

Personal protective equipment guide for education settings

Effective from 28 June 2021

Use of the correct levels of personal protective equipment (PPE), in addition to other health and safety controls, will ensure all workforces in education settings are protected from infection. PPE is only one element of worker protection and it is essential that health and safety controls as outlined in the School Operations Guide are implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Table 1 outlines the required PPE for the education sector based on the current public health advice.

Table 2 provides a list of definitions and examples of application within an education setting. The provided examples are not exhaustive but are intended as a guide.

Please note that other infectious diseases requiring PPE as part of transmission-based precautions are not addressed in this document. Please refer to the [DET Infection Diseases Policy](#) for further information.

This guidance will be regularly reviewed and updated on the direction of the Department of Health, including in the event of an increase in community prevalence of COVID-19.

Table 1: DET guidance

TIER	For use <i>Staff should refer to the School Operations Guide (login required) for current face covering requirements in Victoria</i>	 Hand hygiene	 Disposable gloves	 Plastic apron	 Disposable gown	 Surgical mask	 P2 / N95 respirator	 Eye protection (Goggles or face shield)
Tier 0 – Standard precautions	Currently not applicable based on public health advice.	✓	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	✗	As per standard precautions
Tier 1 – COVID-19 standard precautions	While providing clinical care or assisting with health care needs (see Table 2) in an education setting on an individual not displaying COVID-19 symptoms .	✓	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	✓	✗	As per standard precautions

TIER	<p style="text-align: center;">For use</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Staff should refer to the School Operations Guide (login required) for current face covering requirements in Victoria</i></p>	 Hand hygiene	 Disposable gloves	 Plastic apron	 Disposable gown	 Surgical mask	 P2 / N95 respirator	 Eye protection (Goggles or face shield)
Tier 2 – Droplet and contact precautions - COVID-19 symptoms present	<p>Care of and exposure to individuals deemed low-risk suspected cases of COVID-19 (see Table 2) - excluding where there is a risk of aerosol generating behaviours or an aerosol generating procedure needs to be performed.</p> <p><i>Note: Students with COVID-19 symptoms must be isolated while awaiting collection by a parent or carer.</i></p>	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓ Face shield preferred
Tier 3 – Airborne and contact precautions (including aerosol generating procedures and behaviours) - COVID-19 symptoms present	<p>Care of and exposure to individuals deemed to be high-risk suspected cases of COVID-19 (see Table 2).</p> <p>Care of and exposure to individuals deemed to be low or high-risk suspected cases of COVID-19 where there is a risk of aerosol generating behaviours (AGB) or an aerosol generating procedure (AGP) needs to be performed.</p> <p><i>Note: Students with COVID-19 symptoms must be isolated while awaiting collection by a parent or carer. Only essential AGPs that support emergency care should be undertaken. All other AGPs should be postponed until the child or young person is collected by their parent/carer.</i></p>	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓ Face shield preferred

Table 2: Definitions with examples and potential applications

Table 2 provides definitions of key terms used within Table 1.

Examples of how these are intended to be applied are provided. It is intended that the examples will inform local application.

<p>Confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)</p>	<p>1. A person who tests positive to a validated SARS-CoV-2 test.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person contacted by public health authorities or health professional notifying them of a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test result. • Have not yet been informed by public health that they have completed the required isolation period.
<p>High-risk suspected cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ A person in quarantine for any reason (including: being a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) or a returned traveller from overseas or a relevant interstate area with outbreaks (as defined by public health in the last 14 days) with or without a compatible clinical illness. This group is also referred to as “at-risk”. ➢ A person with a compatible clinical illness who meets one or more of the following epidemiological risk factors in the 14 days prior to illness onset: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact with a confirmed case or an exposure site as defined by public health ○ Was employed in an area where there is an increased risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hotel quarantine workers or any workers at ports of entry - aged care workers/ healthcare workers working in a location where there are active outbreaks - other high-risk industries (such as abattoirs) where there are known cases or high levels of community transmission ○ Lived in or visited a geographically localised area at higher risk as determined by public health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a close contact of a confirmed case. • Returned from international travel in the past 14 days. • A person with symptoms consistent with coronavirus (COVID-19) who lives in an area where there are known coronavirus (COVID-19) cases or outbreaks. • A healthcare worker with symptoms consistent with coronavirus (COVID-19) who has had direct contact or exposure with a coronavirus (COVID-19) patient in the last 14 days.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has been released from a quarantine facility 	
Low-risk suspected cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have symptoms that could be consistent with coronavirus (COVID-19) (for example, cough, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath or runny nose) but no epidemiological risk factors as listed in the high-risk definition. <p><i>Where a student's history cannot be obtained, they should be considered as a low-risk suspected case until further screening information can be obtained, at which point appropriate changes to PPE implemented.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person who has acute respiratory infection symptoms but no epidemiological risk factors for coronavirus (COVID-19). • An unconscious person who presents to an emergency department. • An unconscious person in the community.
Negative coronavirus (COVID-19) cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A person who tests negative to a validated SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test. 2. A person who is a cleared case. 3. A person who screens negative and/or has no clinical or epidemiological risk factors for coronavirus (COVID-19). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person who has been tested and has been notified that the test is negative. • A person without compatible symptoms or potential exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in the previous 14 days, who has been screened as negative for coronavirus (COVID-19).
Isolated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A person who is isolated is confined to their room alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person located in a healthcare facility single room with own bathroom. • A single person in a home (or area of a home).
Clinical care in education settings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performing a clinical procedure with risk of exposure to blood and other body fluids or substances, including provision of first aid, responding to gastroenteritis. 2. Attending to routine health care needs. 	<p>Examples of clinical procedures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wound management. • Enteral (tube) feeding. • Tracheostomy care and suctioning (also see aerosol generating procedures).
Aerosol generating procedures (AGP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procedures performed on patients are more likely to generate higher concentrations of infectious respiratory aerosols. 	<p>Examples of AGPs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-invasive ventilation (e.g. BiPAP, CPAP) • high flow nasal oxygen therapy

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)• suctioning• nebuliser use.
Aerosol generating behaviours (AGB)	1. Behaviours that are more likely to generate higher concentrations of infectious respiratory aerosols.	Examples of AGBs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent and/or severe coughing.• Screaming and shouting.• Spitting.