



## Parent letter – new rules for students wearing masks at school 15 October 2021

Dear parents and Carers

As you know, students will soon begin a [Staged return to onsite learning to school](#) as announced under [the Roadmap](#). For information about your child returning to school please see the previous letter I posted on this site.

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.

### **Students in Grade 3 and above**

- Face masks will be required for secondary students at all times both indoors and outdoors at school, unless a lawful exception applies.
- Face masks will also 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.
- Students in Grades 3 to 6 are required to wear face masks from 18 October 2021. All other students who are required to wear a face mask must continue to do so from the first day they return to onsite learning.
- Face masks will be strongly recommended for Prep to Year 2 students.
- For composite classes of Grade 2 and 3 students, Grade 2 students will be strongly encouraged to wear masks like their Grade 3 peers.
- 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](#).

These new changes to wearing masks will come into effect when students return to staged onsite learning from 18 October 2021 in regional and metropolitan schools.

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.

*David*

Principal

Mornington SDS

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