

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Monday, 5 October 2020

## ROADMAP FOR ALL STUDENTS RETURN TO THE CLASSROOM

Years 7-10 students will join their peers back in the classroom with the final stage of the return to face-to-face learning to occur this month.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Education James Merlino today announced that, subject to final health advice, Year 7 students in metropolitan Melbourne will resume face-to-face learning from Monday 12 October. Students in Years 8 to 10 will return from Monday 26 October.

This staggered return is based on the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer and is designed to manage the increased movement across the community with the return of staff and students to school.

A return of Years 8 to 10 students from October 26 will provide enough time to enable monitoring of the impact of the first stage of students returning to school. The staggered approach to getting all students in all year levels back to on-site schooling will also support a more gradual increase of community mobility across metropolitan Melbourne, while providing a full 14 days between stages to account for a full incubation period of the virus.

As senior students begin their exam preparations, it will also be easier for schools to spread students out across the school - an important protection against transmission of the virus

The staggered return will also allow for schools to work together with parents to support the safe return of students to on-site learning and enable schools to review the implementation of risk-mitigation measures as all students return.

This will include, for example, staggered start and finish times, maintaining physical distancing at the school gate, and observing restrictions on the adults who can enter school sites.

In addition, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Education and Training (DET) have strategies in place to ensure any potential outbreaks in schools can be quickly controlled. Any school attended by a student or staff member while infectious will be closed. Deep cleaning, contact tracing, and a review by DHHS staff will occur before the school is reopened.

Primary school students, students studying VCE and VCAL, and students attending specialist schools will return to face-to-face learning in metropolitan Melbourne from Monday 12 October. Students in rural and regional Victoria are returning to the classroom in a staggered approach from today, their date depending on their year level and local circumstances.

As students return to face-to-face learning, schools will focus on supporting students' mental health and wellbeing and give priority to identifying students who will need help catching up.

The Victorian Government recently announced a \$28.5 million package of initiatives to ensure more students can receive more support, including through the Navigator Program, LOOKOUT, Mental Health Practitioners and the Mental Health in Primary Schools pilot.

### Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

*"We always said we wanted to see students back in the classroom as soon as we can, as safely as we can, and we have been working with our public health experts to ensure that is the case."*

**Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino**

*“Thank you to parents, teachers and school communities for your patience - having students learn from home has made a significant contribution to slowing the spread of coronavirus in our community and has helped save lives.”*