



Dear parent and carers

I am writing with additional information about the return of students to our school campus. First, a reminder about the return dates for students.

<b>Commencing 31 January</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preschool and Kindergarten</li><li>• Years 7 and 11</li><li>• New student orientations</li><li>• Out of school hours care (OSHC)</li></ul>
<b>Commencing 1 February</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Years 1 - 6</li><li>• Years 8 – 10</li><li>• Year 12</li></ul>

Drawing on national and local health advice, we have developed a return to school plan which has three key priorities:

- the health and safety of staff and young people
- the mental and emotional well-being of students and staff, and
- ensuring continuity of learning.

Below is an outline of [ACT Health Guidelines](#) that schools are required to implement to ensure effective COVID-19 measures are in place.

<b>Student illness</b>	Anyone who is unwell, symptomatic or who are household close contacts must not be at school or preschool. This applies to staff and students. If they attend when unwell, they will be sent home.
<b>Masks</b>	<p>Staff, visitors and students* in years 7-12 must wear a face mask on campus.</p> <p>Students in years 3-6 are encouraged to wear a mask if they are comfortable doing so.</p> <p>Students in Preschool to year 2 are not required to wear a mask. Masks may not be suitable for students with a disability or medical condition and schools will make allowances for those students not to wear masks.</p> <p><i>* Masks will be available at school for those who require them. Disposable masks need to be changed every four hours.</i></p>

<b>Physical distancing and cohorting of staff and students</b>	<p>Physical distancing between children and young people is not always possible, particularly in single classrooms and school environments. It is however important for limiting the transmission of COVID-19.</p> <p>To support cohorting of staff and students, we may adjust learning programs, stagger starts, breaktimes, and timetables as well as pick up and drop off arrangements. More specific information about what this means for your child is included below.</p>
<b>Hand hygiene and COVID smart behaviours</b>	<p>Schools will maintain and promote hand and respiratory hygiene practices. Students will need to wash hands and use hand sanitisers throughout the day. Students will not be allowed to share food or drink.</p>

<b>Environmental cleaning</b>	<p>Our school cleaning program includes regular cleaning of high touch point services, frequently used objects, common areas, toilets and play equipment.</p>
<b>Ventilation</b>	<p>All schools are following an Indoor Air Quality Plan. Improved ventilation and increased outdoor learning will be implemented where appropriate. Ventilation systems have been adjusted to increase fresh air circulation and plans will be updated to reflect improvements made since 2021.</p>
<b>Vaccination</b>	<p>The ACT has one of the highest vaccination rates of any city in the world and this is reflected in our teaching workforce. COVID-19 vaccinations are also mandated for staff working across early childhood education and care services, preschools, primary schools, Out of School Hours Care, specialist school settings and P-10 schools, or schools that share campus space with students in year 6 or below. These requirements are in place until the conclusion of the public health emergency.</p>
<b>Visitors and use of Check in CBR app</b>	<p>All students aged 16 and above, staff and visitors must check in using the 'Check in CBR' app. Parents and carers are allowed on school grounds for scheduled appointments only. Special arrangements will be made for children starting at a new school or early childhood service in 2022, or children with special needs who require transition visits prior to the commencement of the new school year.</p>
<b>Wellbeing supports</b>	<p>Wellbeing and learning supports, such as face to face appointments with the school psychologist or access to a Learning Support Assistant, will recommence with the return to school. They can be accessed through the schools established referral process. If the school psychology position is temporarily vacant, you can book an appointment for your child with our Central Telehealth team by filling a <a href="#">booking request form</a> or emailing <a href="mailto:Telehealth@ed.act.edu.au">Telehealth@ed.act.edu.au</a>. Central Telehealth Service is available between 9:30 – 4:30 pm during weekdays.</p> <p>For parents and carers of students with a medical vulnerability: If you wish the school to make reasonable adjustments for the safe return of your child, you must consult a GP and provide medical advice to that effect. Where adjustments can't be made, the school will support your child to learn from home.</p>
<b>Managing COVID-19 in schools</b>	<p>We are prepared to respond to a positive COVID-19 case on campus. A student who presents with symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated with suitable supervision, and parents will be required to collect their child. Symptomatic students will be required to wear a mask. Symptomatic staff and visitors will be advised to travel directly home.</p>

	<p>If a staff member, child, young person or visitor is diagnosed with COVID-19 and has attended a school site during their infectious period, they are required to advise their school.</p> <p>Where a COVID-19 case in a school leads to students and staff being assessed as at risk of exposure, those impacted will be informed by the school about what they are required to do in line with ACT Health requirements. If the exposure is considered low risk, students and staff will continue to be able to attend school while closely monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms.</p> <p>Risk assessments are based off the ACT Health Guidelines for Schools.</p>
<b>COVID-19 screening</b>	<p>Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should get a PCR or Rapid Antigen Test immediately.</p> <p>Free Rapid Antigen Tests will be provided to all staff and students in ACT schools for the first four weeks of term 1. Rapid Antigen Testing will be voluntary for staff and students. Students and staff will do the tests at home and are required to report any positive test results to their school and to ACT Health.</p> <p><b>Rapid Antigen Testing kits will be available to collect from school during the first week of term. More information on the collection arrangements for our school will be provided in the coming days.</b></p>

To further support the ACT Health Guidelines our school is making the following adjustments.

