

Nathalia Primary School Newsletter

February 2nd, 2022

On behalf of all the staff at Nathalia Primary School I hope you had a wonderful time with your children over the summer break and that you are all well and ready to resume the 2022 school year. We are excited to get back to less interrupted teaching and learning this year and remain hopeful that school life will continue to improve for students and staff. The Department of Education is committed to keeping schools open as the priority for 2022, which is great news.

First four weeks of Term 1

The first four weeks of Term may present some challenges for us around positive COVID cases and Isolation periods for students and staff. Please remember that it is vitally important that if your child has any symptoms what so ever they need to stay at home. If students present at school with any symptoms, parents will be called to pick their child up because we do not want to see an outbreak.

I ask that everyone remains calm and understanding during what may potentially be a challenging start to the school year as a result of positive COVID cases both with students and staff. The staff will work together to cover any staffing shortages due to any staff positive cases that may come about.

Student and Community Safety

As a parent you can be confident that we will be doing everything that we can to keep your child/ren and your family safe. The most important thing you can do to support the school as a parent to keep everyone safe is to follow the Rapid Antigen testing program and to monitor your child for any symptoms. If your child is unwell or displaying any symptoms **do not** send them to school. You are best to take your child for a PCR test if they have symptoms because they are more sensitive.

Rapid Antigen Tests

The school will be providing each student with a Rapid Antigen Test Kit containing 5 tests to be used over week 1 and week 2 of the Term. These tests are only to be used by students and no other family members. Students will need to be tested twice per week, (Tuesday and Friday morning before school) as a safety measure to ensure that there aren't any undetected asymptomatic cases circulating in the school. Staff will also be doing the same. As mentioned above, if your child is showing symptoms you are best for them to have a PCR Test.

The Rapid Antigen Tests are no fun and I can understand how some students may get quite anxious as a result. I would really appreciate your support to make these tests occur. The advice that I have at this point is that we will be testing twice weekly up to the end of Week 4. I will advise what will be happening after that point when advice comes through from the Department of Education.

If your child has recently had COVID and completed their 7 day isolation period as a result they will continue to receive a positive test for a while from the Rapid Antigens. Although they may test positive after their 7 days isolation period they should not be infectious according to the health advice and therefore able to attend school.

Vaccination

I've heard many powerful stories about the effectiveness of vaccination protecting a lot of people from serious illness. It is rightly family choice as to whether or not your child is vaccinated but the clear health advice strongly supports vaccination for both children above 5 and adults.

Ventilation

The school has received 6 air purifiers, which will cover most classrooms to increase the safety of students and teachers when inside. Teachers will also open windows and where possible be working outside in an open air environment.

Face Masks

Students in Grade 2 and above must wear a face mask indoors at school, unless a lawful exception applies. Students must wear face masks even if vaccinated. Students are not required to wear masks outside. Parents are encouraged to provide masks for their own children as long as they are compliant with health regulations.

Physical Distancing

Staff and Students will practise physical distancing where possible. Maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres will not always be practical in the school environment and may be particularly challenging in the younger years of primary school. In these contexts, a combination of health and safety measures will be used to reduce risk.

We have had a great start to the 2022 school year with 25 new preps starting their primary school education with us in addition to several other students moving to our school community. I appreciate the overwhelming support of the families with the health and safety measures we are implementing at the school.

2022 School Captains

The School Captains for 2022 were elected by their peers last year and they were presented with their badges at assembly on Monday.

The School Captains are Molly Caldwell, Shakiah James, Charlie Creati and Mason Hatton. The Sports Captains are Harrison Halden, Brody Cooper-Tinkler and Rayan Warrun. The Environmental Captain is Olivia Barker.

We have two new leadership roles at the school. The Information Technology Captain is Rylen Lynch and the Chairperson of the Junior School Council is Lachlan Moor.

It's fantastic to see these students take on leadership roles in our school community.



