



Education

Helensburgh Public School

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31 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to a new school year, an exciting time as our students start or return to their school journey. 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.

Key Dates

School Development Days – Friday, 28 January and Monday, 31 January. Staff will be involved in class planning and there will be no supervision of students on these days.

Years 1-6 First Day of School – Tuesday, 1 February. When students arrive in the morning, there will be teachers at the gate directing students to their morning play areas. Like last year, students will be playing in stage cohorts. The morning play areas will be: Years 1 and 2 - top oval, Years 3 and 4 – basketball court and asphalt play area and Years 5 and 6 – bottom oval.

Welcome to the new families starting at our school. There will be teachers at the Fletcher and Lukin Street gates who will direct new parents and students to the COLA near the administration block where your child's teacher will be waiting to welcome you.

Kindergarten Best Start Dates – Tuesday, 1 February to Thursday, 3 February. Each family has been provided with a date and time for their child's Best Start Assessment. Mrs Badham, Early Stage 1 Assistant Principal, has sent out information to families. If you have any further questions, please make contact with Mrs Badham. All Kindergarten students will attend school on Friday, 4 February.

New Teachers

We have new permanent members of staff who were appointed in 2021 and will be starting this year. They are: Tanaya Webb, Matt McCoy and Kasandra James. Also, we have several temporary classroom teachers working either in a full-time or part-time capacity. They are: Courtney Smith, Shannon Taylor, Jessica Keir, Annie Austin, Prissilla Rademakers, Roz Potter and Laura Tangye. We welcome all our new staff members.

Drop off and Pick Up Locations

Morning Drop Off: Students can enter the Lukin or Fletcher Street gates from 8:25 am.

Afternoon Pick Up: Kindergarten students will be picked up from the Postman's Track gate behind the kindergarten classrooms from 2:50pm for the first week, Years 1 and 2 – Lukin Street gate (Fun 4 U) Years 3 and 4 bottom oval gate (Junction Street).

Older students are to go to the gate of their youngest sibling. Years 5 and 6 students who walk or ride home need to exit the same gate they entered from in the morning.

Riding a Bike to School

As a reminder, only Year 5 and 6 students are allowed to ride their bike to school. They must wear a helmet.

Road Safety

All parents and students should use the pedestrian crossing on Parkes Street if it is on their way home. Unfortunately, some parents and students crossed at the corner of Junction and Parkes Street, where it is unsafe. For your child's safety if applicable, use the pedestrian crossing.

Please remember to park legally. Do not park in the cul de sac on Lukin Street or the grassed area next to this cul de sac. There have been several near misses due to illegal parking last year.

COVID Safety Measures

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.
- Up to 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.
- Students will be kept in their year groups on school grounds, with staggered drop-off and pick-ups, break times, playground and canteen access to minimise the spread of COVID-19 across cohorts.
- 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 \(TGA\) Exte HYPERLINK "https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia"nal link](https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia) 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?

Parents and carers can pick up RAT kits on **Monday, 31 January** at the following times and locations. It is important parents follow the timetable to avoid congestion and leave after collection. **You are encouraged for your child to do the first RAT test on Monday before the first day of school and then on Wednesday.**

Kindergarten parents should also collect the RAT kits on Monday.

Time	Student Surname	Location
9-12	A- E	Outside the Front Gate at Fletcher Street
9-12	F-J	Lukin Street Gate near Fun 4 U
12-3	K- P	Outside the Front Gate at Fletcher Street
12-3	N- Z	Lukin Street Gate near Fun 4 U

- School staff will not be administering 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. The school suggests this to be conducted on **Monday and Wednesdays**.

