

BONALBO CENTRAL SCHOOL

~*Lifelong Learning for a Positive Future*~



24.04.2022

Dear parents and carers

Welcome to the start of a brand-new term, after hopefully a fun and restful break. This letter gives you an overview of how we will continue to ensure our school remains COVID-safe through our updated Term 2 settings.

Some of the layered COVID-smart measures from last term will continue, including:

- rapid antigen testing for symptomatic students and staff
- 7-day isolation for all COVID-positive cases - report to Service NSW and the school
- vaccinations, including booster shots, are encouraged for all eligible students and their families - staff and volunteers on school grounds have vaccination guidelines
- ventilation of indoor spaces
- good hygiene practices
- enhanced cleaning.

What's new in Term 2?

As we head into the cooler months, our COVID-smart measures have been updated in consultation with NSW Health to provide additional protection for our school community.

Change to close contact isolation requirements: On 20 April the NSW Premier announced that from 6pm 22 April 2022, close contacts (including household contacts) could leave home isolation with certain restrictions. This announcement means that from Week 1 of Term 2, students and staff who are identified as close contacts will be able to attend school with the following risk mitigations in place:

- You must notify the school if your child has been identified as a close contact and are intending to return to school.
- Your child should undergo a daily rapid antigen test (RAT) and receive a negative result each morning before attending school for 5 subsequent school days as part of your personal responsibility to minimise the risk of transmission.

- Staff members and high school students must always wear a mask indoors except when eating or exercising for 5 days on their return to school. Primary school students are recommended to do the same.
- No student or staff member identified as a close contact will be permitted to participate in overnight excursions, including school camps.
- Visitors in contact with students including volunteers, allied health partners and staff providing professional learning who are close contacts will follow the same guidelines.

Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs): The department will continue to supply RAT kits to students and staff to support symptomatic testing and testing for close contacts returning to school (as mentioned above). Within the first three weeks of the term, we will provide 1 multipack of RATs per student and staff member. Once these department-supplied RATs are exhausted, please continue to access PCR tests or store-purchased RATs which are now readily available in the community.

Masks: The latest NSW Health advice recommends wearing a mask for people who have recovered from COVID-19 and recently completed their 7-day isolation period for an additional 3 days (from days 8 to 10 after receiving a positive COVID-19 result). Additionally, as outlined in the above section on close contacts, mask wearing is mandatory for staff and high school students returning to school as close contacts for 5 days and recommended for primary school students returning to school as close contacts for 5 days.

Responding to our local situation: We will continue to liaise with NSW Health and the department's Health and Safety team to ensure our COVID-smart settings keep up with the latest developments. If local conditions require it, this may mean temporarily re-introducing some additional COVID-smart settings, including mask wearing for all staff and students in Year 7 and above, directing cohorts to learn from home for short periods of time and postponing or limiting non-essential activities like excursions, indoor assemblies, and visitors to the school. We will update you at the earliest opportunity if any of these additional measures are required in Term 2.

Reducing the risk of illness this winter: It's important to note NSW Health's advice to reduce our risk of not only COVID-19, but also other illnesses that may affect our school this winter like the flu. We can all protect our loved ones and community by:

- staying home if unwell
- keeping up to date with vaccinations, including the flu vaccine, which is available from your local GP, pharmacy or Aboriginal Medical Service now - flu vaccines are free for all children aged 6 months to under 5 years, or for a small charge for those aged 5 years and older
- taking a RAT before visiting vulnerable loved ones or going to large gatherings and events

- practicing good hand hygiene by washing regularly with soap and water
- getting tested immediately for COVID-19 if you become symptomatic and isolating until you receive a negative result.

These measures will allow us to prioritise student and staff health and wellbeing while giving our learners a consistent and productive learning environment this term. You are encouraged to view the following link <https://education.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/advice-for-families> for more detailed information.

If the past 2 years have taught us anything, it's that keeping our schools open is important for our young people's mental wellbeing, especially our most vulnerable learners, where schools are the safest place to be. On behalf of our school, I want to thank you again for your ongoing support and flexibility as we adapt to each new development this term.

Regards

Kathryn Taylor
Principal

OTHER REMINDERS:

Students are encouraged to attend a local ANZAC Day service on Monday 25 April

ALL students return to school - Wednesday 27 April

YONDR Pouches will be used by all secondary students starting Wednesday 27 April

School ANZAC Day Commemorative Service Friday 29 April 10:00am in MPC