



Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School

11 Currie Road, Forestville, NSW 2087

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ABN No: 30 842 913 699

24 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 want to share how we are building on our experiences of the last two 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 strongly recommended for all primary students.
- Only fully vaccinated visitors essential to delivering and supporting learning or wellbeing can come on a school site. Parents and carers are permitted for Kindergarten transition to school. Logistics will be communicated directly with this cohort of parents.
- Students will be kept in cohort groups on school grounds with control measures in place for the playground, end of school pick up and canteen access.
- Continued use of good hygiene, enhanced cleaning, good air flow and ventilation in learning spaces and physical distancing practices. In addition to our regular cleaning, we have a hygienist onsite cleaning desks and high touch areas regularly.

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.



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How and when do I pick up the RAT kits?

- Packs of RAT kits will be distributed to parents or carers prior to the start of Term 1 to ensure students have the opportunity to be tested before Day 1.
- Once the RAT kits arrive at our school, communication will be sent to parents with pick up and distribution instructions.

Additional information

- School staff will not be administering the rapid antigen tests to students.
- RAT kits are to be collected from school by a parent or carer and the tests completed at home in the morning before attending school.
- Each student will receive an initial supply of rapid antigen tests (RATs) to be used twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays.
- 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 school 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 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 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 primary and secondary school staff will be required to wear masks indoors.

No vented or cloth masks should be worn.

Primary school students are strongly recommended to wear well-fitted masks indoors.

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



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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. We also have CO2 monitors checking levels in learning spaces.

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 as we start the school term together. I look forward to welcoming our wonderful students back to the classroom for 2022.

Warm regards,

Fiona Dignan
Principal