

Dear parent and carers,

As promised, I am writing with additional information about the return of students to our school.

First, a reminder about the dates for our phased return.

Commencing 25 October (Week 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood centres (ECEC) • Preschool and kindergarten • Years 1 and 2 • Year 6 • Years 9 and 10 • Out of school hours care (OSHC)
Commencing 1 November (Week 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 3, 4 and 5 • Years 7 and 8
<i>From weeks 1 to 3 of term, onsite supervision and care continues to be available for vulnerable children and young people whose parents are essential workers.</i>	

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.

Use of Check in CBR app	All staff and visitors must check in using the 'Check in CBR' app. Parents and carers cannot enter school grounds except for an essential reason. Visitors must call to make an appointment, or in advance of attendance. All visitors must report to the front office.
Student illness	Staff and students who are unwell are not able to attend school. Students who present unwell will be required to go home.
Hygiene	Schools will maintain and promote appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene practices. Students will need to wash hands and use hand sanitiser throughout the day. Students will not be allowed to share food or drink.

Masks	<p>Staff, visitors and students* in years 7-12 must wear a face mask on campus. Students in years 3-6 are encouraged to wear a mask if they are comfortable doing so. 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>* Students will be required to wear their personal masks. Masks will be available at school for those who require them. Disposable masks need to be changed every four hours.</i></p>
Physical Distancing	<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. To promote physical distancing we may adjust learning programs, breaktimes, our timetable as well as pick up and drop off arrangements. More specific information about what this means for your child is included below.</p>
Environmental cleaning	<p>Our school cleaning program includes regular cleaning of high touch surfaces, frequently used objects, and play equipment.</p>
Ventilation	<p>All schools have been assessed to increase fresh air circulation and this may involve changes to ventilation, modified HVAC system settings and maximising the use of outdoor learning spaces.</p>
Managing suspected cases	<p>We are prepared to respond to a positive COVID-19 case on campus, should the need arise. ACT Health will provide direction to the school and community, which may result in a full or partial school closure. 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.</p>
Will schools have routine testing for COVID-19?	<p>Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should get tested immediately. ACT Health is not recommending routine COVID-19 testing of children, young people or staff using rapid antigen testing.</p>
Wellbeing supports	<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.</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>

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

<p>Drop off and pick up</p>	<p>K-2 Drop off and pick up arrangements – side gate The Term 4 COVID health guidelines outline that parents and carers must not enter school grounds except in the case of an emergency.</p>  <p>In the mornings, K-2 families are required to walk down the gravel pathway next to the community oval. Adults are asked to wait outside the side gate. Staff members will greet your child/ren as they enter the side gate. Children will be asked to use hand sanitizer upon entering the gate.</p> <p>At 3pm families are asked to wait outside the side gate. The gate will remain closed until 3pm. At 3pm class teachers will bring the children to the artificial turf area in the playground and a staff member will open the side gate. Children will be released to families as staff see parents/carers through the gate. To help the process please clearly state your child’s name to staff. It can be difficult to recognise people behind masks, sunglasses etc.</p> <p>Families are asked to maintain physical distancing whilst waiting outside the side gate.</p> <p>Preschool Drop off and pick up arrangements – front office gate The Term 4 COVID health guidelines outline that parents and carers must not enter school grounds except in the case of an emergency.</p>  <p>Staff will be available to collect your child/ren from 8.55am each morning at the front gate. Please wait in your car, or physically distanced from others, until this time.</p> <p>At 3pm your child/ren will be walked out to the front gate by a staff member to be collected. Children will be released to families as staff see you through the gate. Please be patient as staff do their best to keep everyone safe. To help the process please clearly state your child’s name to staff. It can be difficult to recognise people behind masks, sunglasses etc.</p> <p>Families are asked to maintain physical distancing whilst waiting outside the gate.</p>
<p>Hygiene routines</p>	<p>All staff and visitors will be required to use hand sanitizer upon arrival at NECS and are encouraged to wash their hands regularly throughout the day. Hand sanitizer is located at multiple locations throughout the school, including the front office entry, all shared spaces and in each classroom. Children will be required to wash their hands many times throughout the school day e.g. upon</p>

