



The Launceston Preparatory School

Truth and Happiness

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Covid-19 Management Plan

This document is to be read in conjunction with the school's current

- Critical Incident Management Plan, Policy and Procedures,
- COVID-19 Risk Register, and
- Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan.

Information

The Principal will continue to review advice and provide updates to the school community from the above documents and primary information at <https://www.health.tas.gov.au/health-topics/coronavirus-covid-19> and from Public Health notifications via Independent Schools Tasmania.

Information will be distributed to members of the Board, staff, students and their families as appropriate.

Minimisation

All staff and families are reminded regularly through staff meetings and emails to stay at home if unwell and if they or a member of their family is diagnosed with COVID-19 to follow all the directives from Public Health Tasmania. Staff members must advise the school as soon as possible if they test positive so the school can respond accordingly for the health and safety of all our community. Families are advised to notify the school office for the same reason.

All staff members are encouraged to be fully vaccinated (according to the current definition) and receive booster vaccinations as they become available. Through dissemination of information via newsletters and emails, families are encouraged to take up all opportunities to vaccinate students against COVID-19.

Although the wearing of face-masks on the school site is not mandatory, The Launceston Preparatory School encourages students, staff members and visitors to wear face masks if they wish to take this measure to reduce their personal risk of catching or transmitting viral respiratory illnesses, especially where 1.5m social distancing is difficult.

When assemblies are held outside and PA equipment is used, anyone using the microphone should use hand sanitiser before and afterwards; however, masks are not required to be worn when using the microphone.

Improving ventilation is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy that can reduce the number of virus particles in the air by bringing in as much outdoor air as possible.

- If it is safe to do so, windows and doors will be kept open and door jams used where possible. This helps foster air circulation, increase outdoor airflow, decrease the potential concentration of virus particles in the air and minimises the use of the door handles. In inclement weather, air purifiers will be used in each classroom and office.
- Where practicable, classes and activities will be conducted outdoors.

In addition to the vaccination of staff and students and ventilation in learning spaces, staff and students will be encouraged and reminded to take precautionary personal hygiene measures:

- Washing hands thoroughly and regularly with soap and water, before they enter classrooms
- Avoiding touching faces
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of the elbow
- Putting tissues straight into the rubbish
- Using hand sanitizer often

There will be reminder posters throughout the school for these measures.

Hand sanitiser stations are installed close to all learning areas and office spaces, including but not limited to entry and exit points from buildings.

If cooking activities are conducted as part of students' learning, in addition to the above protocols, food preparation areas will be at a suitable height for young children to ensure distance between food and children's faces, cooking utensils and surfaces will be cleaned properly in a dishwasher or by an adult, and food will be served individually rather than from a shared plate.

The following extra cleaning measures are being implemented:

- Cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces (including toilets, sinks, taps, dispensers, door handles, railings, desks, light switches, furniture) at the end of every day.
- Any equipment that requires the use of children's mouths (e.g. balloons and straws) will not be shared and where applicable, disposed of immediately. Students using musical instruments that require blowing will be positioned away from each other. Band instruments will not be shared.

The cleaning contractors have provided certification of appropriate training for personnel and cleaning procedures to be followed.

The cleaning materials will be Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved and those recommended for use with COVID-19.

Staff members will be reminded of safety and hygiene protocols when administering first aid.

Social distancing measures are being implemented, including:

- Where practicable, encouraging students, staff and visitors to the school to maintain 1.5m from others;
- When parents and carers need to collect materials from the school during periods of off-site learning, these will be made available in areas that minimise entry to buildings and contact with others, to be collected at different times throughout the day to avoid congregation of people;
- Encouraging parents/carers to farewell their children at the gate or building entrances rather than in or near classrooms;
- The Early Learners and Kindergarten students will stay in their areas and eat outside if possible.
- Avoiding congregation in large groups except once a week for each of assemblies, Resilience sessions and buddy-reading. These meetings and activities will be conducted outdoors or in the multi-purpose hall.
- Considering the educational and emotional value of excursions, and balancing this against the possible risks associated with the excursion;
- Encouraging staff to use the kitchen facilities across all buildings and take meal breaks outside if possible;

Incident Management

Rapid-antigen tests will be provided by the school to any staff member or student who becomes symptomatic. RATs are also available to members of the school community upon request to the school office.

