



Thursday 27 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

A warm welcome to Term One at Avalon Public School in 2022. We are certainly looking forward to providing a touch of 'normality' with a return to school next week.

School commences for all students in Years 1-6 next Tuesday 1 February.

As in previous years, students will remain in classes with their 2021 class group until all Kindergarten students complete their Best Start Assessments and commence school on Friday 4 February. Once we are sure of our enrolment numbers after the Kindy arrival, we anticipate going into our new class structures around midday on 4 February.

A reminder that students in Years 3-6 are attending the School Swimming Carnival all day on Thursday 3 February and need to arrive at school at 7.45 am for a prompt departure at 8:00 am. Unfortunately, parents and carers are not permitted to attend this year's event.

Term 1 2022 COVID protocol updates and school arrangements

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.
- To better manage our student groups and their movement around the school, students will be kept in their **stage cohort groups** when outside on school grounds, along with staggered pick-ups and playground usage to minimise the spread of COVID-19 across cohorts. For your information: Stage 1 cohort - Yr 1 & Yr 2; Stage 2 cohort - Yr 3 & Yr 4; Stage 3 cohort - Yr 5 & Yr 6. Kindergarten will form their own Early Stage 1 cohort.
- 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 at 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 \(TGA\) External link](#) 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?

- Packs of RAT kits will be available for families to pick up on **Monday 31 January from 9.30am-12pm**
- We have sufficient RATs for every student – no student will miss out.
- Packs will contain 4 RATs per student in your family.
- They will be packaged and organised in **alphabetical order by surname**.
- Pickup is from four trestle tables arranged to the south of the main school gate on **Old Barrejoey Road**.
- Tables will be labelled A-F, G-L, M-S, T-Z
- Please consider your pickup time carefully to avoid congestion on the footpath.
- Parents and carers should leave the pick-up location immediately after picking up their packs of RAT kits.

What if I cannot pick up the RAT kits in this timeframe?

- Not to worry, uncollected kits of RAT tests will be given to the eldest child in each family to take home on the first day that they attend school.
- Please do not come into the school to collect your kits unless requested to do so by the office.

To further reduce potential congestion outside the school, **Kindergarten parents without older children in the school** will pick up their RAT test kits at reception when they sign in for their Best Start assessment. You do not need to collect on Monday 31 January.

Additional information

- School staff will not be administering the rapid antigen tests to students.
- RAT kits should be collected from school by a parent or carer and the tests 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.
- At Avalon, our recommended testing days will be Tuesday and Thursday – test on a day starting with T!
- If a student or staff member receives a **positive** RAT result, they need to:
 - record the positive RAT result through the [Service NSW website](#)^{External link} or [Service NSW app](#)^{External link}
 - notify the school of the positive RAT or PCR result as soon as possible
 - follow [NSW Health advice](#)^{External link} 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 and they are displaying no symptoms OR they are diagnosed as another condition such as hayfever, 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 primary and secondary school staff will be required to wear masks indoors.

No vented or cloth masks should be worn. If required surgical masks will be available at schools.

Primary school students are strongly recommended to wear well-fitted masks indoors.

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](#) [External link](#).

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 students starting at a new school.
- Volunteers or staff operating uniform shops and canteens must be fully vaccinated.
- 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](#) [External link](#) to book an appointment near you.

Vaccinations are not mandatory for students. However, anyone eligible (currently anyone aged 5 and over) is encouraged to get vaccinated.

If a vaccination program is implemented for students in NSW public schools, informed consent will be sought from the child's parents or carers before any vaccine is administered.

For information about vaccine consent for parents and guardians, refer to NSW Health's [Consent for COVID-19 vaccination factsheet](#).

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 will be located in areas where high levels of student and staff mixing occurs, such as staffrooms, internal canteens, student centres and music rooms.

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.

Drop off arrangements

We will keep the same drop off procedures that were established in 2021, as they worked exceptionally well and the students from Year 1 to Year 6 are very familiar with the routine. Staff will be on duty at each gate to greet students and provide any support needed.

Please drop your child at the school gate, or at the kiss and drop zone, and allow them to walk into school by themselves, with a sibling, or a school friend. This is invaluable for their independence and increased self-confidence.

Next week (actually Week 2, as Week 1 is this week, starting for staff on Friday 28 January), students arriving at school slightly BEFORE 8:55am will go to the following areas:

Year 1 2022 and Year 2 2022 will sit in the K-2 asphalt playground

Years 3-6 2022 will sit in designated, marked stage areas in the primary playground.

In a welcome return to more open play before school, **students arriving after 8:55 am** will play in the playgrounds as follows:

K-2 asphalt playground: Years 1 & 2 2022

Primary asphalt playground areas: Years 3 & 4 2022

Grass areas: Years 5 & 6 2022

Kindergarten 2022 commencing school on Friday 4 February, Week 2 will go directly to their classrooms.

Pickup arrangements

Under the current COVID guidelines, pickup will need to remain the same as last year. **3-6 students will finish school at normal time - 3.25pm.**

To safely move the **K-2 students** off the premises, to allow safe parent pickup of younger students, and to ensure social distancing of parents around the school perimeter, we will still need to move K-2 students to the park across from the school on Old Barrenjoey Road before school finishes.

K-2 students will be walked across the road by their class teachers beginning at 3.20pm in time for a 3.25pm pickup.

Those **K-2 students with older siblings will remain in the K-2 playground** (under staff supervision) to be picked up by their 3-6 brother or sister at 3.25pm.

Please speak with your child/ren about these changes and make any necessary arrangements for pick up/meeting points with your family before next Tuesday.

Kindy 2022 parents please note: on Friday of Week 2 (4 February) and all of Week 3 & 4, Kindergarten students will finish earlier at 2:45pm. They will be walked across to the park on Old Barrenjoey Rd by their teachers at 2:45pm. From Week 5, Kindy 2022 will finish school at 3:25pm in line with the Year 1 & 2 routine above.

Traffic/parking

Families are encouraged to utilise the Kiss and Ride Zones. Remember we must keep the flow going, if the zone is occupied when you arrive, please drive around the block.

Please avoid gathering in close proximity at our gates and in the park opposite school. While waiting, please observe NSW Health social distancing guidelines. Please do not gather in groups and stay 1.5m away from others.

Best Start Drop Off

For Kindy parents/carers attending for a Best Start assessment with your child between Tuesday 1 Feb and Thursday 3 Feb, please register at the office on arrival.

Mask wearing is required. You will also be able to collect four RAT tests for your Kindy child at this time from reception (if you do not have older children at our school).

School bus services will be operating as usual on all school days.

If you have any questions about the above arrangements, our office staff will be happy to assist you. Our office reopens on Friday 28 January from 8:00am to 3:45pm. Please call 9973 1439 or email avalon-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Thanks again for your great support and we look forward to a terrific 2022 for all our Avalon families.

Kind regards,

Andy Rankin
Principal
Avalon Public School