

COVID-19 Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan)

KEY CHANGES IN THIS DOCUMENT ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW

This **COVID-19 Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan)** applies to all Victorian government schools, and outlines key health, safety, and wellbeing hazards that schools should plan for. It links to the strategies described in the [School Operations Guide](#) and supports schools to plan for and implement the key health and safety controls in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes implementing the guidance issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, and accessing the central and regional supports available to reduce transmission risk and to support school staff, students and the school community to be well and COVIDsafe. The latest Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for schools is available [here](#).

The [School Operations Guide provides more detailed advice and guidance about these controls and supports](#), and should be read together with this COVID-19 Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan). The [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice for schools](#) is evolving over time and therefore the [OHS guidance and supports](#) will be continually reviewed and updated as required.

Principals must consult with their local health and safety representative(s) and health and safety committee(s) (if applicable) to implement the recommended controls to the maximum extent reasonably practicable. In the absence of a school health and safety committee (HSC) or health and safety representative (HSR), consultation must occur with school staff. Contact your [Regional OHS Support Officer](#) for assistance with local consultation if required. A [draft agenda](#) has been developed for HSC meetings to assist in facilitating consultation and identifying and managing risks.

COVIDSafe Roles and Responsibilities Posters must be displayed on the school's OHS noticeboard detailing the shared responsibility of health and safety in schools, and the health and safety measures that should be applied in schools. Posters are available in the [communications support pack](#).

Your local [Regional OHS Support Officers](#) and the Department's [OHS Advisory Service](#) continue to be available to provide support to your school, including in implementing the latest guidance, tailoring this COVID-19 Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan) to your setting, for suggestions on establishing effective controls, or assist with access to supports, advice and resources.

The DET COVID-19 hotline ([1800 338 663](tel:1800338663)) is available for all Department staff, contractors and parents 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) for any questions, queries or concerns. Employees may also access the guidance at [COVID-19 Advice Line - FAQs](#).

Employees are encouraged to use [eduSafe Plus](#) to report hazards, incidents and mental and physical injuries to ensure effective and timely resolution of OHS issues, as well as escalation of further supports when required. eduSafe Plus reports are being monitored to ensure that support can be provided.

If you or your family need support, personalised over-the-phone or video counselling is available 24/7 through the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#). This service is available to all school staff and their immediate families (aged 18 years and over). Staff can book by calling [1300 361 008](tel:1300361008) or by using the live chat function on the [Lifeworks' Australia website](#). Other mental health supports are available [here](#), including supports tailored to respond to COVID-19 and remote working risks.

This plan covers four key areas of risk ('hazard types'):

- Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control)
- Work-Related Violence
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Working Alone, in isolation or from Home.

Hazard Type	Hazard Description	Recommended Controls	Examples of practical solutions
<p>Infectious Disease (Infection Prevention and Control)</p>	<p>Staff, students, and others on-site may come into contact with an individual currently unaware that they have coronavirus (COVID-19), and subsequently contract the virus from them.</p>	<p><i>Infection prevention and control</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the School Operations Guide for advice on supporting COVIDSafe behaviours and activities on school premises. • Provide information, training, and instruction on health hygiene to staff and students. • Refer to the current School Operations Guide and guidance for wearing face masks in schools (inclusive of staff, students and visitors), as well as DHHS guidance on face masks. • Ensure staff complete the School infection prevention and control during coronavirus (COVID-19) LearnED module. • Contact the OHS Advisory Service for more detailed risk assessments if 	<p><i>Infection prevention and control</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate the latest health advice and requirements to parents (in multiple languages if appropriate), staff and students (where appropriate). • Consult with all staff, including the elected HSR and/or HSC (if applicable) about the implementation of controls. • Monitor staff and student face mask compliance and COVIDSafe practices at school. • Use teaching strategies and communications resources to remind staff and students to wear face masks (in accordance with the guidance in the current School Operations Guide) and to practice good hand hygiene. • Discuss implementation processes for on-site service provision, including

