
Macquarie College COVID-19 Update 1 ~ 20 January 2021

1 message

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20 January 2021 at 16:01

Reply-To: "ajackson@mc.nsw.edu.au" <ajackson@mc.nsw.edu.au>

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the 2021 school year at Macquarie College. I trust that the Christmas and holiday season has been a time of rest for you and your family and that as the new year is now well underway, that you, like all of us here at Macquarie College, are looking forward to school recommencing next week.

This email is intended as a COVID-19 specific update and includes mandated requirements in regard to various aspects of the school's operation in the current COVID-19 context.

I continue to appreciate that such mandated requirements may seem particularly restrictive in some instances. However, it is important to note that these mandated requirements are not specific to MC but, instead, are expectations of all schools in NSW.

As such, I would encourage you to take the time to read the information set out below, particularly as it relates to visiting the school site and the recommencement of various programs and events which are now able to recommence within specific COVID-19 guidelines.

Thank you in advance for your support of the requirements set out below, as ensuring that MC remains a safe learning environment for each young person and staff member is of paramount importance to us at this time.

School Attendance

In accordance with [advice from NSW Health](#), parents and carers are reminded **NOT** to send their young people to school if they are unwell, even if they have the mildest flu-like symptoms.

NSW Health has requested that schools encourage anyone who is unwell or has even mild flu-like symptoms, to arrange to be tested through their local medical practitioner or one of the [COVID-19 clinics](#).

Students and staff with flu-like symptoms will need to be tested and provide a copy of a negative COVID-19 test result, and be symptom-free, before being permitted to return to school.

Students who do not undertake a COVID-19 test will not be permitted to return to school for a 10-day period. Additionally, they must be symptom-free for at least 3 days prior to returning to school.

Students who have seasonal allergic rhinitis or another condition that presents similarly to flu-like symptoms are still required to get tested for COVID-19 and return a negative test result. Where their symptoms continue beyond 10 days, students should provide documentation from their GP confirming their symptoms are typical for their condition. If the student develops new or changed symptoms, they should get tested for COVID-19. Find more information about [COVID-19 symptoms](#).

COVID-19 testing for students with complex health or disability may be challenging. In these situations, schools will ask the parent or carer to have their child assessed by their medical practitioner. Where a medical practitioner determines that a COVID-19 test is not required, documentation must be provided to the school to confirm that the student does not have symptoms that warrant a COVID-19 test. The certificate must also indicate that the student is able to return to school.

MC will be vigilant when implementing infection control, physical distancing and personal hygiene protocols to protect the health and safety of students and staff. MC will promote the need to follow good hygiene practices such as:

- regularly washing hands.
- avoiding sharing drinks or food.
- coughing or sneezing into your elbow, or a tissue which should be discarded immediately.

Learning at Home

Learning at home by MC students will be supported by the school in the following circumstances:

- If they are required to self-isolate due to being a close contact of a positive or suspected COVID-19 case.
- Where the school is directed under public health advice to only remain operational for children of essential workers if an outbreak of COVID-19 was to arise in the local area.

Wearing of Face Masks and Temperature Screening

Staff and students are not required to wear a face mask while at school. Anyone who wishes to wear their own masks at MC will not be prevented from doing so.

Wearing a face mask is not mandatory for parents and carers visiting schools, provided they are visiting only for the explicit reasons within this advice and maintain physical distancing and hygiene practices while at school.

Widespread temperature screening in schools is not required or recommended by NSW Health.

School Activities and School Site Usage

- NSW Health have advised that communal water fountains and/or bubblers in NSW schools can now be turned on. These facilities can remain operational, closing only if there is transmission of COVID-19 in the local community. MC students are still encouraged to bring water bottles from home that they can refill when needed.
- Field trips, excursions and camps to Victoria, Queensland and ACT can continue where interstate border requirements permit.
- Preschool, Kindergarten and Year 7 Orientations can recommence.
- Parents and carers of students in Preschool, Kindergarten and Years 1, 2 and 7, together with parents and carers of **NEW** students in other year levels will be allowed on the school site to drop off their children at their classes in the first week of the school year. In all such cases, parents and carers must follow physical distancing and hygiene measures implemented by the school. (For specific MC site requirements, see the section below *Visiting the Macquarie College Site*)
- Where possible, students will stay within their relevant cohort group (i.e. class, year group, or stage) for all learning activities within the school in order to limit close contacts to the relevant student cohort.
- External providers delivering educational services can proceed with a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.

