



# Thurgoona Public School

*Excellence, innovation, opportunity – student success in a caring environment*

25 January 2022

Dear Parents/Caregivers

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

The first day for students in Years 1 to 6, will be on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February. Students will begin in their 2021 classes, until new classes are formed later in the week. When arriving at school in the morning of Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup>, returning students will place their bags in a line at their 2021 classroom. New students have been allocated a time slot to arrive on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February. New families will be met by a member of the executive team. Kindergarten students will begin on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February.

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.

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 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.
- 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 cohort groups on school grounds, where possible, with staggered canteen access to minimise the spread of COVID-19 across year groups.
- We will continue to use good hygiene, enhanced cleaning, good air flow and ventilation in learning spaces, as well as physical distancing practices.

**Thurgoona Public School**

✉ 11 Bottlebrush Street, THURGOONA NSW 2640

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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***

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 \(TGA\)External link](#) 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?***

RAT kits will be available for collection from the drive through pick-up/drop-off zone on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January from 3pm until 6pm.

- RAT kits should be collected from school by a parent or carer and the tests completed at home in the morning before attending school. It is suggested that the tests are administered on Monday and Wednesday mornings.
- Each student will receive an initial supply of 4 RATs to be used twice a week in the morning before attending school. This supply of 4 RATs is for a two week period.
- School staff will not be administering the rapid antigen tests to students.
- If a student or staff member receives a **positive** RAT test, they need to:
  - record the positive RAT result through the [Service NSW websiteExternal link](#) or [Service NSW appExternal link](#)
  - notify the school of the positive RAT or PCR test result as soon as possible
  - follow [NSW Health adviceExternal link](#) to isolate for 7 days.
- Negative results **do not** need to be reported to Service NSW or to the school.

### ***Use of surgical masks***

- All primary 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 NSWExternal link](#).

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### **Visitors on school sites and vaccinations**

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

- 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.

### **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.

#### **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.

Thank you again for your continued support during this school term.

Jessica Brooker

Principal (Relieving)

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