	<p>arrival at school, before and after toileting, before and after play breaks, before and after eating.</p> <p>At NECS each K-2 classroom has a sink with handwashing facilities. At preschool each child has easy access to an adjacent bathroom with handwashing facilities. The school has purchased 'hand washing timers' to encourage the children to wash their hands for an adequate amount of time. All staff will regularly remind children how to wash their hands properly.</p> <p>There will be reduced capacity in bathrooms. In K-2 only two children may use the facilities at a time, in the Grass Parrot/Kangaroo bathroom five children may use the facilities at a time with one adult helper, and in the Butterfly bathroom one child may use the facilities at a time with one adult helper.</p> <p>The bubblers in the playground will be turned off. Children will be required to bring their own water bottle to school each day or be provided with a cup by staff.</p>
<p>Teaching and learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At NECS K-2 will be considered a cohort and 3-4 year old pre-schoolers will be considered a cohort group. Interaction between the two cohorts will be minimised where possible. ▪ Staff movement between cohorts will be limited. If movement is required staff will implement appropriate hygiene measures such as washing or sanitising their hands upon entering and departing all learning spaces. ▪ Classes are required to engage in learning within their own classroom or in the outdoor environment. ▪ As per the COVID guidelines all HPE will occur in the outdoor environment. ▪ As per the COVID guidelines singing can occur in outdoor spaces. Thus, music lessons that involve singing may be undertaken in the outdoor amphitheatre, artificial turf etc. ▪ No assemblies will be held in term 4. RISE awards will be presented in classrooms once per week. ▪ Classes are not to join together for activities. ▪ All extracurricular activities have been cancelled or postponed to 2022 e.g. Mojo guitar lessons, soccer clinic etc. ▪ The art room will not be in use. ▪ For the remainder of 2021 the library will not to be visited by class groups and home borrowing will not occur. ▪ If a teacher sends home 'home readers' each book will be wiped down using disinfectant wipes upon the return to school. Teachers may choose to allocate children home readers online using the NECS online subscription to the PM eCollection. ▪ K-2 children will not be engaged in Visual Arts lessons with Sandra in term 4. Sandra will be part of the preschool cohort.
<p>Break times</p>	<p>K-2</p> <p>As a cohort K-2 children will access the outdoor environment as per their usual routine. Adults supervising play breaks will use physical distancing, wear masks and implement hygiene measures such as good hand washing. All staff and children will wash their hands before and after each outside play break.</p>

	<p><i>Lining up</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Emus will line up outside their classroom door after each break and to enter and exit the classroom. ➤ The Wombats will line up outside their classroom door after each break and to enter and exit the classroom. ➤ The Hoverflies will line up on the artificial turf after each break and will enter/exit the building via the main exit/entry door, ensuring that the hallway is clear before entering the shared space. ➤ The Bettongs will line up along the brick wall (usual space) after each break and will enter/exit the building via the main exit/entry door, ensuring that the hallway is clear before entering the shared space. <p>Preschool</p> <p>NECS children enrolled in preschool will have access to the preschool playground with their preschool peers. We share this space with the Communities@Work preschool group. A timetable has been created to minimise interactions between children enrolled in Communities@Work group and NECS preschool groups. Staff supervising children in the outdoor environment will wear masks, use physical distancing and implement effective hygiene measures e.g. hand washing. All staff and children will wash their hands before and after each outside play break.</p>
Before and After School Care	<p>Children accessing Before and After School Care will transition between spaces using outdoor walkways and passages when possible e.g. OSHC staff will walk children from the designated OSHC space to their classroom each morning via the preschool and K-2 playground. This will help minimise people congregating in hallways. Children will enter and exit spaces using external access doors where possible and/or follow the 'lining up' guidelines above. Children will be required to wash their hands upon entering the classroom and/or OSHC.</p>
School canteens	<p>Communities@Work provide lunch orders for children at NECS. We are working with them to establish an 'off site' process for the ordering and payment of lunch orders. As soon as Communities@Work have determined a suitable contactless ordering and payment system, we will share that information with you via email. Lunch orders are delivered to classrooms by the Communities@Work cook. This will remain the same as it minimises movement and interactions across the school.</p>

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

Remember, all adults and children aged 12 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](#).

We understand that there has been considerable change and uncertainty for our students during the pandemic, and as we transition back to school. I'd like to remind you that you and your child can book an appointment with our Telehealth Support Service on 02 6205 1559 between 9.00am and 4.30pm weekdays. With the return to school, your child will also be able to organise face to face sessions with the school psychologist.

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 and understanding as we return to face-to-face schooling.

We look forward to seeing all our students back at school.

Kind regards,

Julie Dixon

Narrabundah Early Childhood School