteens can open. However:
 - regular cleaning should be undertaken;
 - schools should review and update as needed their school risk assessment procedures to include COVID-safe principles; and
 - school canteens may continue to be an exception from the requirement for a COVID-safe plan.

Can assemblies be held?

- Yes, assemblies may proceed with staff and students only. Principals may wish to consider smaller year level assemblies as appropriate. Parents and other adult visitors may not attend assemblies at this time.

Are playgrounds open?

- Yes. However:
 - Year 7 to 12 students must wear a mask while playing; and
 - all students should continue to practice good hand hygiene, with handwashing before and after play.

What restrictions will apply to school bus services operating in the Perth and Peel regions?

- All school bus drivers and bus aides will wear a mask;
- Year 7 to 12 students must wear a mask on the bus; and
- Bus services for education support services requires the application of discretion where, for a medical or behavioural reason due to disability, there may be an exemption from mask wearing requirements. Where appropriate, parents of students with disabilities/special educational needs should be encouraged to discuss matters pertaining to mask wearing with school bus operators.

Do school faults, maintenance and building upgrades will continue?

- Yes. However:
 - schools should ensure that contractors have access to school sites to ensure these activities are undertaken;
 - contractors who come to site are expected to comply with the Safe Transition for Western Australia Directions; and
 - concerns relating to maintenance or capital works should be directed to your school's Capital Development Consultant.
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HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Are Year 7 to 12 students expected to bring their own mask?

- Yes. However:
 - students are encouraged to take responsibility for ensuring they have a mask; and
 - schools should maintain additional supplies for students who need them.

Does every Year 7 to 12 student have to wear a mask?

- Yes, at all times, unless the student:
 - has a physical, developmental or mental illness, injury, condition or disability which makes wearing a face covering unsuitable;
 - is communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing and visibility of the mouth is essential for communication;
 - is engaged in strenuous or vigorous exercise; and/or
 - is consuming food, drink or medicine, provided that they are seated at the time.
- Exceptions are listed in the Safe Transition for Western Australia Directions.

What do we do if a Year 7 to 12 student refuses to wear a mask?

- Schools are expected to take a positive and proactive approach in promoting the wearing of masks; and
- Schools should discuss individual circumstances with families and students with regard to the wearing of masks.

What if a student's mask is dirty or lost?

- Schools should have a supply of disposable and reusable masks should students need them; and
- schools should manage the distribution of masks to students in these circumstances.

Can a student travel to an affected area (Perth or Peel) to attend school?

- Yes.

Do Year 7 to 12 students who reside in regions that don't require masks need to wear them if they attend a school in Perth or Peel?

- Yes (subject to exceptions in the Safe Transition for Western Australia Directions).

Do Year 7 to 12 students and parents/caregivers who reside in Perth or Peel need to wear masks if they attend a school in a region which does not require them?

- Yes, providing they have been in an affected area on or after 17 April 2021.

Can primary school students wear a mask?

- Yes, however they are not required to wear them.

Are masks required to be used in the staffroom?

- Yes, unless the person is consuming food, drink or medicine, provided that they are seated at the time.

Do Education Support Staff have to wear face shields or particular PPE?

- No, however:
 - all staff are required to wear masks; and
 - if you are required to wear PPE as part of your business as usual, then continue as normal. There are no additional requirements.

Do physical education teachers need to wear a mask while teaching?

- No.

Are there guidelines for mask disposal?

- Guidelines can be found on the [healthy.wa.gov.au](https://www.health.wa.gov.au) website.
- Single use masks must be placed into a rubbish bin at the point of removal.
- Fabric masks that are reusable, should be washed after every use, or when wet or visibly dirty.
- To safely remove any type of face mask:
 - practise hand hygiene;
 - remove the mask; and
 - perform hand hygiene again.

How often should masks be changed?

- Reusable cloth masks should be changed at least daily.
- Disposable masks are single use and should be changed after four hours.
- Masks should be replaced if they become damaged, wet or dirty.

Can medically vulnerable and/or immune-compromised students attend school?

- Yes. As per AHPPC guidelines, with COVID-19 safe planning and procedures in place and health systems ready to quickly identify and respond to cases, schools remain safe places.

Do we need to re-flush drinking water taps in schools within COVID-19 lockdown regions?

- No.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Can student work placements, simulated work placements and work experience proceed?

- Yes. However, student work placements must adhere to current State Government Directions, including wearing a mask at work.

What attendance code do we use if a student does not attend school?

- Schools are open for learning and students are expected to attend.
- Schools should ascertain the reason for non-attendance.
- Usual attendance codes and procedures apply.

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT – MASKS

Do I have to supply my own mask for work?

- Yes, you are asked to supply your own mask as you are already required to wear a mask outside the home.
- Schools have a supply of spare masks if you forget or lose your mask or it needs to be replaced during your working day and you do not have a spare. The next day you should supply your own mask.

Why does my employer not provide a mask for me?

- Legal advice indicate that employers must take reasonable steps to ensure that their employees comply with the Directions issued under the WA State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency. Employers are not independently requiring employees to wear masks.

When can I remove my mask at work?