Visiting the Macquarie College Site

All parents and carers wishing to access the MC site as pedestrians must first attend at the main MC Administration office and fully complete the school's COVID-19 screening process. Parents and carers who do not complete this process will be unable to access the MC site.

Parents and carers dropping off and picking up students should remain in their vehicles and must not enter any portion of the school site as a pedestrian.

Parents and carers are not allowed on the MC site or at off-site MC events during school hours except for the following purposes (and only upon completion of the MC COVID-19 screening process):

- Essential parent and carer meetings with teachers and/or school executives with a scheduled appointment.
- Parents and carers who attend a school administration building or another defined location for the purpose of picking up their child if they are unwell or where they have been asked to arrange for a COVID-19 test after their child has displayed flu-like symptoms while at school.
- Parents and carers who need to be on-site for canteen volunteer duties or to collect or purchase uniforms from the MC uniform store.
- Parent or carer volunteers required as educational support roles for activities essential to the delivery of the curriculum such as reading groups. Parents and carers must not attend MC unless this volunteer activity has been previously arranged.
- Parents and carers can attend parent orientation meetings and 'meet the teacher' meetings with school staff for all year/stage groups. Meetings should be limited to 1 hour where possible. A COVID-19 Safety Plan will be in place for all such events.

Singing and Musical Performance

- Singing and performance events can continue. Up to 5 performers can sing indoors and there is no limit on the number of performers singing outdoors.
 - If the event is held indoors, audience members must not participate in singing or chanting.

- If the event is held outdoors, the audience may participate in singing with those over the age of 12 required to wear a mask. All singing and group performance activities must take place in large, well-ventilated settings. Outdoor settings are preferred.
- During solo and group singing events, singers must maintain a distance of 5 metres between themselves and any person they are facing, including staff, students and audience members.
- All singers are to be positioned 1.5 metres apart from one another. This includes choirs.
- Instructors, teachers and adult support persons must maintain a distance of 1.5 metres on the side of the performers and not within 5 metres in front of them during the rehearsals and performance.
- In a primary school and preschool setting, in-class educational activities such as group repetition, chanting, recitation, or singing activities are permitted provided these activities take place outdoors or in large, well-ventilated settings.
- Activities involving musical instruments can proceed. Students playing non-reeded woodwind instruments such as flutes and recorders should be positioned so that they can maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres from all persons (including other members of the musical group). They must also maintain a minimum 3 metres space between the direction of airflow from their instruments and other performers.
- Singing and band rehearsals and performances should take place outside or in well ventilated indoor spaces.

School Performances, Productions, Plays and Concerts

School performances, productions, plays and concerts can continue. These events at MC will comply with the NSW Health requirements for COVID safe events and include a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

The following considerations will apply as MC plans for such events in 2021:

- Ensure that all attendees, including students, staff and visitors, parents and carers, are well and free of any flu-like symptoms.
- Seating arrangements will include distancing of 1.5 metres between non-household members.
- People will remain seated as much as possible to minimise mingling outside of household or close friend groups.
- Catering arrangements will comply with the COVID-19 Safety Plan requirements where appropriate.
- Special guests such as the Local Member of Parliament, one videographer or photographer may attend events. Special guests must be kept to a minimum and be included in the maximum number of participants.
- Singing and musical activities at the event will adhere to the above guidelines for singing, musical activities and creative arts consistent with NSW Health advice for group singing and musical ensembles.
- When holding events at external venues, all external venues and providers will have a COVID-19 Safety Plan to ensure health and safety measures are in place.

Sport and Associated Carnival Events

Many of the sports and carnival events which were placed on hold in 2020 are now able to recommence as per the outline below:

- Interschool sport and physical activity can recommence.
- This means that schools and students may now travel outside their local community.
- HRIS carnivals (swimming, athletics etc.), round robins and gala days involving more than one school, can also recommence.
- The number of participants involved in interschool sport and physical activities in a given sports facility will be limited to ensure compliance with relevant COVID-19 venue restrictions.

