



DOMINUS LUX MEA
the Lord is my light

St. Dominic's College



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA

26 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to a new school year, an exciting time as our students start or return to their school journey.

I would like to provide some insight into how St Dominic's College is building on our experiences of the last two years by continuing to safeguard our community whilst 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 minimise transmissions at school. The health and wellbeing of our students and staff remains our priority and these measures are designed to help 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.
- Students must bring their own surgical masks.
- Only fully vaccinated visitors essential to delivering and supporting learning or wellbeing can come onto a school site.
- Students will be kept in their Year Groups on school grounds where possible during break times, in the playground and canteen access to minimise the spread of COVID-19 across cohorts.
- Continued use of good hygiene, enhanced cleaning, good air flow and ventilation in learning spaces and 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

Two weeks supply of Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits have been delivered to the College. Parents can collect these kits this **Friday, 28 January from 8.00am – 2.30pm** via the oval gates on Gascoigne Street. The kits will be set out in Year and House groups. Parents/carers will need to sign for the tests. If you are collecting for other students, you will need to sign a collection form located on the table.

If you are unable to collect the RAT tests on Friday, you will need to either:

- Seek a PCR test over the weekend OR
- Obtain a RAT test elsewhere and administer it on Monday morning.

Students who have not collected their kits on Friday will be given their kits to take home on their first day of school.

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.

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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- School staff will not be administering the rapid antigen tests to students.
- RAT tests should be completed at home in the morning before attending school.
- Each student will receive an initial supply of four rapid antigen tests (RATs) to be used twice a week. Your son will need to test at home on Monday and Wednesday mornings.
- If a student or staff member receives a positive RAT test, they need to:
 - record the positive RAT result through the [Service NSW website](#) or [Service NSW app](#)
 - notify the College Office or info@stdominics.nsw.edu.au of the positive RAT or PCR test result as soon as possible
 - follow [NSW Health advice](#) to isolate for 7 days

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

IF YOU DISPLAY SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 AND ARE UNWELL

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 a student or staff member displays even mild COVID-19 symptoms, they must take a RAT or get a PCR test and isolate until they receive a negative test result.
- **Students must not come to school until they are symptom free, even if they get a negative RAT result.**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A STUDENT OR STAFF TESTS POSITIVE TO 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 College staff will be required to wear masks indoors.
- No vented or cloth masks should be worn.
- Masks are also strongly encouraged in outdoor settings where you cannot physically distance.
- Your child can remove their mask when eating, exercising and playing a musical instrument.

For more information, refer to [NSW Government Mask advice](#).

VISITORS ON SCHOOL SITES AND VACCINATIONS

No parents, carers or visitors will be allowed on school site for the first 4 weeks of Term 1, with the exception of:

- Two parents/carers are allowed to accompany their child into school on their first day of Year 7 or students starting at a new school.
- Visitors supporting school operations and curriculum delivery.
- Allied health partners for the wellbeing of students.

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 from 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.

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 maintaining 1.5 metres distance wherever possible.

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

Yours sincerely,



Mr Michael Ronchetti
College Principal

COVID-smart measures for schools

Information for parents and students



Being together in a classroom is the most effective way for students to learn and grow. Since COVID-19 remains a relatively mild illness for most children, we're committed to return to school safely in 2022. We will support this through the following measures.



WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS

- If your child is unwell, even with mild symptoms you must keep them home and get them tested. If they display any symptoms they should take a PCR test (nose and throat swab) or rapid antigen test (RAT).
- If symptoms continue your child should not come to school, even if they get a negative rapid antigen test result. Your child may return when they get a negative PCR test result and have no symptoms.



VACCINATIONS

- All staff on school sites must be fully vaccinated.
- We strongly encourage all students and their families to get vaccinated. Children aged 5 to 11 can now get vaccinated. Parents are encouraged to book their child in for a vaccination at the first available opportunity.
- Once eligible, all adults are encouraged to get booster shots.



TESTING

Before the start of term 1

- Rapid antigen tests will be provided to all staff and students through their schools. Schools will inform their local communities on how these kits can be collected.
- All staff and students are asked to take a rapid antigen test twice a week and get a negative result before attending school. Your child's school will provide advice on when tests should be taken.

At the start of term 1

- For the first 4 weeks, students and staff should take a rapid antigen test **twice a week on the morning before attending school**. Test kits will continue to be supplied by schools.
- Students who are household close contacts must isolate at home for 7 days.



COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES

- If your child has no symptoms and there is a positive case in their class, year or other grouping, they can continue to attend school in line with NSW Health advice.
- Staff and students who get a positive rapid antigen test result must register it on service.nsw.gov.au or the **Service NSW app** as soon as possible.
- Staff and students who receive a positive rapid antigen or PCR test result must tell their school as soon as possible, and follow NSW Health advice.
- Schools will regularly communicate to parents about the presence and impact of COVID-19 in their community. Parents should expect to be provided with details of any impacted year groups or cohorts.



VENTILATION

- Fresh air is the most effective form of ventilation to minimise risk of transmission. Where natural ventilation is limited, schools will consider alternatives, such as air purifiers.
- Using outdoor spaces will continue to be encouraged.



MASKS

- All primary and secondary school staff will be required to wear masks indoors.
- No vented masks or cloth masks should be worn. If required, surgical masks will be available at schools.
- Secondary school students are required to wear masks.
- Primary school students are strongly recommended to wear well-fitted masks indoors.



ACTIVITIES

- COVID-19 will be considered in all risk assessments. Guidance will be provided to schools on applying appropriate safeguards across a range of activities.
- Parents will be made aware of the risk of exposure and will need to give their permission for participation in extra-curricular, out of school hours or off-site activities



STUDENT COHORTING

- Schools will continue using cohort arrangements and consider staggered drop-off and pick ups, break times, playground and canteen access.
- Depending on the school, cohort size and timetables, cohorts may be based on classes, years or stages.



VISITORS

- Visitors on school sites should be kept to a minimum to support essential school activities or student needs. Visitors will be required to wear a mask indoors and will be encouraged to wear a mask outdoors if they cannot maintain physical distancing.
- Schools are advised to allow a maximum of 2 parents or carers per student onto school grounds for Kindergarten orientation or Year 7 transition.



KEEPING SCHOOLS OPEN

- Parents are asked to respect the rules at their child's school to help keep the community safe.
- Schools will do everything they can to maintain continuity of face-to-face learning including the use of more casual staff.
- Schools will need to make localised staffing decisions to ensure appropriate supervision can be maintained.
- Schools will not be able to guarantee particular staff for any cohort and students may not have their regular teacher for a class.



LEARNING FROM HOME

- We will continue to monitor the situation and where face-to-face learning is not possible, learning from home options will be supported for short periods.

For more info, visit nsw.gov.au/covid-19

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring school operations continue while prioritising the safety and wellbeing of students and school staff.