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		<p>required to support to students with complex needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the current School Operations Guide for guidance on use of shared equipment and other school activities (e.g. playgrounds and shared resources). Refer to ChemWatch (login required) to access hand sanitiser safety data sheet. Ensure adequate supervision and safe storage of supplies. 	<p>planning for staggering recesses and lunchtimes and use of alternate spaces to increase physical distancing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the availability of hygiene products throughout the school and reorder supplies through COS as needed. Conduct regular inspections of the school site, using this COVID-19 Safety Management Plan and the School Operations Guide, to check that recommended risk controls are implemented and working effectively, including displaying on-site signage. Encourage students, staff and contractors/visitors to bring their own face mask, and also check to ensure there are enough single-use face masks available for staff, students or visitors who do not have their own or for masks that get damaged/soiled. Eliminate or minimise the necessity of using shared equipment at this time. Such items may include shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, and musical instruments. If used, strict hand

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		<p>QR codes and record keeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Service Victoria QR Code check in system is mandatory to record all visitors entering buildings on the school site (including contractors, external Department staff, building and maintenance staff and parents who enter school buildings). QR code check ins are not required to be used by school staff or students, or by parents who are on site for drop off or pick up, but do not enter school buildings. Schools can use existing mechanisms such as student attendance records and staffing rosters to record this information. Visitor sign-in procedures must collect the following information: the person's first name and surname, a contact phone number, the date and time the person attended the school and the 	<p>hygiene should be followed before and after use. Risk can be further minimised with users wiping down items where appropriate, for example using a disinfectant/detergent wipe or cloth.</p> <p>QR codes and record keeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display QR codes prominently around the school site, including at gates, entryways, reception and outside buildings. QR codes are also required to be displayed on playgrounds available for community use. Communicate with the school community and any visitors or contractors about QR code check in requirements. Ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that visitors and contractors follow the QR code and visitor sign in requirements.

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		<p>areas within the buildings that the person attended (attendance records for capital works should be managed by the principal contractor). Recording the purpose of the visit should continue to be collected for legal and regulatory obligations.</p> <p>Limit visitors to school grounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors to school grounds should be limited to essential school services and operations. Guidance to support schools about which visits are 'essential' is in the School Operations Guide. <p>Create COVIDSafe spaces and reduce mixing of staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the advice in the School Operations Guide with respect to promoting outdoor air ventilation and use of outdoor spaces. • Carry out an assessment of spaces within the school to determine areas of greater or lesser ventilation options. • Refer to the advice in the School Operations Guide in relation to reducing 	<p>Limit visitors to school grounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential visitors to school grounds must comply with density limits, face mask requirements, QR code check-ins and practise good hand hygiene. <p>Create COVIDSafe spaces and reduce mixing of staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are strongly encouraged to increase outdoor air ventilation whenever possible and to maximise the use of outdoor learning areas or environments. This may mean taking lessons outside, where possible, and keeping windows and doors open (weather permitting). • Refer to the School Operations Guide in relation to the density limit

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		<p>cohort mixing and creating workforce bubbles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the advice in the School Operations Guide to reduce the need for staff to work across multiple sites. • Physical distancing should be encouraged where possible, and density limits applied in staff areas such as staff lunchrooms and areas accessible by the public, in accordance with the current School Operations Guide. 	<p>requirements for staff areas such as lunchrooms and staff offices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display density signage prominently in required areas, which indicates the maximum number of members of people that may be present in the space at a single time. Posters are available in the communication support pack. • Space out staff workstations as much as possible and limit the number of staff in offices according to density requirements. This might mean re-locating some staff workstations temporarily to other spaces (such as the library or unused classrooms). • School principals should ensure appropriate cleaning requirements are in place, including the timing of any additional professional cleaning services required. • Consider adjusting how staff and students interact within the built environment to reduce contact with certain surfaces. For example, a simple measure such as keeping a door open

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		<p>Events/activities meetings and assemblies on school premises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School events, gatherings, assemblies, and non-essential meetings should be deferred or held remotely. <p>Use of school facilities by community and sport groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of school facilities by community and sport groups is not permitted, the exception being indoor and outdoor markets to obtain food and groceries. Please see the School Operations Guide for advice and requirements for hosting markets on school sites. 	<p>will reduce the need for multiple people to touch the door handle.</p> <p>Events/activities meetings and assemblies on school premises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools must refer to current School Operations Guide advice for permitted events/activities and excursions and interschool sport as guidance is subject to change based on restrictions in Metropolitan and Regional Victoria. <p>Use of school facilities by community and sport groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see the School Operations Guide for advice and requirements for hosting markets on school sites.