- Teaching staff may remove masks when teaching.
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- Masks can also be removed when:
 - eating, drinking or when exercising vigorously outdoors (Physical Education teachers are not required to wear masks);
 - when communicating with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

How long do we need to wear masks?

- The requirement to wear a mask applies until 12.01am on Saturday 1 May. Any further requirements will be subject to health advice and further announcements.

Should I bring more than one mask to work?

- Yes. You should have spare masks in case the one you are wearing is damaged, or gets wet or dirty.

What type of mask do I need?

- The directions under the Emergency Management Act 2005 require a face covering to be worn which means a disposable mask or a reusable fitted cloth mask that covers your nose and mouth. HealthyWA recommends masks that have at least 3 layers where each layer is a different type of fabric. Scarves and bandanas are not suitable.

How often should I change my mask?

- Disposable masks are single use that need changing after 4 hours. Reusable cloth masks should be changed at least daily. All types of masks should be replaced immediately if they become damaged, wet or dirty.

How do I clean and store my reusable mask?

- Reusable fabric masks should be washed after every use, or when wet or visibly dirty.
- Wash with laundry detergent on the hottest setting (preferably at least 60 degrees celsius). Avoid using disinfectant to clean the mask as it may produce fumes that are harmful to inhale.
- If you are unable to machine wash, wash in hot water with a laundry detergent then rinse thoroughly. Make sure your fabric mask is dry before re-using. Once dry, store your clean fabric masks in a disposable, sealable plastic bag to protect from contamination.
- Over time, your fabric masks need to be replaced. Replace your fabric mask if
 - it no longer fits snugly;
 - it starts to slide or fall off;
 - there are any holes;
 - you find you need to keep adjusting the fit; and/or
 - the material has started to wear or fray.

How do I dispose of my mask?

- To safely remove any type of mask practise hand hygiene, remove the mask and then perform hand hygiene again.
- Disposable masks must be placed in a rubbish bin at the point of removal. If a rubbish bin is not immediately available, take the mask to the nearest rubbish bin in a safe manner to ensure the used mask cannot contaminate other items/belongings or people. This may need to be done in a bag such as a labelled resealable bag which can then be disposed of at the nearest rubbish bin.
- Avoid placing used disposable masks in cars, pockets and directly into handbags/backpacks/luggage as used masks may pose a risk of contamination to other items and people.
- Always practise hand hygiene after handling used masks and other items of rubbish.

- Consider cutting the ear loops of your masks when you dispose of them to prevent harm to wildlife.

Do I need to wear a mask while talking on the phone or video conferencing?

- Yes, where possible. Where this is impacting your ability to communicate effectively you can take it off while speaking.

Where can I buy a mask?

- Most pharmacies, hardware and other shops sell masks. You can also make your own and there is a handy sheet to assist you.

TRAVEL AND ATTENDANCE

Can medically vulnerable and/or immune-compromised staff attend school?

- Yes. As per the AHPPC guidelines, with COVID-19 safe planning and procedures in place and health systems ready to quickly identify and respond to cases, schools remain safe places.

Can staff training or professional learning go ahead?

- Yes, providing participants and presenters follow external provider conditions and wear face masks, unless teaching.

Can staff travel to an affected area (Perth or Peel) to work at a school?

- Yes.
- Staff are encouraged to apply for a G2G pass and carry evidence such as proof of employment and residential address. Where can I request a letter of support to travel from an affected area (Perth or Peel) to other regions?
- If required, principals can request letters by emailing staff member details (first name, surname, home address, work email address, school name, school address) to CoronaVirusSupport@education.wa.edu.au

Do staff residing in regions that don't require masks need to wear them if they work at a school in affected areas (Perth or Peel)?

- Yes.

Do staff who reside in an affected area (Perth or Peel) need to wear masks if they work at a school in a region which does not require them?

- Yes, providing they have been in an affected area on or after 17 April 2021.

RESIDENTIAL AND BOARDING FACILITIES

Can students return to boarding and residential facilities?

- Yes.

Are Year 7 to 12 boarding or students and staff required to wear a mask?

- Year 7 to 12 boarding students are required to wear masks when attending school, classes and related activities. When boarding students return to their "home" (i.e. within the boundary of the boarding house), they not required to wear a mask.
- Boarding staff who reside at the boarding house are required to wear masks when attending school, classes and related activities, subject to exceptions in the State Government Directions. When full-time boarding staff return to their own home they are not required to wear a mask.
- Boarding staff, who live in private homes off-campus are required to wear a mask at all times when carrying out duties on school premises including within the boarding house.

Do boarding facilities need to maintain contact registers?

- Yes. Boarding schools are required to maintain contact registers to assist Western Australian Health Department contact tracing staff in the event of an outbreak.
- Usual practices for residents to sign in continue to apply.

What are the cleaning and hygiene requirements for residential and boarding facilities?

- As per AHPPC advice, each facility is required to undertake a facility-specific, systematic risk assessment, analysis and mitigation process to inform development of risk management plans which include their planned response to scenarios such as single or multiple cases being identified amongst the boarders with multiple close contacts, to manage the risk posed by COVID-19.
 - Good hygiene practices should be maintained.
 - Cleaning requirements remain in place as per Phase 4 requirements
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