



What you need to know about our return to school in Term 4

We're excited about our return to face-to-face learning and welcoming students and staff back onsite where we know the best learning happens. This is a short summary of what our parents and students can expect.

We will be returning under Level 3 Plus restrictions and will be implementing a number of measures in line with NSW Health and Dept of Education guidelines.

Please note that each of the measures that are being put in place will contribute to the overall health and safety plan. The combination of these measures provides the best approach to support the safety of our school community.



Key dates for our staged return

While we know there is excitement about the return to school it's important that we stick to the staged return to give us time to be ready to welcome back students onsite. Students will return to face-to-face learning in the following order

- from 18 October – Year 12 can be at school and a program has been developed for them
- from 25 October – all remaining year groups will return to school.



Our school's COVID-safe operations

Our COVID-safe return to school plan is NSW Health approved and includes numerous effective practices to support the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. These practices include vaccinations, mask wearing, reduced mingling of student groups and staff, ventilation in classrooms and continued good hygiene and cleaning.

Students and staff must not come to school if they are unwell or have even the mildest of COVID-19 symptoms. Students are expected to attend school from their designated return to school dates unless they are unwell. Schools will not be able to maintain the current online mode of learning after the set date for students to return to school.

School buses will return to their normal timetable from 18 October, however we anticipate that many parents will be dropping off and picking up students. For the sake of safety and traffic management, parents are requested to make a meeting place well away from the school and not to drive past the front of the school. Please do not stop in Robyn Ave. We recommend that you meet in the streets closer to the Field of Dreams.

Our canteen will be operating with modifications to normal operations. Online ordering will be required.

Bubblers will be covered up. All students will be expected to bring a water bottle.



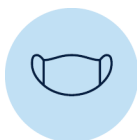
Keeping student groups together

As we return to school students will be kept in their cohorts to minimise opportunities for transmission of COVID-19 and to enable effective contact tracing and containment. This means minimising interaction between students on school grounds and keeping cohorts together where possible.

At THS we will be implementing a number of measures to minimise interactions between students from different cohorts (year groups). These include:

- staggered start and finish times to the day
- different period lengths for each stage to minimise the number of students entering blocks and lining up for classes at the same time
- allocated areas of the playground and toilets for each year group

Details of these arrangements will be provided closer to the return to school date.



Mask wearing for students and staff

Masks are required to be worn on school site by staff and students indoors and outdoors unless eating. Masks are also required on public transport. Please ensure that students bring a mask to school. The school has been supplied with extra masks which will be available for students who do not have a mask with them on arrival. Students who refuse to comply with the mask-wearing requirements will be referred to a senior member of staff. Parents will be required to pick students up from school and they will be able to return only when wearing a mask.

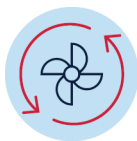
The current Public Health Order outlines reasons why some students may not be able to wear a mask for extended periods of time such as skin conditions, autism or trauma. If this is the case, please inform the school ahead of the return of students to school.



Vaccinations

All staff required on site supporting the return to school will need to be fully vaccinated from 18 October. Then from 8 November all staff, contractors, volunteers and pre-service teaching students on placement on a school site will need to be fully vaccinated, including Outside of School Hours Care staff.

While students are not required to be vaccinated in time for the return to school we are encouraging all in our school community to take up a vaccine as soon as possible. Most students would be now eligible and it is heartening to hear of the vaccination rates in our community.



Ventilation

Having open or well-ventilated spaces reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19 because infectious particles are more quickly diffused in the open air. The department will continue to work with NSW Health to provide us with advice and guidance on maintaining good ventilation in our school and we will make use of our outdoor spaces wherever practical.

Department personnel have completed an audit of all rooms in the school and we are working with them to ensure good ventilation in classrooms and staff rooms. To find more information on this please refer to the [department's information on ventilation](#)



School activities

During Term 4 many school-based activities will remain on hold until NSW Health advise otherwise. This includes large celebrations like assemblies, presentation days and graduations, arts and sports events.

Our Thursday school sport program will be modified. There will be no interschool sport. We have received advice that end of year celebrations such as Year 12 graduation and Presentation Evening cannot take place before 3 December. We are working on plans that take into account the likely health settings for that part of the term.

Special Religious Education will not be running under Level 3 or Level 3 Plus.



Covid Communication

Parents and students will be notified if a decision is made to close the school due to a confirmed case of COVID-19. During this time we will continue to provide learning from home activities and we will let you know when we can return to face-to-face learning.

We will communicate via email, the school website and Facebook if this occurs.



HSC student revision and support

During Week 3 Year 12 will engage in a series of practice examinations and workshops at school. Attendance is encouraged but not compulsory. In weeks 4 & 5 teachers of HSC subjects can be available for revision and support during their usual timetabled HSC classes.



HSC exams

We are putting in place and preparing COVID-safe arrangements for exams to minimise mixing between students. These plans include appropriate spacing for students and that exams are conducted in well-ventilated rooms and spaces, mask wearing for students and staff onsite. We are also organising alternative venues in the event we need to relocate the exams.

Year 12 students and parents will be advised of specific arrangements closer to the commencement of the HSC Examinations on 9 November.



Orientation and transition to school

Onsite orientations and transition programs for Year 6 are not currently allowed in person on school sites until we are advised differently by NSW Health. We'll share more information in the coming weeks about our school's virtual orientation and transition program.