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		<p>Camps and excursions</p> <p>Camps and excursions for Victorian schools cannot take place at this time.</p> <p>PPE for staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For information and training relating to the correct use of PPE, school staff should refer to the guidance for staff on the use of PPE in education settings. Staff are also encouraged to watch the education PPE Donning and Doffing education video. <p>Vaccinations and Vaccination Champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination roll-out, all school staff and all students who are eligible can receive a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine. 	<p>Camps and excursions</p> <p>Camps and excursions for Victorian schools cannot take place at this time.</p> <p>PPE for staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff should refer to the Department guidance for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in education to determine when additional PPE is required and for information on the correct and safe use of PPE. Schools should make sure they have appropriate PPE supply available. Refer to personal hygiene products, including sourcing and procurement tips for high demand items. <p>Vaccinations and Vaccination Champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with your staff about vaccine eligibility. Encourage staff to become Vaccination Champions for your school. Exercise maximum flexibility to enable staff to attend vaccination

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vaccination Champion program will train and support trusted staff in your school community to share credible information about the vaccines with staff, students and parents/carers. • These staff members will be trained to help their school community understand the importance of COVID-19 vaccines and well as how to access them, helping to keep schools safe by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing vaccine confidence • increasing uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations • supporting any vaccine related activities at your school. <p>Further information is available here: Nominate your school's Vaccine Champion</p> <p>Testing Requirements</p> <p>School staff moving between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria are required to undertake twice weekly COVID-19 PCR testing to help keep our schools safe.</p>	<p>appointments including, where possible, during the normal work day.</p> <p>Testing Requirements</p> <p>Testing is an important health and safety measure. While the testing obligations under the CHO directions fall on staff members in their individual capacity, schools have an important role in working with staff who cross boundaries of</p>

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		<p>This includes both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff who live in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA) who work in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA; and • Staff who live in metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Shepparton LGA who work in regional Victoria (excluding Greater Shepparton LGA). • Staff do not need to isolate following their test and can attend work while waiting for their test result. However, if any staff present symptoms of COVID-19 they should not attend on site but get tested and isolate immediately. <p>Requirements for VCE and essential assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the requirements and COVIDSafe settings for VCE and essential assessments as set out in the School Operations Guide. 	<p>restricted areas to ensure that schools remain safe and healthy working environments. Schools should consider whether there are reasonably practicable steps that should be taken, based on their own staffing profiles, to assist staff meeting their testing obligations under the restrictions. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with staff about testing requirements; • Requesting information about employees' testing; • If appropriate in the circumstances, or if concerned about non-compliance by staff, giving directions to employees not to attend work unless evidence of testing is produced.
	<p>Staff and students may contract disease by touching surfaces contaminated with coronavirus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the advice with respect to environmental cleaning services and access to cleaning supplies and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning arrangements should be adjusted to each school's requirements while continuing to be in line with

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	(COVID-19), following exposure from someone with the virus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools should refer to the COVIDSafe routine cleaning guidelines for advice on cleaning requirements. 	<p>the COVIDSafe Routine Cleaning Guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate or minimise using shared equipment at this time. Such items may include shared computers, class sets of teaching and learning materials, and musical instruments. If used, strict hand hygiene should be followed before and after use. Risk can be further minimised with users wiping down items where appropriate, for example using a disinfectant/detergent wipe or cloth. Consider adjusting how staff and students interact within the built environment to reduce contact with certain surfaces. For example, a simple measure such as keeping a door open will reduce the need for multiple people to touch the door handle. For further advice or support with cleaning requirements, schools should contact the Department at cleaning@education.vic.gov.au.
	Vulnerable workforce or students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the advice in the School Operations Guide in relation to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure consultation with your elected health and safety representative and

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		<p>supports available to assist schools to support medically vulnerable staff and students, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Those staff members who may be medically vulnerable, or living with or caring for elderly or chronically ill relatives; and ○ Preparation of an up-to-date Student Health Support Plan and accompanying condition-specific health management plan for any students that may be medically vulnerable. 	<p>staff and incorporate into workforce planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the guidance in the School Operations Guide to support medically vulnerable staff and students.
	<p>A suspected case may occur among staff and students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the managing suspected cases advice in the School Operations Guide. • Also see the advice in the Operations Guide regarding management of unwell students and staff. • Contact the Department by calling 1800 126 126 to report an IRIS incident alert if there is a suspected case of COVID-19 in a school. Schools do not need to take further action until directed to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate messages to the school community and staff which promote the message that the most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is to ensure that any unwell staff, parents / carers and students remain at home and get tested, even with the mildest of symptoms, and that people who are unwell do not attend school sites. • Refer to the communication support pack for resources to communicate with your school community.

