



Paula Graham

Principal

COVID-SMART MEASURES:

Rapid Antigen Tests

Surgical masks

Cohorting

**Good hygiene and
enhanced cleaning
practices**

**Ventilation of learning
spaces**

**Physical Distancing
practices**

YEAR GROUP RETURN TO SCHOOL DATES:

**Years 7,11 & 12 return to
school on Tuesday 1st
February**

**Years 8,9 & 10 return to
school on Wednesday 2nd
February**

**Deputy Principal for Year 7
and Year 10:**

Mr Andrew Robinson

Dear students, parents and carers,

Welcome to a new school year, an exciting time as our students start or return to their school journey. To all our new families and especially Year 7, welcome to the MHS family!

I am delighted to be returning to MHS after a year of sick leave for cancer treatment. I know a rumour went around amongst students that I had long COVID! Not quite, however, I am well and return renewed and eager to drive our continuing improvement – leaders, teachers and students.

My apologies in advance, for this is a lengthy newsletter as it covers a large amount of **COVID-Smart information**. Later in the newsletter, you will find: HSC congratulations; Early Leaver information; Student Assistance advice; and a back page detailing **who to call, when**.

Firstly, I would like to thank our Deputy Principal, Melissa Schatz for the outstanding job she did as Relieving Principal in my absence. Melissa, we are all indebted to your tireless efforts, exceptional capacity and commitment to leading the school in 2021.

Congratulations to our Year 12, 2021! Your persistence and grit throughout a very COVID-interrupted 2 years of senior schooling is a testimony to your resilience and determination to succeed. I would like to particularly acknowledge the achievements of Sarah Hawkins and Joshua Ngo whose outstanding ATARs and Band 6 results are testimony to their outstanding academic ability and unwavering commitment. Congratulations!

I'd like to share how we are building on our experiences of the last 2 years and continuing to safeguard our school community while keeping our school open, where we know the best learning happens. We will start 2022 with a layered approach to COVID-smart measures that have been developed in partnership with NSW Health to help to minimise transmissions at school. The health and wellbeing of our students and staff remain our priority, and these measures are designed to help to keep our school open and our students learning in the classroom.

These key measures include:

Rapid antigen test (RAT) kits will be provided to all students to help monitor your child's health and minimise transmission of COVID-19 across our school.

Where to go before 9am on the first day:

Friday 28/1:

Year 7 – MPC, outside on grassed area inside the school.

A maximum of 2 parent/carers may stay with their Year 7 student at the beginning of their first day of high school.

Year 11-Main Quad

Year 12 – Year 7 Quad COLA

Monday 31/1:

Year 8 - Basement/Area in front of the MPC

Year 9 - Basketball Courts/Area alongside of the MPC

Year 10 – Main Quad

Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) collection days

COVID-Smart Guidelines in place to pick up RATs

Deputy Principal for Year 8 and Year 12:

Ms Melissa Schatz

- Wearing of surgical masks indoors is required for all staff and students. Masks will be provided by the school if required.
- Only fully vaccinated visitors essential to delivering and supporting learning or wellbeing can come on a school site.
- Two parents or carers are allowed to accompany their child into school on their first day of Year 7 or students new to the school.
- Students will be kept in their year groups on school grounds, with staggered break times, playground and canteen access to minimise the spread of COVID-19 across cohorts.
- We will continue to use good hygiene, enhanced cleaning, good air flow and ventilation in learning spaces, as well as physical distancing practices.

While this is not going to be a normal start to the school year, we know that being together in the classroom is the most effective way for students to learn and grow. Your child's relationship with their teacher is important, but as we manage potential disruptions to staffing due to COVID-19, they may get to meet more teachers than usual.

