

16th November, 2021.

Overport Primary School.

Dear Parents and Carers,

Rapid Antigen Testing Program

The Department of Education and Training is implementing a rapid antigen testing program for students who are identified as close contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case from Monday 15 November.

This program will help unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students to safely return to school as quickly as possible after being identified as a primary close contact (PCC), reducing their isolation period to 7 days instead of 14 days.

It is only available to students who have been identified as a close contact because of community contact, such as in a classroom, but **not** to those identified because of household contact.

Following an exposure at our school, you will be notified that your child has been identified as a primary close contact (PCC) of a confirmed COVID-19 case and will be required to be tested and isolate at home.

How the rapid antigen testing program will work

The at-home rapid antigen testing program is an opt-in program for unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated, students. Parents/carers can choose if their child will participate. Our school will provide you with rapid antigen test kits if you opt in. These will be free for families of those students who meet the criteria and are required to isolate.

Our school has opted into this program and we are currently awaiting our first batch of rapid antigen tests. I have been advised that these should arrive this Friday or Monday at the latest. The Department has now advised that parents may also purchase their own and use these for testing if they do not want to wait for the arrival of our kits.

If your child is eligible (meaning they are unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated and not a household PCC) and you want to take part in the at-home rapid antigen testing program, your child must first quarantine at home for seven days.

On day six of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local COVID-19 testing site. The day your child was exposed is day zero; therefore, the following day is day one. If the test is negative, you must provide evidence of this test to the school via the email address: overport.ps@education.vic.gov.au. We will then provide you with a supply of rapid antigen tests, which come with instructions. You can collect your RA test from the school office. Your child will then be required to complete a rapid antigen test at home before they come to school each day between days 8 to 14. Before coming to school each day, you must report the result of each test using a web page at this link by 8.30 am: <https://vacodata.educationapps.vic.gov.au/detvac/s/ratest> If you choose to purchase your own kits, you must still record the results on the website prior to 8.30 am for your child to attend.

If the test is negative, your child can come to school. If the test does not work for some reason, your child cannot attend school. And if the result is positive, you must take your child for a PCR test as soon as possible. Your child does not need to complete the tests on weekends. This must be done **before 8.30 am**, otherwise your child cannot attend that day.

‘Stay at home when unwell and get tested’ policy

It's important to note that rapid antigen testing does not replace PCR testing for the purpose of diagnosis of COVID-19 in children, staff and students, regardless of their vaccination status.

Parents should continue to follow current school policy and public health advice. Anyone unwell **must** remain at home and get tested for COVID-19 with a PCR test, even with the mildest of symptoms, regardless of a negative rapid antigen test result.

If we do have a confirmed COVID-19 case in our school, we will communicate with you as soon as we can, including with instructions on how to access the tests, conduct them, how to report the results, and support available if needed.

The statewide roll-out of rapid antigen testing is one of many strategies currently in place to support schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To support the roll-out of this program, resources to support parents and carers can be found at coronavirus.vic.gov.au. This information will be added to over the coming weeks.

For more information about what strategies are in place, please visit the [department's website](#) or call the department's COVID-19 hotline on 1800 338 663.

Kind regards,
Julie Gleeson
Principal.