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	<p>A confirmed case (or a close contact of a confirmed case) may occur among staff, students, or the school community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the managing of a confirmed case advice in the School Operations Guide. Refer to monitoring of close contacts in schools advice in the School Operations Guide. Also see the advice in the Operations Guide regarding management of unwell students and staff. Contact the Department by calling 1800 126 126 to report an IRIS incident alert if a student or staff member tests positive to COVID-19. Schools do not need to take further action until directed to do so. The Department will notify WorkSafe on behalf of the affected school. WorkSafe may be in contact with the affected school to ensure the school is following the health and safety guidance outlined in this document and has implemented their COVID-19 Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in contact with affected staff or families remotely to provide wellbeing support. Refer to the communications support pack for resources to communicate with your school community. Stay in contact with affected staff or families remotely to offer wellbeing support.

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		<p>Management Plan. Please contact the OHS Advisory Service (1300 074 715) for support in managing occupational health and safety matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to the Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines for advice on cleaning and disinfection when a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified in a Victorian Government School. The Department will support schools with this process. 	
	<p>Non-Department contractors and their staff may need to enter school grounds to carry out work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the advice in the School Operations Guide regarding visitors and contractors attending school sites. • QR code check ins are required to be used by all visitors on school site including contractors, external Department staff and building and maintenance staff). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools should ensure contractors (such as Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs)) receive appropriate induction, including in relation to the record keeping requirements and QR code requirements on site. • Ensure, so far as is reasonable practicable, that QR Code and sign in requirements are followed by all contractors and visitors attending site (including parents entering a school building), by displaying QR codes prominently and communicating with contractors about the requirements.

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<p>Working Alone, in Isolation or from Home*</p>	<p>The home work environment may cause injury (noise, lighting, thermal comfort, and slips, trips and falls).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to working alone, in isolation or from home policy and procedure. • Refer to OHS guidance for working from home. • Refer to ergonomic advice. • Refer to tips for working from home safely and productively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable reasonable access to available school equipment. • Proactively plan with staff who have a known pre-existing injury. • Establish protocols for regular check-ins with staff. • Encourage staff to access the Working from Home Guide.
	<p>Staff may suffer musculoskeletal disorders by adopting static postures while using laptops, portable devices or personal computers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to regularly stretch and move during the day. • Consult with staff to identify possible adjustments to work/tasks/timetable to reduce static postures and prolonged desk / screen time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, encourage and allow time for keeping active while working from home – i.e. times when staff are encouraged to stand up and stretch, or take a short break from their workstations. • This many include ending meetings five minutes early to stretch and move, starting meetings or lessons with a stretch session, timetabling movement breaks and (where possible) having phone calls instead of virtual meetings to reduce screen time and eye strain. • Proactively plan with staff who have a known pre-existing injury.

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	Increased isolation (on-site and/or at home) may increase risk of injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice and support (including ergonomic advice via videoconference) is available to all staff via the OHS Advisory Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the OHS advice and support (including EAP and wellbeing webinars) to staff. <u>Other mental health supports are available here.</u> Establish protocols for regular check-ins with staff.
	Exposure to family or gendered violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist staff in following the advice and support for employees exposed to family violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish protocols for regular check-ins with staff.
*To be applied in conjunction with Mental Health and Wellbeing and Work-Related Violence hazard sections below.			

