

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Education

Minister for Women



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STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOLS IN ROCHESTER AFTER FLOODS

Students in Rochester will return to their schools this week after being affected by the devastating flooding across Victoria last year.

It's the first time the students at Rochester Primary School and Rochester Secondary School will be able to walk back through the school gates since the flooding left both schools inundated with water.

Classes were temporarily relocated to Bendigo Senior Secondary College and Elmore Primary School for students to finish the school year while repairs took place.

Relocatable classrooms have since been set up at both schools to accommodate students' return, while science rooms, the school gymnasium and the school oval at Rochester Secondary College have also been completed and cleared for student use.

Classrooms have also been fitted out with new furniture and equipment – including teaching and learning materials – to give students the best spaces to learn. The full suite of subjects and programs return for both primary and secondary students, including those studying their VCE.

Learning at St Joseph's Primary School will also resume this week, while a kindergarten service located at Rochester Secondary College will commence in early March.

Regional school bus services to Rochester have also since resumed, with daily pick ups and drop offs for students residing at Elmore Village.

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing to support Victorian schools affected by the devastating flooding and ensure that repairs and restoration works are completed as quickly as possible.

This includes investing \$9 million for the works to be carried out at Rochester primary and secondary schools. Repairs will continue throughout Term 1, with ongoing restoration works at both schools expected to be fully complete by mid-2023.

Since 2014, the Labor Government has invested \$12.8 billion in building new schools and more than 1,850 school upgrades, creating around 17,400 jobs in construction and associated industries.

The Government is ahead of schedule in opening 100 new schools by 2026, with 75 new schools opening between 2019 and 2024 – ensuring every student can access a great local school and a quality education no matter where they live.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins

"We know that children learn best when in a stable and familiar environment – which is why it's so important for students in Rochester to return to their school from the beginning of Term 1."

"We're continuing to support Victorian schools that have been affected by the widespread flooding across Victoria and ensure that repairs and restoration works are completed as quickly as possible to give students the best spaces to learn."

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Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

“Recovery takes time – which is why we’re continuing to support our schools affected by the devastating flooding across Victoria last year – including right here in Rochester – and making sure local students can return to their classroom for the start of Term 1.”