

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Monday, 20 July 2020

FACE COVERINGS AND MASKS FOR METRO SCHOOLS

Schools in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will be one of the first priority areas to receive reusable face masks in coming weeks as remote learning returns.

The Victorian Government has placed orders for 1.37 million reusable fabric masks from five Victorian manufacturers. These orders will be delivered across July and August. The manufacturers are companies Nobody Denim, StylePrint, NMBQ, The Ark and The Mask Project – supporting local jobs while keeping Victorians safe. Further orders will be placed as needed.

All students aged 12 and over and staff who are attending school in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will be required to wear a face covering or mask when at school from Thursday, 23 July. Masks will not be mandatory for teachers while they are teaching students but should be worn at other times. Specialist schools and primary schools are exempt from this rule.

The Department of Education of Training will be one of the first to receive the reusable masks and will provide them to students if they are unable to access one from home. However, it is expected most students will provide their own face covering and mask.

Reusable masks will also be available for staff and will be provided to both government and non-government schools.

23 million single use masks have also been ordered and will be distributed while the reusable masks are made. Around 500,000 have already been provided to DHHS for public housing tower tenants and 1,200,000 single use masks to the Department of Education and Training for use in schools.

Senior secondary students will this week continue learning on-site across the state, together with other students who are not able to be supervised at home and no other arrangements can be made – including children whose parents cannot work from home, vulnerable children and children with a disability.

Following advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer, most P-10 students in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will today begin learning remotely and continue until at least 19 August.

These arrangements will significantly reduce the movement of more than 700,000 students, as well as their parents and carers, across metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.

Government school students will continue to receive the technical support they need, students without access to a tablet or laptop will be loaned one by their school or the Department of Education and Training. During the last period of remote learning, more than 61,000 laptops and tablets and 23,000 SIM cards and dongles were loaned to students.

Schools will continue to provide multiple entry points and staggered drop-off and pick-ups where necessary, to reduce the number of adults around school grounds at any one time. Schools will also continue to implement physical distancing and cleaning measures for the safety of their staff.

The Government has already invested \$45 million for enhanced daily cleaning in government schools, which will continue throughout Term 3. Daily temperature checks have also been introduced for students at government schools in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“Returning to flexible and remote learning will limit the movement of more than 700,000 students, their parents and carers, and help slow the spread of coronavirus.”

“We have over a million Victorian-made masks on the way and we will take steps to ensure every student has access to a face covering if they’re learning onsite.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

“We know this is will be a challenging time for many families, but we will support our students, our teachers and our school communities every step of the way.”

“Teachers, parents and school communities showed already this year they are up to the challenge of remote and flexible learning, and I have faith that we will be able to do it again – together.”