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Work-Related Violence	Online, over the phone or other remote threatening or aggressive behaviour by students, parents/carers, school staff or other members of school community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the Work-Related Violence in Schools Policy, which covers online and on-site behaviour. Consider whether any student supports, including Behaviour Support Plans, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure on-site staff are ready to manage the students that will be attending and that student supports, including reviewing and ensuring Behaviour Support Plans are up to date if required

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	<p>On-site violence, bullying or harassment by students, parents/ carers, school staff or other members of school community.</p> <hr/> <p>Staff experiencing stress or anxiety stemming from exposure to increasing onsite or online work-related violence and aggression from parents. Many parents/carers are likely to be anxious during this time.</p>	<p>require revision in consultation with Student Support Services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also, refer to Creating Respectful and Safe School Communities (including template Statement of Values), the Respect for School Staff local policy template, and resources available through Respectful Relationships and Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support. Proactive and open communications with parents and carers is important to prevent an escalation in behaviours. Refer to Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for parents, carers and guardians, and to the communications support pack. Escalated referrals will be managed by the Employee Wellbeing Response Team, and Complex Matter Support Team. Refer to the mental health and wellbeing advice on the OHSMS COVID-19 Employee supports page, and the relevant policy and procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with Student Support Services for Behaviour Support Plan assistance where required. If wearing a mask when working with students at risk of grabbing or pulling it, use a mask that will release easily, e.g. with hooks over the ears rather than ties around the back of the head. Regularly and explicitly teach students not to touch or attempt to remove others' masks. Set expectations for behaviour with the school community and promote appropriate ways for parents to raise their concerns. Discuss extra supports or strategies for staff who engage with anyone known to present a risk. Encourage staff to report incidents in eduSafe Plus and IRIS as appropriate, de-brief, and seek escalated support (e.g. through EAP) if required.

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<p>Mental Health/ Psychosocial Hazards</p>	<p>Leaders managing the anxiety and mental health of others – including students, staff, and members of the school community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the mental health and wellbeing advice on the OHSMS COVID-19 Employee supports page, and the relevant policy and procedure. Encourage staff to access MyWellbeing Program by contacting employee.wellbeing.response.team@education.vic.gov.au Consult with staff to identify causes/sources of workload challenges and to identify possible adjustments. Refer to the Return to Work Coordinator Portal. Refer to the Principal Health and Wellbeing services on the OHSMS COVID-19 Employee support page. Refer to the Department’s Flexible Work Policy. Refer to School Operations Guide Video-counselling is available via the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all staff and their immediate family (aged 18 years and over). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult, communicate and check-in regularly with staff on how they are feeling with the current situation, what supports might help. And encourage team leaders to be flexible and supportive about work requirements. Have regular conversations to provide as much clarity and flexibility as possible about tasks, priorities and the way work can be delivered. When a transition occurs either to or from remote learning, consider how best to enable staff to respond to the transition and adjust their planning to suit. Talk with staff about how they can limit screen time and consult with staff about strategies for manage emails. Encourage staff to take scheduled screen breaks Encourage staff to take wellbeing time. Consider pausing the introduction of any new initiatives or additional professional development activities
	<p>Staff experiencing changes to workload (increase/decrease) from modifications in tasks and priorities.</p>		
	<p>Balancing non-work-related demands (e.g. caring responsibilities) while delivering a remote learning program</p>		
	<p>Extended hours and screen-time exposure, due to planning and delivery of remote learning programs</p>		
	<p>Staff experiencing disengagement and low morale regarding clarity of</p>		

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	<p>tasks, team roles and evolving priorities.</p> <p>Staff experiencing uncertainty, stress, anxiety from the transition to an altered working environment</p> <p>Staff experiencing uncertainty and anxiety about the COVID-19 risks to their personal health (especially if working onsite).</p> <p>Staff experiencing isolation and changes in levels of support from leaders and colleagues as a result of the changed arrangements.</p> <p>Aggravation of stress caused by pre-existing conditions (e.g. existing mental health conditions, disabilities, vulnerable cohorts, and staff on leave, including Workers' Compensation or sick leave, etc.).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit meeting duration and record meetings to enable flexibility in attending • Allow time for staff to access the relevant information, instruction and training • Encourage staff to use EAP, for themselves and their immediate family, as well as the other supports and resources available, and, promote the ability to access individualised supports through a referral to MyWellbeing, by contacting employee.wellbeing.response.team@education.vic.gov.au • Ensure there are adjusted return to work strategies for people on sick leave or Workers' Compensation leave.