

COVID Safe Plan

Business name:	Monash University
Site location:	All campuses and Monash locations
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Monash COVID Safe Strategies

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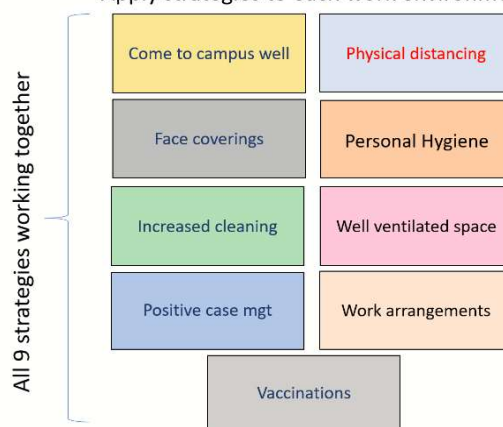
Introduction

The health and safety of the Monash community is the highest priority. Monash is committed to protecting the Monash community from the transmission of COVID-19 and has developed a nine-pillar risk control strategy, in line with the government advice.

The nine strategies work together to protect the staff, students, contractors and other persons including visitors to the University. They are applied to the diverse range of spaces and activities the University undertakes. The University has carefully assessed the latest advice from Government agencies, including the Health Department, Department of Education and Training and WorkSafe. The current community vaccination levels have resulted in 75% of Victorian adults receiving their third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine¹.

The Monash COVID Safe Plan has been developed under the direction of the Monash Chief Medical Officer and in consultation with staff from across the University to ensure it is fit for purpose. The plan is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing nature of the pandemic. Version 32 of the plan supports the continued safe operation of our campuses and is cognisant of the ending of the Victorian Pandemic Orders and the need to manage COVID as an ongoing OHS risk.

Apply strategies to each work environment:



¹
<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/numbers-statistics>

Strategy 1. Come to campus well

Victorian Government, WorkSafe, Department of Education and Training & Department of Health guidance relating to Monash University:

- Persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home and isolate for 5 days and not return to onsite work or study until they are no longer symptomatic. This recommendation extends to 7 days where a person would be attending a sensitive setting (eg hospital, aged care).
- Any person who has COVID-19 symptoms but not tested positive should not attend their place of work or study until they are no longer symptomatic.

Monash Actions

Communication

- *Consistent with the Government's health messaging Monash has communicated to all staff, students, contractors and visitors to only attend Monash University locations, including campuses and offices, if they are well.*
- *All persons attending Monash University locations including staff, students, contractors and visitors are expected to continually monitor themselves for symptoms.*
- *Monash University continues to reinforce this message by communicating with:*
 - *All staff and students. In order to protect the Monash community, it remains essential that all staff and students who are feeling unwell and showing even the mildest symptoms of COVID-19, do not attend any Monash University locations and instead get tested for COVID-19. Faculties and Divisions will continue to reinforce this message in all COVID related correspondence with staff and students.*
 - *Members of the public and contractors. It remains essential that anyone who is feeling unwell and showing even the mildest symptoms of COVID-19, does not attend any Monash University locations. This may include research participants, persons attending Monash functions or utilising the campus facilities. The Monash personnel arranging or coordinating the visits reinforce this message in correspondence with members of the public who may be due to attend a Monash University location.*

Absence from University

- *Fixed-term and ongoing staff who have tested positive to COVID-19 and who are not well enough to work will be required to utilise their existing sick leave entitlements whilst they are absent from work. Staff who have exhausted their accrued sick leave, can apply to access existing special paid leave provisions or apply for isolation leave if required to isolate by a medical practitioner. <https://publicpolicydms.monash.edu/Monash/documents/1935723>*
- *The University will utilise alternative student learning methods and assessment activities so as not to disadvantage students if they are unable to attend campus due to illness. Students are required to notify Monash using the specified form.*
- *Further information may be found in Strategy 7, below, regarding persons who are positive cases, close contacts or social contacts.*

Rapid Antigen Testing (Monitoring)

- *Rapid Antigen Tests for monitoring purposes will be provided by Monash University, subject to supply, for use in the following situations. The voluntary monitoring program has been extended until 31/1/23, subject to supply availability. The use of RATs for monitoring purposes is voluntary.*
- *Decisions regarding which individual staff will be offered RATs for monitoring purposes are to be made by the head of the Faculty/Division or their delegate, unless otherwise noted. Staff members who may consider completing monitoring RATs include those who work in community facing or critical on-site roles and those who work with known positive cases or vulnerable persons.*
- *A limited supply of RATs will also be available through Faculties/Departments for distribution/use as needed, which shall include provision of RATs to take on a field trip or camp in the event that a person develops symptoms during the trip.*

Strategy 2. Physical distancing

Victorian Government, WorkSafe, Department of Education and Training & Department of Health guidance relating to Monash University:

- Where possible, maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres from each other.