Rapid Antigen Test distribution

Years 7, 11 & 12 parents/carers will be able to collect their RAT tests on Friday, 28 January from 12 noon:

Year 7 parents/carers to collect from the Front Office Portico ;
Year 11 parents/carers – MPC Pearce St entrance
Year 12 parents/carers – Library verandah

Years 8, 9, 10 parents/carers will be able to collect their RAT tests on Monday, 31 January from 10am:

Year 8 parents/carers to collect from the Front Office Portico;
Year 9 parents/carers – MPC Pearce St entrance
Year 10 parents/carers – Library verandah

If you have students in more than one year, you may collect your RATs for all students at the venue listed for your oldest student.

We respectfully ask you to follow our COVID-Smart guidelines when collecting your RATs:

Please DO Not come to pick up your RATs if you are unwell, experiencing COVID-like symptoms or have tested positive to COVID. Please authorise another family member or friend to collect them for you.

Wherever possible, **one person only should attend to pick up the RATs.**

Please wear masks, preferably not cloth or vented masks;
Maintain 1.5m physical distance

Please do not stay and talk to other parents/carers

When and How do I use the RATs?

Where can I get additional information on how to use the RATs?

What should I do if my child tests positive?

What if my child is unwell at school?

What should I do if my child is unwell but doesn't test positive?

At home testing on the first and third day of the first week back, then each Monday and Wednesday going forward, as per NSW Health advice. **These tests are not mandatory but are highly recommended.**

The use of RAT kits is an important step to support the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. They are a quick and easy screening tool to help detect COVID-19. It is a simple process of placing a nose or throat swab in a chemical solution, which is put onto a scanning device. Results can be ready within 15 minutes. Use of RAT kits is highly recommended but not mandatory. When you collect your 4 RATs for each of your MHS students, we will also include a flyer outlining what to do should your child test positive.

Instructions are included in the kits detailing how to use the tests, check the results and dispose of the tests safely. You can also download the instructions through the [Therapeutic Goods Administration \(TGA\)](#) website. The user guides will also contain a contact number for the suppliers if you need additional support.

Additional information

School staff will not be administering the rapid antigen tests to students.

If a student or staff member receives a **positive** RAT result, they need to:

record the positive RAT result through the [Service NSW website](#) or [Service NSW app](#)

notify the school of the positive RAT or PCR result as soon as possible

follow [NSW Health advice](#) to isolate for 7 days.

Negative results **do not** need to be reported to Service NSW or to the school.

Any student or staff member who is unwell and/or displays symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to go home and stay until they can complete a RAT or PCR test.

If symptoms continue, they should stay at home and take another RAT in 24 hours or have a PCR test.

If the second RAT or initial PCR test result is negative and they are displaying no symptoms OR they are diagnosed as another condition such as hayfever, the student or staff member can return to school.

Deputy Principal for Year 9 and Year 11:

Mr Andrew McKay

What happens if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

Wearing of surgical masks

No visitors allowed to site, with some exceptions:

All staff on school sites are required to be fully vaccinated

Vaccinations are highly recommended

Head Teachers Wellbeing:

Ms Sarah Gambrill

Ms Megan Elliott

Under the new close contact rules, schools are no longer included in contact tracing. I will inform the school community when there is a positive case in our school and advise families on public health advice, including monitoring for symptoms.

Masks

School staff will be required to wear surgical masks indoors.

No vented masks or cloth masks should be worn. If required, surgical masks will be available at schools.

Secondary school students will be supplied with surgical masks, which they are required to wear indoors.

Primary school students are strongly recommended to wear well-fitted masks indoors.

Masks are strongly encouraged in outdoor settings where you cannot physically distance.

Masks are also strongly encouraged in outdoor settings where you cannot physically distance. Your child can remove their mask when: eating; exercising or playing a musical instrument; it is necessary for instruction purposes.

For more information, refer to [Face mask rules in NSW](#)

Visitors on school sites and vaccinations

No parents, carers or visitors will be allowed on school site until further notice with the following exceptions:

Two parents or carers are allowed to accompany their child into school on their first day of Kindergarten or Year 7 or students starting at a new school.

