



## Back-to-school plan

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you and your families have enjoyed a relaxing holiday break.

As we prepare to welcome students back to our school next week, the Victorian Government has announced some new measures for the beginning of the 2022 school year across all Victorian schools.

### Free rapid antigen tests

Free rapid antigen tests will be available for the first four weeks of Term 1 2022.

The Department of Health is strongly recommending that students complete a test twice a week to help proactively identify any cases, reducing the risks of an outbreak.

We have been supplied with tests by the Victorian Government – you do not need to buy your own.

The Rapid Antigen Tests will be distributed in homeroom to each student on their first day at school. For Years 7, 9, 10, 11 & 12 this will be Tuesday February 1 and for Year 8 students it will most likely be Wednesday February 2 but their tests are yet to arrive at this stage.

Students and staff will do the tests at home; they only need to report their result if it is COVID-positive. They must report a COVID-positive result to:

- the school by phone on 03 93012777; this is so that we can support students, record that they will be absent while in 7-day isolation, and let the rest of the school community know there has been a positive case onsite and that they should monitor for symptoms
- the Department of Health via the [COVID-19 Positive Rapid Antigen Test Self-Reporting Form](#) or call centre on [1800 675 398](#).

Parents will be notified by the College if their daughter and/or son is considered a close contact.

Information about how to do a test and how to read RAT results, including a how-to video translated into 33 languages, is [available online](#).

### Vaccination requirements

Parents and carers must have had two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine or have a valid medical exception (with limited exceptions) to enter school buildings.



COVID-19 vaccinations for students are not required for them to attend school but vaccination for students is highly encouraged. If your child has not yet had their first dose, please try to organise this before term begins. For more information on how to book a vaccination, including important information about vaccination for children aged 5 to 11, visit the [Vaccination information for children and teenagers](#) page on the [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au) website.

### **Ventilation**

We will also make sure that classrooms are well ventilated by opening windows and doors, to minimise the risk of infection. We have received air purifiers, which will be used around the school as an added safety measure.

### **Vital COVIDSafe steps**

Hand hygiene, mask wearing, and social distancing will continue wherever possible in Term 1.

### **Staffing our school**

I know many of you will have questions about what happens if your child's teacher gets COVID-19. While there may be some disruption because of staff absences, we will be able to bring in extra teachers and other staff if we need them, and will be doing everything that we can to make sure our school stays safe and open.

### **Other information about school operations**

Feel free to contact us to clarify any concerns you may have. It is best to contact via phone on 03 93012777 or alternatively via email [principal@penola.vic.edu.au](mailto:principal@penola.vic.edu.au)

There's no doubt that this term is going to be challenging for all of us, but we are also very excited to kick off the school year and welcome back all of our students.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards

Chris Caldwell  
Principal