Monash Actions

- *Keeping 1.5 metres distance where possible remains a recommended control measure. Physical distancing between workstations has been assessed and adjustments made to maintain 1.5 m 'head to head' distancing between people in staff work areas where possible.*
- *Where there are local ('split systems' or window, wall and ceiling mounted air conditioning systems) or no ventilation systems in place, Monash may choose to reduce occupancy in these spaces.*
- *Floor markings may be installed in areas where staff and students congregate including queues for service desks, retail outlets and lifts.*
- *Physical distancing is included in the University's 'How to Stay Safe' messaging.*

Strategy 3. Face coverings

Victorian Government, WorkSafe, Department of Education and Training & Department of Health guidance relating to Monash University:

- Face coverings are recommended to be worn when persons (aged 8 years and above) are on public transport, indoors, have any COVID-19 symptoms, are with people who are at higher risk to COVID-19 or are in a space where unable to physically distance (unless they have a valid reason to not do so, eg medical condition).
- Face coverings should be worn by all persons working and visiting (aged 8 years and above) a hospital or care facility. Employers should provide training, instruction and guidance on how to correctly fit, use and dispose of PPE.
- Face coverings should be worn by a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 7 days after a positive test when they need to leave home.
- Types of face covering which are recommended for use by the Victorian Department of Health include 3 layer cloth, surgical and N95.

Monash Actions

- *Face coverings are recommended to be worn in all indoor settings and strongly recommended when travelling on University transport (inter-campus buses, shared Monash vehicles). In particular this applies where people are serving or facing members of the public or where it is not possible to physically distance.*
- *Face coverings should be worn by persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 7 days after a positive test when they attend a Monash work location (further information in section 7).*
- *Monash University may require the use of face coverings in certain settings where this is endorsed by the Monash University Chief Medical Officer or their Deputy.*
- *Persons who have a physical or mental health illness or condition, or disability, which makes wearing a face covering unsuitable are exempt from doing so.*
- *Face coverings should be worn when at a sensitive setting, for example a hospital. When persons are visiting the University Health Service, a mask should be worn.*

- *'How to Stay Safe' messaging has been used to reinforce the wearing of a face covering when in Monash buildings and outside when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Monash University will continue to provide strong messaging regarding the recommendation to wear face coverings in indoor settings.*
- *Until 31/1/23,*
 - *Staff and students will be provided surgical masks to wear on campus, if they choose to do so.*
 - *To provide respiratory protection, P2/N95 respirators will be supplied to staff and students working directly on campus with persons who have tested positive for COVID-19. Appropriate instruction and fit testing will be provided.*
 - *To reduce transmission, P2/N95 respirators will be provided to community facing staff working with the public and students and staff working with susceptible groups. Instruction will be provided to staff on appropriate respirator fit checking.*

Strategy 4. Practice good personal hygiene

Victorian Government, WorkSafe, Department of Education and Training & Department of Health guidance relating to Monash University:

- Employers should make soap and hand sanitiser available for all workers and customers at the workplace and encourage regular handwashing.

Monash Actions

- *Monash University has deployed hand sanitiser stations across all its campuses and buildings to ensure all staff and students have multiple opportunities to hand sanitise when entering a building or workspace. This may include stations at the entry to buildings, entry and exits of lifts and main stair landings.*
- *Hand sanitiser is provided in teaching spaces, office, workshop and laboratory areas to encourage regular hand sanitising throughout the day.*
- *The University cleaning team is ensuring adequate soap is available in all bathrooms, with a method provided to dry hands.*
- *Posters may be displayed in bathrooms, lunch areas and above hand sanitiser stations showing the correct method of washing or sanitising hands.*

Strategy 5. Increased Cleaning

Victorian Government, WorkSafe, Department of Education and Training & Department of Health guidance relating to Monash University:

- Employers should clean and disinfect high touch surface regularly.

