

31<sup>st</sup> January 2022

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Dear Encounter Families

As we commence the 2022 school year, I thank you for showing such active support of your children and our staff team as we prepare for an extraordinary start to Term 1. Your public and personal recognition of the efforts of staff has been appreciated and has also enabled us to confidently plan for a wonderful first few weeks, whether your children be at school or connecting online.

### Preparing for the new school year

One small housekeeping item relates to end of holiday haircuts and ensuring that your child's hair adheres to our Uniform Policy, which states 'hairstyles will not draw unnecessary attention to individuals'. With that in mind, any colouring or shaving of hair that will attract attention will need to be addressed urgently, so please make sure your kids are appropriately groomed for their first day of face-to-face learning. Thanks for your support.

### New Uniform Items

With the introduction of our new uniform items this year, we have been advised that there has been a delay with some of our new items arriving instore as a result of related supply chain issues. While the new puffer vests and girls shirt have now arrived, the boys shirt won't be available until late February, and the new Encounter jackets are now due in late April.

### Upcoming Key Dates

- **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February** – Term 1 commences face-to-face for students in Foundation, Year 1, Year 7, Year 8 and Year 12.
  - Term 1 commences online for students in Years 2-6, and Years 9-11.
- **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February** – Junior School Information Evening, 6.00pm (online).
- **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February** – Middle and Senior School Meet & Greet, including Year 9 Information Evening, 6.00pm (online). Please note the date clarification from previous email correspondence.
- **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February** – Middle and Senior School Student ID Photos (new date).

### 2022 Parent Handbook

The 2022 edition of the Parent Handbook is now available via the following link:  
[www.encounter.sa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Parent-Handbook-2022-1-1.pdf](http://www.encounter.sa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Parent-Handbook-2022-1-1.pdf)

Further information is also available via the [Parent Lounge](#) on our website at [www.encounter.sa.edu.au](http://www.encounter.sa.edu.au)

## COVID Safe Arrangements

The remainder of this letter outlines how we will need to operate in the next few weeks to maximise staff and student safety. Part way through Week 2, I am expecting an update that will allow us to plan for Week 3 and beyond. Here's hoping that translates to all Encounter students being back on site and some restrictions easing a little.

Firstly, Encounter will remain open if there is a case of COVID-19 under the new arrangements.

It is very important that you notify us immediately if your child tests positive to COVID-19 (see email address below). Please keep your children home if they are:

- unwell
- experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms (even if symptoms are mild)
- any other member of the household has COVID-19
- they are a close contact for a person who has COVID-19 and are required to quarantine.

Unfortunately, we will make contact with parents/carers if symptoms are evident during the school day.

## Classroom Contacts

If a student or teacher in your child's class tests positive for COVID-19, your child will be deemed a classroom contact and the following will occur:

- we will notify all parents in that class of the positive case
- all students and children without symptoms can continue attending school. No Rapid Antigen Testing will be required.

Any teacher who is in a classroom with a student or colleague who tests positive will undertake 7 days of Rapid Antigen Testing (test to stay).

## Additional Recommendations for Classroom Contacts

The Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO) has recommended that classroom contacts should avoid the following between days 1 to 7 of exposure:

- attendance at OSHC where possible
- attending extra-curricular activities for 7 days (such as camps, excursions, interschool sport, combined choir etc – noting most of these activities have been temporarily suspended until week 4).

The CPHO advises classroom contacts should do the following to minimise risk to others, when outside of the school setting between days 1 to 14 of exposure:

- avoid high risk settings or COVID Management Plan events
- wear a surgical mask around others (where age appropriate) and outside the home
- avoid contact with vulnerable people outside of your workplace or family, where possible
- avoid non-essential activities where possible (eg where there are lots of people, inside, in close contact)
- avoid shared spaces and maintain physical distance.

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## **Students who have Worked 1:1 with a COVID Positive Staff Member**

Any student who has worked 1:1 with a COVID positive staff member (more than 15 minutes, indoors, in close proximity and where face masks are not able to be worn) will be asked to complete 7 days of rapid antigen testing ('test to stay'). The test should be taken each morning before attending school. We will provide you with the testing kits at no charge. Students who test positive must not attend school. Alternatively, if you do not want your child to complete the 7-day testing protocol, they must quarantine for 7 days.

Please note that Encounter staff will be wearing masks for the vast majority of the time while in contact with students, which will significantly reduce the likelihood of positive cases and will also minimise the impact on students having to take part in the 'test to stay' program.

## **Surveillance Testing for Preschool and Childcare Staff**

In our Early Learning Centre, staff will undertake surveillance Rapid Antigen Testing every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning and will attend the workplace if they receive a negative result.

All of these new arrangements will be in place until the end of Term 1, Week 4. However, with the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic, this may be reviewed or changed if and when necessary. As always, we will remain flexible and responsive.

Some further specific and critical reminders for our community include:

Masks are strongly recommended for students in Years 7 to 12 and encouraged for students in Years 3 to 6. Students in Foundation to Year 2 are also welcome to wear masks. Given the confined space and limited ventilation on our school buses, we strongly encourage masks to be worn by all students who use this service.

No parents/carers are able to be on site to commence Term 1. We do hope this is relaxed and will let you know as soon as possible. Essential adult visitors will be able to be on-site, including allied health professionals and contractors who are critical to school operations.

All events in the first part of Term 1 will have to be postponed, rescheduled, relocated or, at worst, cancelled. We hope to reschedule our much beloved Night on the Green to a date in Term 4, but it would be irresponsible to proceed with our original date of 25<sup>th</sup> February in our current circumstances. A decision relating to Sports Day and Term 1 camps will be delayed for a few weeks, but we are hopeful of holding these events in some form, albeit in accordance with the advice from SA Health.

In the coming weeks please be assured of our ongoing and transparent communication. This will come in various forms, but one new strategy is a dedicated email address we have established to receive notification of positive student COVID cases, as well as providing a forum to ask questions about how we are supporting the Encounter community in regard to upholding staff and student welfare. The email address is [covidcomms@encounter.sa.edu.au](mailto:covidcomms@encounter.sa.edu.au). Emails sent to this address will be viewed and responded to within 24 hours. Please use this means of communication rather than contacting Administration staff regarding COVID matters.

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This will enable us to respond in a timely manner, as well as you being confident the information you receive is coming from a reliable source that has the most updated, school-relevant information from our State Government and SA Health. Although we are creating this dedicated email address, please ensure you are carefully reading all correspondence from the College so we are not repeating the same information across one forum to another.

Thank you again for your trust and your strong advocacy for Encounter. I am confident we will overcome all challenges together and look forward to seeing your children thrive as our year gets underway.

Sincerely



**Kelvin Grivell**  
Principal

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