Volunteers or staff operating uniform shops and canteens must be fully vaccinated.

Visitors supporting school operations and curriculum delivery must be fully vaccinated.

Allied health partners for the wellbeing of students must be fully vaccinated.

All staff on school sites are required to be fully vaccinated, including having their booster when eligible.

We strongly encourage our students and their families to consider vaccination when eligible. [Find a vaccination clinic](#) to book an appointment near you.

Ventilation

Other key measures

We will continue to follow NSW Health ventilation guidelines that natural ventilation is the most effective measure so we will maximise fresh air flow in learning spaces through opening doors and windows. This approach is strongly supported by expert advice. Where natural ventilation is not sufficient, mechanical ventilation and/or air purification will be used and we will continue to use outdoor settings where possible.

Air purifiers

Air purifiers have been provided to schools as a supplementary measure to support common areas in schools and can be deployed at the principal's discretion. These purifiers could be located in areas where high levels of student and staff mixing occurs, such as staffrooms, internal canteens, student centres and music rooms.

Cleaning

Cleaning

We continue to have enhanced cleaning focusing on high-touch and high-traffic areas.

Physical distancing

Physical distancing

We will continue to follow physical distancing guidelines and maintain 1.5 metres distance wherever possible.

Cohorting – Playground areas for separate year groups

Cohorting

Each year group has their own area in the playground before school and at break times. They are clearly signposted at each main entrance to the school:

Year 7 – Year 7 Quad

Year 8 – Basement Area and in front of the MPC

Year 9 – Basketball Courts and area alongside the MPC

Year 10 – Main Quad

Year 11 – Front of the School

Year 12 – Year 7 Passive Area

Specialist Support Unit – Main Quad under the shade sails

Year 7 Year Adviser –

Ms Stephanie Tedd

Year 8 Year Adviser-

Mr Robert Walker

Potential Learning From Home arrangements

HSC Student Hub Resources

Uniform and footwear requirements

Student Assistance? Email

maitland-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au

PPE compliant footwear is mandatory for entry into practical classrooms under WorkSafe Australia regulations.

Year 9 Year Adviser-

Mr Joshua Noble

Year 10 Year Adviser

Mr James Keith

Potential learning from home arrangements.

In the event that the school needs to cease operations temporarily due to COVID-19, learning will continue online using the CANVAS Learning Management System which is in its third year of use for all our students. The regular school timetable will be used and staff will provide: a unit of work; direct instruction online, where the learning task is unpacked, demonstrated and discussed by the teacher in a video conference; each class each day will have a check in online with the class teacher based on the regular timetable.

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/learning-from-home/hsc-central/hsc-student-hub>

MHS is a uniform-wearing school and it is critical that a high standard of dress is maintained for student wellbeing and safety. We need to ensure that any intruder on site stands out immediately by their attire and students out of uniform compromise this. I am very eager to ensure that every student has access to our school uniform and will gladly provide Student Assistance to any family who needs it. Such assistance can also cover subject contributions and equipment. Please send an email to the school email address: maitland-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au with the subject line: 'Student Assistance' and we will send you the very short application forms. You can also ask your child to request these forms at the Front Office. These can be returned to the Front Office and once approved, uniform, fees and equipment can be supplied. The process is entirely confidential.

Fully enclosed, sturdy school shoes with a solid leather or leather-like waterproof upper are mandatory under WorkSafe Australia rules for entry into all practical classes. Assistance can also be provided to purchase appropriate footwear through the same process outlined above. The school is not legally permitted to allow students to engage in practical work in these classrooms without appropriate PPE footwear and equipment.

Early Leavers -process for collecting students before the end of the school day for essential purposes

Early Leaver notes

Early leavers processes – send note to school or phone early.