Monash Actions

- *Monash University has a cleaning regime which incorporates the Department of Health cleaning guidelines², including the use of disinfectant products during the normal routine (early morning) cleaning. The use of disinfectant cleaning product also meets the requirement for cleaning spaces where a positive case has attended.*
- *Until the end of the Semester 2 exam period (18/1/22) additional daytime cleaners (outfitted in pink vests) are engaged to complete regular high touch surface cleaning at Monash Sport, Secret Garden, Hargreaves Library, Matheson Library, Campus Centre, Chancellery, LTB and Woodside. At Caulfield, the Library, Graze on the Green and S Building. At Peninsula, the Library and Building A. At Parkville, the Library and building common areas.*

² [COVID-19 cleaning guidelines for workplaces and the general public | health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/cleaning-guidelines-for-workplaces-and-the-general-public/)

- *Additional cleaning materials (eg alcohol wipes) are provided to allow staff and students to wipe down their furniture and equipment before and after work/study or exercise.*
- *The cleaning regime is provided on the University's internet for staff and students to understand the new cleaning standards and frequencies.*
- *Inspections are undertaken to ensure the quality of the cleaning is maintained.*

Strategy 6. Well ventilated spaces

Victorian Government, WorkSafe, Department of Education and Training & Department of Health guidance relating to Monash University:

- Optimise ventilation systems including provision of fresh outdoor air, improving airflow and filtration.

Monash Actions

- *The University has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of all of its buildings to ensure the ventilation systems are effectively providing sufficient outside air and do not represent an increased COVID transmission risk. Monash is ensuring the ventilation systems are meeting or exceeding Australian Standard 1668.2 and regular monitoring and maintenance of the systems is in place.*
- *The ventilation systems supporting all central teaching spaces have been reviewed and where appropriate upgrades completed to ensure teaching can be conducted at normal room occupancy.*
- *The outcomes of the ventilation review are available on the Monash COVID safe website.*
https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/2859156/Monash-COVID-Safe-Plan-ventilation-bldg-list.pdf
- *Additional COVID safe measures are being applied to buildings or spaces with no ventilation system or areas supported by local 'split systems' or window, wall and ceiling mounted air conditioning systems (that primarily recirculate the air in the room). This includes measures such as:*
 - *Activities involving large groups in small spaces with no or local ventilation systems being scheduled to other well-ventilated spaces*
 - *Reducing room occupancy*
 - *Installing a portable air purifier unit/s*
 - *Opening windows and doors to provide outside air into the room and using fans and recirculating systems to create air movement*
- *Staff and students are encouraged to undertake activities outside if possible. Meetings, discussion groups etc which do not require technology are ideally undertaken outside if weather permits.*

Strategy 7. Positive Case and Close Contact Management

Victorian Government, WorkSafe, Department of Education and Training & Department of Health guidance relating to Monash University:

- Regarding notification:
 - Workers (including contractors) who receive a positive COVID-19 result and have attended an indoor space at a Monash University location during their infectious period should notify Monash University.
 - Students and other persons who receive a positive COVID-19 result and have attended an indoor space at a Monash University location during their infectious period should notify Monash University.
 - Persons who test positive to COVID-19 should take all reasonable steps to notify their close (household) contacts and social (including workplace) contacts.
- Regarding positive cases, it is strongly recommended that:

- Persons who test positive to COVID-19 stay home and isolate for 5 days and not return to onsite work or study until they are no longer symptomatic. They should also wear a mask when outside their home for at least 7 days after their positive test result and should not attend any sensitive settings (for example, hospitals or aged care) or visit people at high risk of severe illness
- Workers from sensitive settings (eg hospitals) should not return to working in a sensitive setting for at least 7 days and should have a negative RAT result prior to returning.
- Regarding unwell persons, it is strongly recommended that:
 - Persons who are unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19, not attend their place of work or study until they are no longer symptomatic.
- Regarding close (household) contacts:
 - Persons who are identified as close (household) contacts should follow precautions in the 7 days after being advised they are a close contact, including not visiting sensitive settings and wearing a mask.

