

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Education

Minister for Women



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100 MILLION FREE RATs DISTRIBUTED IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

The Andrews Labor Government has distributed more than 100 million free Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) to schools this year, to reduce costs for parents and help keep kids in the classroom.

Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins today announced the ongoing program to distribute RATs in schools had collectively saved Victorian families hundreds of millions of dollars throughout the school year.

Students at schools and early childhood services can continue to access RATs as needed as the program will continue in Term 4.

In addition, as part of the Labor Government's \$190 million plan to keep classrooms safe, more than 105,000 air purifiers have been distributed to all 1,587 government schools and almost 25,000 to 620 non-government schools since term 4 last year, helping to reduce instances of classroom transmission.

Primary and secondary school students and staff, and early childhood education and care staff and children aged 3 to 5 are recommended to test at home if they experience COVID-19 symptoms or are a contact of a confirmed case.

Vaccination of children aged 5 to 11 and booster shots for people over 16 years old remain the best way to protect students and staff against the risks of COVID-19. We will continue to support efforts to get as many children vaccinated as possible.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins

"We have kept our promise to ensure school doors have remained open from the beginning of Term 1, and free RATs will continue to be delivered throughout Term 4 to keep students and staff safe."

"We thank teachers, parents and students for their hard work in keeping each other safe during this time – whether it's setting up new purifiers, to getting your child vaccinated or staying home if unwell."

Quote attributable to Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt

"Keeping our littlest learners in early childhood services is so important which is why we're ensuring every family and all staff members have access to free RATs."