- If a student or staff member receives a **positive** RAT result, they need to: record the positive RAT result through the [Service HYPERLINK "https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/register-positive-rat-test-result"](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/register-positive-rat-test-result) or [SW HYPERLINK "https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/register-positive-rat-test-result"](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/register-positive-rat-test-result) website [External HYPERLINK "https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/register-positive-rat-test-result"](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/register-positive-rat-test-result) link or [Service NSW HYPERLINK "https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/service-nsw-mobile-app"](https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/service-nsw-mobile-app) app [External HYPERLINK "https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/service-nsw-mobile-app"](https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/service-nsw-mobile-app) link
- notify the school of the positive RAT or PCR result as soon as possible
- follow [NSW Health HYPERLINK "https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/self-isolation-and-testing.aspx"](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/self-isolation-and-testing.aspx) [h HYPERLINK "https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/self-isolation-and-testing.aspx"](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/self-isolation-and-testing.aspx) [advice External HYPERLINK "https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/self-isolation-and-testing.aspx"](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/self-isolation-and-testing.aspx) link to isolate for 7 days.
- It is recommended that staff and students that return to school after recovering from COVID-19 do not participate in rapid antigen test surveillance for 28 days (four weeks after recovery) following release from self-isolation. This is due to NSW Health advice that people who have recovered from COVID-19 have a low risk of contracting it again in the following 28 days. After 28 days (from week five after recovery) staff and students may resume participation in RAT surveillance.

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.
- In NSW, positive COVID-19 cases are provided a Medical Clearance Notice after 7 days and allowed to leave self-isolation as long as they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

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](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/face-masks) [HYPERLINK "https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/face-masks"NSWExternal HYPERLINK "https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/face-masks" link.](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/face-masks)

Visitors on school sites and vaccinations

No parents, carers or visitors will be allowed on school site until further notice with the following exceptions:

- Up to 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](https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/) [HYPERLINK "https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/"clinicExternal HYPERLINK "https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/" link](https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/) to book an appointment near you.

Other key measures

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 could 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.

Student Health

We will be sending out individual health care plans for parents and carers to complete who have a child with individual health care needs e.g. allergies, anaphylaxis and severe asthma. We would appreciate it if these forms were updated and returned as soon as possible. If your child has developed a serious health condition, please inform the school.

Playground Areas

Students will be playing in stage cohorts. Stage 2 and 3 will take turns at lunch and recess to play on either the asphalt area outside the stage 2 classrooms or the bottom oval. Kindergarten and Stage 1 will take turns at lunch and recess to play either on the top oval or the asphalt area outside the kindergarten classrooms. This will operate the same as last year.

Toilets

Throughout the day, students will have scheduled toilet breaks to try and avoid different stage cohorts mixing. However, students can go to the toilet any time during class.

Canteen and Uniform Orders

Canteen orders are online only and there will be no over-the-counter service. Lunch orders will be collected by students and delivered to the class at the beginning of lunchtime.

If you would like to purchase your child's uniform, please make an order online and it will be sent home with your child.

Seesaw and Continuity of Learning

In the first week of school, your child's teacher will send information about how you can join Seesaw. This will be a fantastic way for you to connect with your child's learning.

In the event your child has to isolate as they are household contact but have no symptoms, teachers will provide work through the Department of Education's Learning from Home Hub.

If your child is isolating and feeling sick, there will be no set learning provided.

Sport

All students will be doing sport every Friday this year. Students are expected to wear their sport uniform including joggers.

School Uniform

It is especially important that students wear full school uniform. This includes wearing school hats and black shoes. If your child has misplaced their hat, please send in a note so that we are aware of your situation. If your child has forgotten their hat, they will be asked to play in the shade.

Voluntary School Contribution

It would be appreciated if you could provide a voluntary school contribution. Funds raised from voluntary school contributions will go towards purchasing classroom resources such as classroom readers and online subscriptions such as Maths Online.

If you have more than one child at the school, it would be expected a family would contribute \$80. If you have one child, it would be expected a contribution of \$50.

Attendance

It is important for your child's education that they regularly attend school. Please ensure that your child arrives at school before 8:55am and if your child arrives late, please ensure that you call the school to provide a reason.

Where possible, please plan family holidays during school holiday times. If you are thinking of going on a holiday during school time, an application of extended leave needs to be completed and sent to the school. The principal has the right to decline the application if it is not in the best interests of the student's learning.

School Communication

If you need to contact the school or your teacher, please use the school email address. This will be checked during school hours.

Seesaw is to be used to share student learning and is not meant for parent/teacher communication. If you have any concerns about your child, please email the school and this email will be passed onto your child's teacher.

Regards,

Ewen Neild
Principal