Monash Actions

Positive Case Management

- *Monash requests that persons who test positive to COVID-19 notify the University of their positive test result.*
- *Monash will continue to engage with the Department of Health local Public Health Unit, as appropriate.*
- *It is strongly recommended that persons who test positive for COVID-19 do not attend a Monash location and instead self-isolate for 5 days, or until they are no longer symptomatic. [For example, if a person tested positive on Monday, they would leave isolation on the following Saturday if they were well].*
- *It is recommended that persons who test positive for COVID-19 wear a face covering when outside their home for at least 7 days from the day they tested positive and do not visit any sensitive settings, like hospitals or care facilities during this time.*
- *Persons who are workers at a sensitive setting (for example a hospital) should seek additional advice from that workplace regarding any particular isolation requirements.*

Other Contacts

- *Social contacts. If informed by a colleague or student that you were a social contact, it is recommended that you closely monitor yourself for COVID-19 symptoms, complete a COVID-19 test if any appear and consider sourcing some monitoring RATs to use.*
- *Close (household) contacts. Where a person in their household has tested positive for COVID-19, should:*
 - *Closely monitor themselves for symptoms. If unwell they should not attend a Monash location.*
 - *Test regularly using RATs in the period following their notification as a close contact. Completion of a daily RAT prior to attending a Monash location is encouraged for the 7 days following notification..*
 - *Wear a mask when outside the home for 7 days.*
 - *Discuss options with their supervisor if they work or study in a sensitive setting (for example, health care or working with vulnerable persons). If a person must attend it is strongly recommended that a RAT is completed prior to attending and a mask worn.*

Rapid Antigen Testing (Diagnostic)

- *Rapid Antigen Testing for diagnostic purposes supplied by Monash University may be utilised in the following situations:*
 - *Diagnosis of symptomatic persons who present at the University Health Service.*
 - *Diagnosis of symptomatic persons who reside at a Monash Residential Service location.*
 - *The supply of one rapid antigen test, where available, to a staff member or student who becomes symptomatic whilst at a Monash work location. If close to a University Health Service centre, contact the triage nurse on 9905 3175 to discuss that they are 'developing symptoms and need to obtain a RAT', then wait OUTSIDE the UHS location for the RAT to be provided to you. Note: symptomatic persons must not attend campus to obtain a RAT.*

Strategy 8. Work Arrangements

Victorian Government, WorkSafe, Department of Education and Training & Department of Health guidance relating to Monash University:

- Universities are encouraged to support staff and students who have tested positive to COVID-19 or are symptomatic, to work and study from home.

Monash Actions

- *Monash has implemented a “hybrid” work strategy and has established a range of HR procedures and resources to support staff working from home.*
- *Where a person has a medical condition, which may leave them more susceptible to COVID-19 symptoms, alternative work arrangements may be established.*
- *Where a person has been diagnosed with ‘long COVID’ and requires additional time/support to recover, you may apply to access any accrued leave entitlements, including sick leave (supported by a medical certificate), annual leave, long service leave or special leave without pay where all accrued leave entitlements have been exhausted. Other options include applying for a ‘voluntary reduced working year’ or requesting a flexible work arrangement.*
- *Where a person would like some individual support/counselling, they are encouraged to utilise the Employee Assistance Program (1300 360 364) or the University Counselling Services (9905 3020).*
- *Where catering is being arranged, the Monash COVID Safe Catering Guidelines should be supported wherever possible, including provision of single serve options without sharing food, drinks or crockery between people.*
<https://www.monash.edu/ohs/health-and-wellbeing/nutritional-health/monash-catering>

Strategy 9. Vaccinations

Victorian Government, WorkSafe, Department of Education and Training & Department of Health guidance relating to Monash University:

- No persons are required to present their vaccination status to Monash.
- Healthcare workers are required to comply with the COVID-19 Vaccination Directions from the Secretary, Department of Health³.
- COVID-19 vaccination is strongly encouraged.

Monash Actions

- *Vaccination remains strongly encouraged for all persons attending a Monash University location.*
- *Persons attending Monash University locations with underlying health conditions are encouraged to speak with their GP and ensure they are fully vaccinated.*
- *Persons working in a healthcare setting (public health services, public hospitals, denominational hospitals, private hospitals and day procedure centres, ambulance services, patient transport services engaged by a health service or Ambulance Victoria, or residential aged care services operated by public health services) must comply with the COVID-19 Vaccination Directions from the Secretary, Department of Health. For most workers in these settings three doses of vaccine are required.*

6 August 2020
25 October 2022

Original Date
Modified Date

³ health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/vaccination-for-healthcare-workers