- Students from different schools are permitted to mix while participating in must avoid mixing when not participating.
- Students participating in weekly sport and physical activities, including recreational activities, where possible, are to remain within their regular cohort to limit the mixing of students between cohort groups.
- Selection trials for representative pathway events may now recommence.
- Parents, carers and other spectators are not permitted to attend MC sport and carnival events held on the MC site during school hours.
- Parents, carers and other spectators wishing to attend an offsite MC sport or carnival event at an external venue during school hours must comply with the COVID-19 Safety Plan which is in place and relevant to that venue.
- External providers can be used for sport and physical activity programs provided they have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.
- Sharing of sporting and physical activity equipment, such as fitness equipment and weights, are permitted. MC will continue to implement safe health practice guidelines including cleaning of such equipment at the end of each session.

School Camps and Excursions

- Dependent upon relevant border restrictions, MC can now recommence field trips, excursions and overnight activities within NSW, Victoria, Queensland and in the ACT. International excursions are on hold until further notice.
- MC will ensure that all external providers and venues accessed during any off-site program have a COVID-19 Safety Plan to ensure that measures are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of students and staff.
- NSW Health advise that overnight accommodation settings where facilities are shared by people from different households and require additional adult supervision and interactions, such as

camps, have an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission should someone attending be infected.

- As such, MC will ensure that accommodation facilities and overnight event organisers have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place to minimise risks to students and staff. (NSW Health requires organisers to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place relevant to their business. Such businesses should use the COVID-19 Safety Plan for [Caravan parks and camping grounds](#) or [hotels and accommodation](#)).
- Where MC hosts an overnight event such as a camp on the school site a COVID-19 Safety Plan for hotels and accommodation will be in place. A small number of parent volunteers may participate in such events. (In such instances, specific advice will be provided at that time).

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing of students in schools is not required under the AHPPC guidelines.

All teachers, support staff, parents and carers should maintain physical distance from each other (1.5m).

School Cleaning and Hygiene

MC continues to maintain cleaning protocols in line with the AHPPC guidelines and advice from NSW Health. Target areas include high-touch areas and other hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and movement areas.

As in 2020, automated hand sanitizer dispensers are fitted in all learning and work spaces.

Responding to COVID-19 Cases

MC has in place clear and comprehensive plans, developed in consultation with NSW Health and the Association of Independent School NSW, to both initially respond and subsequently manage any

suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our school.

In such an event, we will communicate with parents and carers and provide appropriate advice and direction at that time.

Bus Transport

Bus services to and from MC are scheduled to run as normal. For travel advice to and from MC, please refer to [Transport for NSW](#). Please encourage your young people to follow the latest public health advice when using or waiting for public transport. Please refer to the [NSW Government website](#) for more information.

MC COVID-19 Relief Fund - Continuing into 2021

As was shared with you in 2020, the MC COVID-19 Relief Fund was established to support our MC families to navigate through potential financial complexity via the following assistance measures:

- The MC COVID-19 Relief Fund is made available to families to ensure that fee support and/or remission is able to be directed most effectively to families in need. (These funds will assist in ensuring that families in need can be assured of their capacity to meet their school fee commitments).
- The implementation of a fast-tracked system of highly flexible fee support and/or remission strategies (this measure streamlines and simplifies a previous support application process to ensure that families needing support are not being asked to navigate unnecessary complexity).
- The monitoring of these measures over the coming months to ensure that such support continues to be available beyond 2021 if required.

As such, all families are encouraged to contact our Business Manager, Stephen Andrews, at businessmanager@mc.nsw.edu.au, if assistance, via the MC COVID-19 Relief Fund may be beneficial either now or at any time throughout the 2021 school year.

Best wishes to you as the new school year at MC gets underway. As always, please feel welcome to contact me directly at principal@mc.nsw.edu.au if you would like to chat with me in relation to any of the items outlined above, or if there are any other elements of the school program that I can assist you with.

Personally, I'm looking forward to the year ahead and once again value the privilege I have of working in partnership with you to support the learning of your young people at MC.

Kind Regards,

Rohan Deanshaw

Principal

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For more information on SEQTA, visit www.seqta.com.au.