



Coonabarabran High School

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Dear Parents/Caregivers

RE: WELCOME TO 2022

Welcome to a new year at Coonabarabran High School; in particular a special welcome to students and families who are new to our school. We are pleased to welcome a number of new staff to our school:

Mrs Heather Frewin (Support Unit), Ms Sabina Dzihic (HSIE), Mr Ben Jackson (HSIE/ Mathematics), Ms Catherine Long (Visual Arts), Ms Georgina Harley (Office/ Admin), Mr Stephen Cordwell (Generalist), Mrs Tanya Murray (LOTE-Gamilaraay). Additionally, Mr Michael Armstrong will fulfill the position of Head teacher Administration whilst Mr Brian Shand is on leave in 2022 and 2023.

We also welcome Carly Hansen who will be supporting our students as School Counsellor each Monday and alternate Tuesdays. Mr Stephen Mair Senior Psychologist will also be providing counselling services to our students on a part-time basis, each Friday. We are also delighted that Mrs Bonnie Hain will continue in her role providing specialist literacy and numeracy small group tuition.

COVID

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 have been 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 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. Regrettably, this means that we will need to postpone planned events such as our Year 7 welcome BBQ, year group parent information evenings and our Indigenous welcome BBQ. Covid permitting, we will hold these events later in the term.
- We will continue to use good hygiene, enhanced cleaning, good air flow and ventilation in learning spaces, as well as physical distancing practices.

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 teachers 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.

School staff will not be administering the rapid antigen tests to students. RAT kits should be collected from school by a parent or carer and the tests completed at home in the morning before attending school.

- Each student has received an initial supply of 4 RATs to be used twice a week in the morning before attending school. If you have not received your allocation of RAT kits, please contact the school. **We shall send home another allocation of RAT kits, with students on Friday 18 February.** If you would rather collect your RAT kits please contact the school. If your child is not displaying any symptoms, then the recommendation is that you do the surveillance testing on Monday and Wednesday of each week.
- If your child receives a **positive** RAT result, can you please :
 - record the positive RAT result through the [Service NSW website External link](#) or [Service NSW app External link](#)
 - notify the school of the positive RAT or PCR result as soon as possible
 - follow [NSW Health advice External link](#) to isolate for 7 days.
- It is recommended that students who return to school after recovering from COVID-19 do not participate in rapid antigen test surveillance for 28 days (four weeks after recovery) following release from self-isolation. This is due to NSW Health advice that people who have recovered from COVID-19 have a low risk of contracting it again in the following 28 days. After 28 days students may resume participation in RAT surveillance.

Negative results **do not** need to be reported to Service NSW or to the school.

Unwell at school

Any student who is unwell and/or displays symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to go home and stay until they can complete a RAT or PCR test.

- If symptoms continue, they should stay at home and take another RAT in 24 hours or have a PCR test.
- If the second RAT or initial PCR test result is negative and they are displaying no symptoms OR they are diagnosed as another condition such as hayfever, the student or staff member can return to school.
- In NSW, positive COVID-19 cases are provided a Medical Clearance Notice after 7 days and allowed to leave self-isolation as long as they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

What happens when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19

Under the new close contact rules, schools are no longer included in contact tracing. I will inform the school community when there is a positive case in our school and advise families on public health advice, including monitoring for symptoms.

Use of surgical masks

All school staff will be required to wear masks indoors.

No vented or cloth masks should be worn. If required, surgical masks are available from the office.

Masks are also strongly encouraged in outdoor settings where physical distance is difficult. Your child can remove their mask when eating, exercising or playing a musical instrument.

Visitors on school sites and vaccinations

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

- Up to two parents or carers are allowed to accompany their child into school on their first day of Year 7.
- 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.

We strongly encourage our students and their families to consider vaccination 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. We will also 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.

OTHER (NON COVID) MATTERS

The beginning of a new school year is a good time to set out a few matters which will assist us in ensuring that all of our students are best supported in their education and that we enjoy another successful year of learning. In this regard I seek your support in relation to the following:

BELL TIMES

A copy of the bell times is enclosed for your reference. For, returning families, you will note that times have been adjusted slightly this year and we also have an earlier finish each Friday. Bus students will be supervised until departure.

