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Dear parents and carers,

Re: Extension of Covidsafe measures for Term 1

I am writing to let you know that the Victorian Government has extended the COVIDSafe measures initially announced for the first four weeks of Term 1 2022.

The use of rapid antigen tests (RAT) as a screening tool, getting vaccinated, providing adequate ventilation and adhering to vital COVIDSafe steps such as hand hygiene, mask wearing and physical distancing have played an important part in reducing the impact of COVID-19 on our school community.

These measures will continue to be in place for the remainder of Term 1.

I will be contacting families as soon as the free RAT tests arrive with details of the distribution process.

On behalf of the school, I would like to thank you for your continued support in implementing these important COVIDSafe measures.

Free rapid antigen tests

As part of the extension, it is anticipated an additional 24 million RATs will be provided to schools and early childhood settings to continue to support early detection and prevent infection, for use at home. This is in addition to the 15.6 million RATs rolled out during the first four weeks of Term 1, and means more than 39 million RATs will be delivered in total across schools and early childhood settings throughout Term 1.

Department of Health modelling indicates that in the first two weeks of school returning, the program has already prevented more than 21,000 cases in schools alone.

Their modelling indicates, assuming a 75 per cent compliance rate with screening of students, that by continuing RAT screening in schools for the full 10 weeks of Term 1, we will prevent:

- 61,000 COVID-19 infections in children aged 5 to 17
- more than 150,000 COVID-19 infections in the overall community (on average 15,000 per week over 10 weeks, or more than 2,100 per day)
- around 400 hospital admissions.

We will continue to monitor the RAT screening in schools program.

This voluntary screening program is one component of our school's COVIDSafe settings to minimise the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

The need for the program will continue to be monitored, and it may end earlier based on health advice.

Twice-a-week testing is strongly recommended for both students and staff.

Students will do the tests at home; they only need to report their result if it is COVID-positive. They must report a COVID-positive result to:

- the school via the [Student COVID-19 Test Portal](#) or phone; this is so we can support you and your child, record that they will be absent while in 7-day isolation, and let the rest of the school community know there has been a positive case onsite and that they should monitor for symptoms
- the Department of Health via the [COVID-19 Positive Rapid Antigen Test Self-Reporting Form](#) or call centre on [1800 675 398](tel:1800675398).

Information about [how to do a test and how to read RAT results](#), including a how-to video translated into 33 languages, is available.

Vaccination requirements

Vaccination remains the best way to protect students and staff in school settings.

Vaccinations for children aged 5 to 11 are open, and third dose vaccinations for 16 to 17 year olds are now available.

There are lots of convenient options to access vaccinations. These include state-wide vaccination hubs, your local GP or pharmacy.

You can book your appointment in a few different ways, including:

- online: coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine
- by phone: 1800 675 398 (Coronavirus Hotline)
- In person: talk to your local pharmacy, doctor, or attend a state-wide vaccination hub.
- using the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder - [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

Ventilation

Improving ventilation is one of the most effective measures to keep education settings safe. Approximately 51,000 air purifiers were delivered to schools in Term 1, 2022 to support COVIDSafe settings in schools. DET has now announced up to an additional 60,000 air purifiers will be rolled out to schools ahead of winter to supplement natural and mechanical ventilation during the cooler months based on current enrolments. The winter allocation will provide enough purifiers to cover all classrooms in government schools. This includes general purpose classrooms and other specialist classrooms such as art and science rooms.

Vital COVIDSafe steps

Hand hygiene, mask wearing, and social distancing will continue wherever possible in Term 1.

Mask rules will remain the same, with students in Grade 7 and above required to wear masks – although they will not be required outdoors.

Together, these measures will give us the best chance to keep children healthy and reduce the risk of them catching and spreading COVID-19.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitsinikos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that curves back towards the end of the name.

John Mitsinikos

College Principal