

BONALBO CENTRAL SCHOOL

~Lifelong Learning for a Positive Future~



24.01.2022

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 2 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 students in Year 7 and above and strongly recommended for all primary students. Masks will be provided by the school if required.
- Only fully vaccinated visitors essential to delivering and supporting learning or wellbeing can come on a school site.
- Two parents or carers are allowed to accompany their child into school on their first day of Kindergarten or Year 7 or students starting at a new school.
- Students will be kept in their year/stage groups on school grounds, where possible, to minimise the spread of COVID-19 across cohorts.
- We will continue to use good hygiene, enhanced cleaning, good air flow and ventilation in learning spaces, as well as 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

We will distribute packs of rapid antigen test (RAT) kits for all students and staff prior to 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.

How and when do I pick up the RAT kits?

- Parents/carers are asked to **come to the school** to collect their child/ren's RAT kits. This can be done on **Friday 28 January 1:30 – 3:30** or **Monday 31 January 1:30 – 3:30**.

Additional information

- School staff will not be administering the rapid antigen tests to students.
- Tests are to be completed at home in the morning before attending school.
- Each student will receive an initial supply of 4 RATs to be used twice a week in the morning before attending school.
- 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 symptoms continue, they should stay at home and take another RAT in 24 hours or have a PCR test.
- If the second RAT or initial PCR test result is negative, the student or staff member can return to school.

What happens when a student or staff member tests positive for 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 school staff and essential visitors are required to wear masks indoors.

Secondary students are required to wear surgical masks indoor. Primary school students are strongly recommended to wear well-fitted masks indoors.

No vented or cloth masks should be worn. Students will be provided with surgical masks as a backup when needed.

Masks are also strongly encouraged in outdoor settings where you cannot physically distance. Your child can remove their mask when eating, exercising or playing a musical instrument.

For more information, refer to [Face masks in NSW](#).

Visitors on school sites and vaccinations

No parents, carers or visitors will be allowed on school site until further notice with the following exceptions:

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

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.

Air purifiers have been provided to schools as a supplementary measure to support common areas in schools and can be deployed at the principal's discretion. These purifiers could be located in areas where high levels of student and staff mixing occurs, such as staffrooms.

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 maintain 1.5 metres distance wherever possible.

Thank you again for your continued support in keeping everyone safe. I will provide further updates as more information becomes available. Please don't hesitate to contact me at the school if you have any questions or concerns.

Looking forward to a productive 2022

Kathryn Taylor
Principal

REMINDER:

Students return to school

Tuesday 1 February – Years 1 – 7, 11 & 12

Wednesday 2 February – Kindy, Years 8 - 10