LOCKERS

We have fabulous lockers for hire. A copy of our locker policy is enclosed. If students wish to obtain a locker they should return the signed note to Mr Graham.

ATTENDANCE

Daily attendance at school is absolutely vital to support your child's learning. Regular and or extended absences from school undermine your child's ability to achieve to their full potential. Of course I appreciate that there will be occasions due to illness, family commitments and the like that your child will need to be absent. In those circumstances please advise the school either by telephone or via a note as to the reason for your child's absence. However, there is no doubt that one of the best things you can do to support your child's education is to ensure that they attend school, on time each day.

BEHAVIOUR

Our school community rests on a core value of respect. Conflict which arises from students not respecting their peers, their teachers, school property and ultimately themselves in terms of not valuing their educational opportunities, regrettably undermines your child's ability to reach their potential. Our rules are aimed at ensuring that we have a harmonious and productive school community and again your support in ensuring that your child is a respectful member of our community is valued.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Correct school uniform plays an important role in nurturing a respectful school culture. In some cases, for example regarding correct footwear, there are also relevant health and safety concerns and helps your child to start the day on a positive footing. Kindly ensure that your son or daughter attends school in the correct school uniform. The school does have some good quality second-hand uniforms and in some circumstances, financial assistance can be provided to assist with the purchase of uniforms. Should that be the case, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the event that your child is out of uniform for the day, kindly send a note which your child should present to the Deputy Principal before school.

All students are encouraged to be sun safe in the school playground. School caps are available from the front office at a cost of \$16.00. School hoodies and jackets can also be purchased for \$60 from the accounts office.

Finally, if you have any school uniforms to donate to our uniform pool they would be gratefully received.

MOBILE PHONES

Students are asked not to bring phones to school. This decision has been made in consultation with the school community. Students who repeatedly (more than 3 times in a year) bring a mobile phone to school will have their phone confiscated until the student's parents/carers can attend a meeting to discuss the breach of school procedure. The school is responsible and liable for the confiscated devices. Some exemptions to this rule may apply. If students need their phone for after school they may hand them into the Deputy Principal before school.

EQUIPMENT

Students are required to bring all equipment necessary to support their learning, each day. Please encourage your child to be responsible in ensuring that they arrive each day equipped to learn. Teachers have provided students with details of what equipment is required. Please be advised that 5 in 1 subject books are not useful as student work becomes jumbled across subjects and it is difficult for the classroom teacher to collect students' books for marking in a specific subject. Each student is required to have a pencil case.

Please note that, permanent markers, liquid paper and aerosol deodorants are not allowed at school. The latter can be a significant health and safety risk to some students and staff. Each students will be given a student diary to support completion of homework and assessment tasks and growing students organisational skills. Please encourage your child to utilise this resource. It is also another mode of communication between school and home.

ASSESSMENT TASKS

Students assessment tasks will be posted on our website – <https://coonabarab-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/>. Assessment notification alerts will also be sent via the School Stream app - which is free to download if you have a smart phone and is a great way to stay in touch with school events.

STUDY CENTRE

Study Centre operates in our Library each Monday to Thursday until 5.00 pm. Students are able to work under the supervision of staff who assist with homework, assessments and reinforcing classroom learning, as required. Afternoon tea is provided on Tuesdays. Attendance at Study Centre is an effective way for your child to support their learning by building sound study habits whilst also accessing any necessary assistance.

PARENTS & CITIZENS

Our school is fortunate to be supported by a dedicated P&C who meet once per term at 5.30pm in the school Library. The date of the first meeting will be advised via School Stream and Facebook page and it would be wonderful to welcome new members.

COMMUNICATION

Our website, Facebook and the School Stream app are all good ways to stay in touch.

I appreciate that this is a lot of information but trust that it may assist, particularly new families, to settle in well to the new school year.

Thank you in anticipation of your support in relation to the matters which I have outlined above. Should you have any queries, concerns or suggestions please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Looking forward to another productive year of learning.

Yours sincerely

Ms Mary Doolan
PRINCIPAL

