



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

For students

Returning to secondary school: frequently asked questions

Question: Why did I stop going to school?

Answer: Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a new virus. Viruses are easily spread in crowded places and schools are crowded places. The virus was spreading quickly in the community, so schools closed to help stop this.

Question: Why am I going back to school?

If it wasn't safe to be at school before, is it safe now?

Answer: Because people stayed home and practiced social distancing, coronavirus (COVID-19) has not spread very much in the community. Now we know that young people don't catch it as much as older people. During the time you have been at home, the school was cleaned thoroughly. Every school has worked out the best ways to keep students and teachers safe.

Question: Why didn't they tell us when we would go back?

Answer: No one knew how long students would need to stay home. It depended on how many people caught the virus. Once the government decided the virus was under control, the schools needed time to make plans to keep everyone safe when they return to school.

Question: Do I have to go back to school?

Answer: Yes, you must go back to school unless you are sick, or your parents or carer say you need to stay home.

Question: Will I get coronavirus (COVID-19)? How can the school keep me safe?

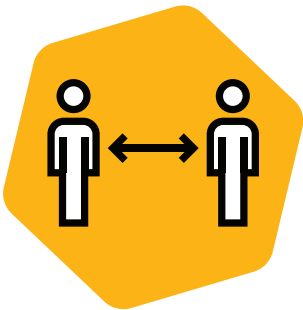
Answer: Young people have a low risk of getting sick from coronavirus (COVID-19). You are much less likely to catch the virus if you:

- Wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your face during the day.
- Listen to your teachers about how to stay safe.



Schools are making changes to help keep you safe such as:

- Extra cleaning.
- Ensuring physical distancing between adults on the school grounds.
- Different times for school drop-offs and pick-ups for students in different year levels.



Question: Do I need to wear a mask?

Answer: Yes, you will be asked to wear a mask. Wearing a mask reduces the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). You can ask for information on how to use a mask safely from a medical professional. If you can't wear a mask for medical reasons speak to your regular health professionals for advice on your situation, or to your school about how they are supporting students who cannot wear masks.

Question: Why can't I go to school when my brother / sister is?

Answer: Different schools and year levels have different dates to go back to school. You might go back to school on a date before or after your siblings. The government made this decision so that that it is easier to keep people separated and safe.

Question: Will school be the same? How will I know what is different?

Answer: Many things will be the same. What you wear to school, being in class, and most of the students and teachers will be the same. There will be some changes though. You may need to wash your hands more often or use hand sanitiser. You won't be able to share things like pens and equipment. These things will prevent spreading the virus. At some schools there may be new start and finish times, and/or new lunch and recess times.



Some teachers or students may not be back yet if they are sick or at extra risk of becoming sick.

Question: How can I find out what changes my school has made?

Answer: You could check the portal (if your school uses one), the school's website, emails from the school or ask your family to find out for you.

Question: I'm a VCE student, can I still pass my units?
What will the impact be on my ATAR?

Answer: Yes, you can still pass your units if you have passed your School Assessed Coursework (SAC)s.

The ATAR is not a score. The ATAR is a ranking of students compared to all the other students completing VCE. All the other students completing VCE are in the same situation as you. Your school will be working hard to make sure that everything is as fair as possible.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority have changed some aspects of VCE. If you have concerns or questions, ask your teacher or read the [VCAA COVID-19 update](#).





Question: Will I have the same teacher and timetable?

Answer: There may need to be changes. You might have different teachers for some of your classes. The timetable and bell times may also change.

Question: What can I do if I am worried?

Answer: This will be a big change to learning from home. If you feel worried or have questions:

- Tell a teacher you feel comfortable with, a trusted friend, a counsellor, or your parent or carer.
- You could also try drawing or writing a list of your worries or record yourself saying them. Give this to your parent, carer or teacher.

Need help with the transition back to school?

Go to <http://www.amaze.org.au/returntoschool2020>

Amaze Autism Advisors

Contact the Amaze Autism Advisors for more information about autism, or to discuss your individual situation:

Phone: **1300 308 699**

Email: info@amaze.org.au

Website and webchat: www.amaze.org.au

This service is available from 8am to 7pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

Victorian Department of Education learning from home advice line for parents

If you have questions about learning from home, call the advice phone line for parents on **1800 338 663**.



Education and Training