<b>Student Drop off and pick up</b>	<p><b>Junior School</b></p> <p>On the junior site, drop off and pick up will be run differently in the interest of maintaining separation of cohorts and the social distancing of parents. The following adjustments will be put in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in kindergarten, year 1 and year 2 can be dropped off and picked up 5 minutes earlier than students in years 3 to 6.</li> <li>• Students in preschool (at both Nichols and Hall sites) will have their own staggered start and finish times based on surname in order to allow parents to socially distance.</li> </ul> <p>Drop off and pick up points will also be different.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We request that Kindergarten to year 2 use the gate at the turning circle to enter and exit the school.</li> <li>• Students in years 3 to 6 are to use the gates closest to the IGA carpark to enter and exit the school.</li> </ul> <p>These changes will be communicated in more detail to parents via Seesaw. Additionally, we will post plans onto our website.</p> <p><b>Senior School</b></p> <p>For students on the senior site, we will open additional gates to allow for greater social distancing when entering and exiting school grounds.</p> <p>We request that students observe social distancing requirements outside school grounds and do not congregate in large groups at bus stops.</p>
<b>Hygiene routines</b>	<p>All learning spaces have hand sanitiser and sterile wipes available for use. Students will be routinely encouraged to use hand sanitiser throughout the day which will supplement hand washing with warm water and soap. Any shared resources will be wiped after use.</p>

	Bins with lids have been provided for the disposal of surgical style face masks and additional masks will be provided to students when required.
<b>Teaching and learning</b>	<p>Teaching and learning will be very similar to how it was in term 4 2021 for all students. To minimise interaction between cohorts to prevent the potential spread of infection we have arranged for students to be grouped according to year levels. Strategies will be put in place to minimise interaction between those groupings in a number of ways.</p> <p><b>Junior School</b> On the junior site, our specialist program will be paused to allow us to ensure that teachers only work with a specific cohort.</p> <p>There will be some minor changes to class timetables in the junior school. These changes will be communicated to parents through Seesaw.</p> <p><b>Senior School</b> Some of the teaching programs have had to be modified in order to adhere to the current Health requirements. Any modifications to course outlines will be communicated through classroom teachers.</p>
<b>Break times</b>	<p><b>Junior School</b> A variation to break times has been made to allow for separation of cohorts. The school will run on two separate break schedules.</p> <p>Kindergarten to year 2 will have the same time allocated for breaks but will be assigned to specific play areas to minimise cross over of cohorts.</p> <p>Years 3 to 6 will have the same time allocated for breaks, while again being separated by assigned play areas.</p>
<b>Before and After School Care</b>	OshClub will be operating in a COVID aware capacity as they were in term 4 2021.
<b>School canteens and uniform stores</b>	Our school canteens will be open for pre-orders and contactless counter sales.
<b>Events and Excursions</b>	<p><b>Whole School</b> All assemblies, excursions, camps and carnivals across the school will be paused for the interim.</p> <p>All activities that include cross over of students from one site to another have been paused until further notice.</p>

We will continue to review and adjust these measures based on the most up to date advice from ACT Health.

During this time we may experience impacts on our workforce due to the requirements of staff to isolate under ACT Health directions. We will work closely with the Education Directorate to make appropriate adjustments to ensure student and staff safety. This may include using casual relief staff, combining of classes, limiting or cancelling non-essential activities, switching to the provision of supervision only or possibly temporary transition to remote learning.

Remember, all adults and children aged 5 years and above are eligible for vaccination. If your child is eligible but not yet vaccinated, we encourage you to book them in by calling the COVID-19 vaccination line on 5124 7700 daily between 7am-7pm. Bookings can also be made with some [GP clinics and pharmacies](#).

For more information about the return to schools, I'd recommend visiting [the Education Directorate's website](#).

You can keep up to date with the latest health information, advice and resources on the [ACT's COVID-19 website](#).

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support. We look forward to seeing all our students back at school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Breen', written over a horizontal line.

Daniel Breen  
Principal  
Gold Creek School

28 January 2022