Forthcoming Events:

Friday February 11th — The School Swimming Program begins. (check the dates below)

No school for prep students on Wednesdays in February

Tuesday February the 15th — School Council Meeting (on-site)

Wednesday February 16th — Meals on Wheels (Year 6 students)

Friday March 11th — Pupil Free Day (staff training / Indigenous studies)

Monday March 14th — Labour Day Public Holiday

Wednesday March 16th — Meals on Wheels (Year 6 students)

Friday April 8th — Final Day of Term 1

Swimming

The school swimming program will operate on February 11 — 25. (February 14 and 22 are the scheduled dates for the secondary colleges' swimming sports so we will not be operating our program on these dates.)

Children who are in level one will swim from 12.30—1.00pm and levels two and above will swim from 1.00—1.30pm. The children will get changed at school and walk to and from the pool for their sessions.

We have a number of children who have enrolled at the school since our 2021 swimming program and they will be assessed on day one and put into a group that reflects their swimming ability.

If your child has completed a swimming program since the school's 2021 program and you think they may have jumped a group from last year, please contact Chris and I will make the appropriate adjustment.

People will have seen in the news of late the significant numbers of death by drowning in Victoria this year. Water safety is a life skill that should be embraced by all families.

To reduce the group sizes for swimming, we are asking for interested parents to assist with the program. Parents who would like to assist with the program should contact Chris at the school as soon as possible. We will not need parent helpers on the first day of the program, February 11, as we will be testing and grouping the children.

The swimming program is a compulsory part of the curriculum and establishes life long skills for the children. If, on any day, your child is not well enough to participate in swimming, they need to be kept home from school.



Returning to school – some of your questions answered...

Q. Do I have to buy Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) for my child?

A. No – you will receive these from the school.

Q. Is it mandatory for my child to complete a RAT test twice weekly?

A. Whilst it is not mandated, it is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** that students complete a RAT twice within the school week.

Q. What happens if my child tests positive on a RAT?

A. If your child receives a positive test result at any time, you must report this through the Department of Health system ([Rapid antigen tests | Coronavirus Victoria](#)) or via the coronavirus hotline at 1800 675 398. It must also be reported to the school, either by phone or written notification. This is so the school can support you, record that your child will be absent while in 7-day isolation, and let the rest of the school community know that there has been a positive case onsite and that families should monitor for symptoms.

Q. Can my child attend school if they are identified as a close household contact?

A. No. Your child must isolate and remain at home and isolate for 7 days.

Q. Can my child engage in remote learning if they are at home isolating?

A. The school will provide learning opportunities, web links and ideas for your child to access their learning whilst at home isolating.

Q. Is my child able to attend school if they are unwell?

A. The directions on this have not changed. Children are not able to attend school if they are unwell. Please keep your child home if they are unwell and administer a RAT. Children should not be attending school if they have any symptoms.

Q. How will I know if there has been a positive case at school?

A. If there is a positive case at school a message will be sent via Compass to inform the school community. You will be informed of the year level and the date the student was in attendance at school.

- Q. What happens if my child has been in contact with a positive case whilst at school?
- A. If your child is **asymptomatic** they are able to continue to attend school and monitor for symptoms. If **symptomatic**, your child must stay home or you will be contacted to collect them (if at school). You are then advised to take a rapid antigen test, or get a PCR test if a rapid antigen testing kit is unavailable. On receipt of a negative test result, and if well enough, the student is able to return to school.
- Q. Is my child required to wear a mask?
- A. Students in Years 2 to 6 are required to wear a mask inside. They are not required to wear a mask outside. It is recommended that students in Foundation and Year 1 wear a face mask.
- Q. Will my child's teacher be wearing a mask?
- A. All staff are required to wear a mask unless they are instructing and communicating with their students.
- Q. Is hand sanitiser available for my child to use?
- A. Yes. All classrooms and learning spaces have sanitiser for students and staff to use.
- Q. Are there air purifiers in classrooms?
- A. Yes. All classrooms have access to air purifiers and windows will be open for fresh air ventilation.
- Q. What will happen if my child's teacher is away?
- A. The school will work to minimise disruptions as much as possible to the learning of all students.



Inspire Discussion



featuring...

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+ A 3KMMUD RUN FOR THE KIDS

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at Kidstown**

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