



Wednesday 26 January 2022

Dear Hurlstone students and families,

Welcome to a new school year, an exciting time as our students start or return to their school journey. I want to share how we are building on our experiences of the last 2 years and continuing to safeguard our school community while keeping our school open, where we know the best learning happens.

We will start 2022 with a layered approach to COVID-smart measures that have been developed in partnership with NSW Health to help to minimise transmissions at school. The health and wellbeing of our students and staff remain our priority, and these measures are designed to help to keep our school open and our students learning in the classroom.

These key measures include:

- Rapid antigen test (RAT) kits will be provided to all students to help monitor your child's health and minimise transmission of COVID-19 across our school.
- Wearing of surgical masks indoors is required for all staff and students in Year 7 and above. Masks will be provided by the school if required.
- Only fully vaccinated visitors essential to delivering and supporting learning or wellbeing can come on a school site.
- Students will be kept in their year groups on school grounds, with staggered drop-off and pick-ups, break times, playground and canteen access to minimise the spread of COVID-19 across cohorts.
- We will continue to use good hygiene, enhanced cleaning, good air flow and ventilation in learning spaces, as well as physical distancing practices.

While this is not going to be a normal start to the school year, we know that being together in the classroom is the most effective way for students to learn and grow. Your child's relationship with their teacher is important, but as we manage potential disruptions to staffing due to COVID-19, they may get to meet more teachers than usual.

Rapid antigen testing

We will distribute packs of rapid antigen test (RAT) kits for all students and staff at the start of Term 1.

The use of RAT kits is an important step to support the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. They are a quick and easy screening tool to help detect COVID-19. It is a simple process of placing a nose or throat swab in a chemical solution, which is put onto a scanning device. Results can be ready within 15 minutes. Use of RAT kits is highly recommended but not mandatory.

Instructions are included in the kits detailing how to use the tests, check the results and dispose of the tests safely. You can also download the instructions through the [Therapeutic Goods Administration \(TGA\)](#) website. The user guides will also contain a contact number for the suppliers if you need additional support.

How and when do I pick up the RAT kits?

- Packs of RAT kits will be distributed to parents or carers before the start of Term 1 to ensure students have the opportunity to be tested before Day 1.
- Each pack contains 4 x Rapid Antigen Tests to cover the first two weeks of school.
- This will take place on Thursday and Friday this week using a 'drive through' model on Roy Watts Rd using allotted times for each year group to avoid congestion.
- While it is recommended that families collect the kits during the allotted time, are still able to collect the RAT kits outside of the allotted time if this is more convenient.
- Families with students in different year groups should collect kits for all students at one time.
- The following times have been allocated for parents or carers to pick up the packs of RAT kits. Please state your child's year group, last and first name to make it easier for our staff to locate your child(ren) on our lists:

Thursday 27 January

10.30am – 12pm: Year 7

12pm – 1.30pm: Year 11

1.30pm – 3pm: Year 12

3pm – 5pm: after hours collection (all year groups)

Friday 28 January

9am – 10.30am: Year 8

10.30am – 12pm: Year 9

12pm – 1.30pm: Year 10

Parents and carers should leave the pick-up location immediately after picking up their packs of RAT kits.

Additional information

- School staff will not be administering the rapid antigen tests to students.
- Each student will receive an initial supply of 4 RATs to be used twice a week in the morning before attending school (e.g. on Monday and Wednesday).
- If a student or staff member receives a **positive** RAT result, they need to:
 - record the positive RAT result through the [Service NSW website](#) or [Service NSW app](#)
 - notify the school of the positive RAT or PCR result as soon as possible
 - follow [NSW Health advices](#) to isolate for 7 days.

Negative results **do not** need to be reported to Service NSW or to the school.

Unwell at school

Any student or staff member who is unwell and/or displays symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to go home and stay until they can complete a RAT or PCR test.

- If symptoms continue, they should stay at home and take another RAT in 24 hours or have a PCR test.
- If the second RAT or initial PCR test result is negative and they are displaying no symptoms OR they are diagnosed as another condition such as hayfever, the student or staff member can return to school.

What happens when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19

Under the new close contact rules, schools are no longer included in contact tracing. I will inform the school community when there is a positive case in our school and advise families on public health advice, including monitoring for symptoms.

Use of surgical masks

All school staff and students will be required to wear surgical masks indoors.

No vented or cloth masks should be worn. If required, surgical masks will be available at schools.

Secondary school students will be provided with surgical masks as a backup when needed, which they are required to wear indoors.

Masks are also strongly encouraged in outdoor settings where you cannot physically distance. Your child can remove their mask when eating, exercising or playing a musical instrument.

For more information, refer to [Face masks in NSW](#).

Visitors on school sites and vaccinations

No parents, carers or visitors will be allowed on school site until further notice with the following exceptions:

- Volunteers or staff operating uniform shops and canteens must be fully vaccinated.
- Visitors supporting school operations and curriculum delivery must be fully vaccinated.
- Allied health partners for the wellbeing of students must be fully vaccinated.

All staff on school sites are required to be fully vaccinated, including having their booster when eligible.

We strongly encourage our students and their families to consider vaccination when eligible. [Find a vaccination clinic](#) to book an appointment near you.

Other key measures

Ventilation

We will continue to follow NSW Health ventilation guidelines that natural ventilation is the most effective measure so we will maximise fresh air flow in learning spaces through opening doors and windows.

This approach is strongly supported by expert advice. Where natural ventilation is not sufficient, mechanical ventilation and/or air purification will be used and we will continue to use outdoor settings where possible.

Air purifiers have been provided to schools as a supplementary measure to support common areas in schools and can be deployed at the principal's discretion. These purifiers could be located in areas where high levels of student and staff mixing occurs, such as staffrooms, internal canteens, student centres and music rooms.

Cleaning

We continue to have enhanced cleaning focusing on high-touch and high-traffic areas.

Physical distancing

We will continue to follow physical distancing guidelines and maintain 1.5 metres distance wherever possible.

Invitation to a virtual school assembly

To welcome you and our students back to school and to share more detailed guidance about the settings for Term 1, we will be holding a virtual school assembly on the evening of **Tuesday 2 February** via Zoom:

6pm – 6.30pm: Year 7, 11 and 12

The link to join is:

<https://nsweducation.zoom.us/j/63397149043?pwd=SkNPS0NLbXJxUWRKT0F4VWISQVU0UT09>
Meeting ID: 633 9714 9043

Passcode: **term1**

6.30pm – 7pm: Year 8, 9 and 10

The link to join is:

<https://nsweducation.zoom.us/j/61223965328?pwd=TnZYSyt5b2dJN1hiSGJMS3lkNXNHQT09>

Passcode: **term1**

You will need a registered Zoom account to log on.

During the assembly we will outline our school's plan and cover many of the things you will need to know for the return of school in Term 1 2022, including testing, masks, vaccinations, ventilation, visitor protocols and potential learning from home arrangements.

If you can't make the assembly, we will share an outline of our return to school plan in a newsletter article which will be posted on our school website.

We look forward to connecting with you at the virtual assembly. Please send any questions you would like answered to [**hurlstone-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au**](mailto:hurlstone-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au) in advance and we will make sure we cover as many as possible.

Thank you again for your continued support during this school term.

Kind regards,

Christine Castle
Principal

Mai Ni Pham
Sailash Krishan
Sharon Davis
Rebecca Ross
Senior Executive