All parents and carers are reminded that the school needs to have prior permission note or phone call request to pick up students before the end of the school day. It is extremely inefficient and results in unnecessary delay for parents to have haphazard requests for early departures at the school gate, or phone calls from the car waiting outside. It takes time to locate the classroom your child is in; write the student note authorising the student to come to the front office; organise a student on School Service to go to the classroom and; sign out a student and check the bonafides of the adult collecting the student.

Early leaver notes

The Education Act 1990 requires that parents ensure that any absence from school is for a justifiable reason. On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

being sick, or having an infectious disease

having an unavoidable medical appointment

being required to attend a recognised religious holiday

exceptional or urgent family circumstance e.g. attending a funeral.

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school may contact you to discuss the absence. Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens the principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why.

Year 11 Year Adviser-

Ms Stephanie Primrose

Year 12 Year Advisers

**Ms India Bos / Mr Jake
Fletcher**

Core Behaviour Expectations at MHS

MHS Values

All students have the right to learn in settled and productive classrooms.

All students are valued, equal and unique and are supported to set high personal learning goals for a positive future.

All students have a right to be free from anti-social, aggressive or threatening behaviour in the playground.

All students have the right to make a fresh start, every day, knowing that teachers believe in them to become their best selves.

All students have at least one identified staff member at MHS who they can trust and turn to for support.

All students belong in this school.



MHS Classrooms

No disruptive or disrespectful Behaviour in class

Mobile phones are never used in class

Equipped and engaged in learning.

No excuses.



Hard and Fast 5

At MHS, the following are never tolerated:

- Physical violence
- Bullying, harassment
- Alcohol or drug use
- Swearing at a teacher
- Persistent disruption



They will result in Suspension.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are turned off and put away in bag before entering the classroom.

Ear-pieces are removed and put away in bag.

One request by teacher to do so at the classroom door.

Any infringement: phone is placed in envelope and taken to principal for the remainder of the day.

Phone breach occurs more than once in a day: phone banned from school for a week.

Phone breach occurs repeatedly: parent meeting with principal; phone banned from school for a month. Formal Caution.

Breach of ban: Suspension
No excuses.



Who do I contact?

Year Advisers: for peer or friendship issues; settling in concerns

Aboriginal Student Support

Head Teacher Wellbeing: for mental health, health or family concerns

Attendance Issues

Learning difficulties

Learning concerns in particular subjects, class placement issues; classroom concerns.

Serious peer and wellbeing issues

School management, staff and critical student issues

Careers planning

Please be assured that we would rather hear early if there is a problem or concern, rather than later when the problem or issue may have become more entrenched or worrying.

Year Advisers:

Year 7 Year Adviser: Ms Stephanie Tedd

Year 8 Year Adviser: Mr Robert Walker

Year 9 Adviser: Mr Josh Noble

Year 10 Adviser: Mr James Keith

Year 11 Adviser: Ms Stephanie Primrose

Year 12 Advisers: Ms India Bos / Mr Jake Fletcher

Aboriginal Community Partnerships Officer: Chantal Tanna

Aboriginal Education Officer: Warren Sherwood

Head Teacher Wellbeing:

Years 7, 9, 11: Ms Sarah Gambrell

Years 8, 10, 12: Ms Megan Elliot

Attendance Issues: Ms Megan Elliot

Learning Difficulties: Head Teacher Learning Support: Ms Genevieve Henry

Head Teacher Subject Areas:

English: Mr John Norberry

Mathematics: Mr Brett Burton

Science: Mr Scott Parrey

HSIE: Ms Michelle Matthews

PDHPE: Ms Michele Burgess

TAS: Ms Donna Howarth

CAPA: Ms Brittany Benton

Computers: Ms Donna Chapman-Hardy

Special Education Unit: Ms Jayne Cameron

Deputy Principals:

Years 8 & 10 – Ms Melissa Schatz

Years 9 & 11 – Mr Andrew McKay

Years 7 & 10 – Mr Andrew Robinson

Principal: Paula Graham