

# Barnier Public School

Barnier Drive Quakers Hill NSW 2763

Telephone: 9837 1600



Term3, 2022

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome to Term 3, I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday.

As we enter Term 3, I wanted to update you all on the department's updated COVID-smart measures which will be in place at our school. These measures have been developed with NSW Health and are aligned to the NSW Government's general community settings. These aim to keep our students and staff safe, while also keeping schools operating with minimal disruption to learning.

While we continue to face challenges, the wellbeing of our staff and students, and our students' education remain paramount. We will continue to implement our layered COVID-smart measures this term, which are aligned to the NSW Government's general community settings, including:

- staying home and getting tested if unwell, and only attending school when symptom free
- strongly encouraging mask-wearing for all staff and students, particularly in the first 4 weeks of term
- rapid antigen testing for symptomatic staff and students, and close contacts attending school to learn and work
- strongly encouraging staff, students and their families to get a flu vaccination
- good hygiene practices
- maximising natural ventilation
- boosted cleaning during the day, with particular attention given to high touch surface areas
- responding to local COVID-19 conditions when necessary, by working with the department's Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing team.

## What's new in Term 3?

As community settings continue to change, we continue to update our COVID-smart measures in consultation with NSW Health, to provide appropriate protection to our school community.

- **Boosted day cleaning.** The department has made a slight change to its cleaning process. Cleaning of school sites will now be more concentrated during the day, with an increase in cleaning during school hours, and a subsequent reduction in out-of-hours cleaning. Boosted day cleaning will continue to focus on high-touch areas and other hard surfaces, door handles, lockers, light switches and handrails in stairways and movement areas.

## What's continuing for Term 3?

- **Masks.** Masks are an effective way of minimising the transmission of viral illnesses and infectious diseases, and protecting our community, especially those who are at higher risk of severe illness. We strongly encourage all staff and students wear a mask for the first 4 weeks of Term 3, particularly in indoor settings or when distancing is not possible. Masks remain required for staff working with students at greater risk of serious illness should they contract COVID-19. NSW Health advice recommends wearing a mask for people who have recovered from COVID-19 and recently completed their 7-day isolation period for an additional 3 days (from days 8 to 10 after receiving a positive COVID-19 result) to help minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19. Additionally, as outlined in the below section on close contacts, mask wearing is mandatory for staff and high school students returning to school as close contacts for 5 days and recommended for primary school students returning to school as close contacts for 5 days. Where students or staff are unable to wear a mask, they will be supported to learn or work remotely.
- **Rapid antigen tests (RATs).** The department will send another round of RATs to our school early this term, which we will provide to you in the form of 1 multipack of 5 RAT kits per staff member and student. These RATs can be used as required for symptomatic testing, such as if you are displaying even mild symptoms, [DELETE FOR SSPs/support units: and daily testing for close contacts returning to school]. Once these department-supplied RATs are exhausted, please continue to access store-purchased RATs which are now readily available in the community or PCR tests. Additionally, our school will be maintaining a reserve stock of RATs onsite to support symptomatic testing in the event of an outbreak in our school community. Please also remember that positive RAT results must be registered with ServiceNSW, and you must not attend work until your isolation period ends and you are symptom free.
- Staff and students identified as close contacts remain able to attend school providing they are symptom free, notify the school and return a negative COVID-19 test result daily for 5 consecutive school days. Additionally, all staff and secondary students are required to wear a mask for 5 consecutive school days (except when eating/drinking or exercising). Primary students, while not required, are strongly encouraged to wear a mask for 5 consecutive school days (except when eating/drinking). Please note that staff and students identified as close contacts are still unable to attend overnight excursions, including camps. Visitors identified as close contacts who are engaging directly with students are required to return a negative COVID-19 test result before attending our school and wear a mask.
- **Maximising natural ventilation.** The department has reviewed all school sites as part of its winter ventilation planning to ensure that local climatic conditions at each school are considered. The department has provided local guidance to our schools, including advice on maximising natural ventilation while balancing thermal comfort and the use of indoor and outdoor learning areas for school activities to support schools to adapt to local climate conditions through the winter months. If you do have any concerns about how we are implementing ventilation at our school, please don't hesitate to contact me and I will liaise further with our Assets Management Unit.

- **Responding to our local situation.** We will continue to liaise with NSW Health and the department's Health and Safety Case Management team to ensure our COVID-smart settings keep up with the latest developments. If local conditions require it, this may mean reintroducing temporary additional COVID-smart measures to act as a 'circuit breaker', including:
  - mandating mask wearing for all staff and students in Year 7 and above (high school settings)
  - mandating mask wearing for all staff (primary school settings)
  - postponing or limiting non-essential activities like excursions, indoor assemblies and visitors to the school
  - directing cohorts to learn remotely for short periods of time.

**Reducing the risk of illness this winter.** Finally, it is important to note NSW Health's advice to reduce our risk of not only COVID-19, but other illnesses that may affect our school at this time of year like flu and [respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\)External link](#), both of which can be serious in young people. We can all protect our loved ones and our community by:

- staying home and getting tested if unwell

keeping up to date with our vaccinations – including the flu vaccine, which is available from your local GP, pharmacy or Aboriginal Medical Service now.

- getting tested immediately for COVID-19 if you become symptomatic and isolating until you receive a negative result and are symptom free
- practicing good hand hygiene by washing regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitiser
- taking a RAT before visiting vulnerable loved ones or going to large gatherings and events

Please do not hesitate to contact the school office if you have any concerns or questions.

*Warm regards,  
Mrs Mandy Hollis*

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*A proud member of the Blacktown and Quakers Hill Learning Communities*