The Principal must be notified as soon as a staff member tests positive for COVID-19. Families are advised to do the same if a student tests positive. All families will be reminded to monitor their children for symptoms. Staff and students should stay at home if they are unwell and experiencing symptoms, and follow Public Health procedures.

If there is a positive case identified in Early Learning or Kindergarten, the Department of Education ECU will be notified by the school.

Whilst required to do so, the school will keep track of positive cases within each home group and report numbers each Friday for forwarding to Michael Shorter at IST, who will then report independent school case numbers to Public Health authorities.

Teachers and aides will support the wellbeing of students as well as their physical safety through pastoral care measures such as the careful and age-appropriate relay of information and discussions to allay children's fears, as well as facilitating social intercourse through any period of learning off-site, and pastoral care of students upon their return to school.

The Principal will support the wellbeing of staff members through pastoral care, regular debriefs, support for flexible work arrangements that do not compromise the viability of the school, access to the school's Employee Assistance Program, and dissemination of information on resources to support well-being.

Business continuity

If the school is required to close, or the Board and Principal decide it should close, every effort will be made to ensure a smooth transition. As much notice as possible will be provided to school families and staff members. The School Board will give due consideration to any changes in fee structure that are necessitated by prolonged school closure.

Every effort will be made to avoid stand-down procedures and consequent implications for staff. However, it should be recognised that the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic is rapidly changing and not always foreseeable, and the Board of the school will take all measures necessary to ensure the ongoing viability of the school.

Staff

Reduction in staff (through testing positive to COVID-19 or needing to isolate) is a significant threat to the continued operation of the school.

The following measures will be implemented to alleviate teaching staff shortages:

- Develop a pool of fully vaccinated relief teachers and aides;
- Encourage part-time teachers and aides to take on relief work if required;
- Encourage flexibility among teachers in taking non-contact time;
- Using the Co-Principals for relief teaching work where possible; and
- Combining classes and employing part-time aides for support of large groups.

It may be necessary to employ temporary office staff through an employment recruitment agency.

If staff members have to stay at home through testing positive to COVID-19, needing to isolate, or having to care for someone in their household who has COVID-19, Pandemic Leave may apply.

Any staff members who have underlying health conditions or who fall into categories of vulnerable people, will be encouraged to stay at home and personal leave entitlements will apply.

If staff members have to stay at home because of an enforced school closure, and they are well enough to work, they will be expected to help implement remote learning for students (*The LPS Learning Loop*). They will continue to be paid and the time will not be deducted from their Personal Leave.

It may be possible for the school to close for students but remain open to employees. In this case, staff members will be encouraged to maintain minimisation strategies while they implement *The LPS Learning Loop*.

Students

Our main aim is to keep as many children at school as possible and if children are well, we want them to attend. Families with students at home will be encouraged to use the Department of Education's *Learning from Home* online resources (an extensive range of student tasks that are linked to the Australian Curriculum) available at <https://www.education.tas.gov.au/learning-at-home>. There is also advice in our Homework Policy for activities that are family-friendly and relevant to the students individually.

In the event that the school is required to close, families and students will be supported through the implementation of *The LPS Learning Loop* – a combination of provision (and return) of hard copy materials, electronic learning materials through Google Classroom, a dedicated email address for correspondence between teachers and parents/students regarding work tasks, daily home group meetings via Zoom, and regular communication between school and home. Teachers will follow up with families where students appear not to be engaging with continued learning.

Not all of these learning tasks will be via online learning platforms. World Health Organisation guidelines, together with recommendations developed in Australia, suggest no more than two hours of screen time per day for children, with screen time not recommended for children under two years. The WHO also stresses that children aged one to three should have at least three hours of physical activity per day.

Review

The circumstances surrounding COVID-19 tend to evolve rapidly and courses of action may need to be developed in response to advice from the Tasmanian Government. Our school management team will need to respond to changing circumstances as they arise and review this plan in the light of new information.

As a minimum, the Principal and teaching staff will review the COVID-19 control measures regularly to assess their effectiveness and to put in place further control measures where necessary and/or desirable. These reviews will be recorded in staff meeting minutes, which General Staff are required to read each week.