



COVID-19

Member Update - 6 August 2020

Following [my email to you on Tuesday](#), this is a quick update about a couple of important issues now that Stage 4 restrictions have taken effect in Melbourne and all schools across Victoria have moved to remote learning. We are still waiting for operational guidelines to be released by the Department of Education which will no doubt be replicated in our schools. As soon as guidelines become available we will share them with you.

Remote Learning

From Wednesday this week schools switched to remote learning for students at all year levels.

In Melbourne, on-site supervision will be available to:

- Children whose parents are permitted workers. It is currently unclear whether the children of school staff who are working from home will be eligible for this, and we are seeking urgent updates.
- Vulnerable children in out of home care, children known to child protection and other agencies and children the school identifies as vulnerable.
- Children with a disability who also fit one of the above two categories.

In rural and regional Victoria, on-site supervision will be available to:

- Children whose parents cannot work from home
- Vulnerable children
- Any child with a disability.

The very clear message from DHHS is that as few people as possible should be onsite at a school – this includes students and staff.

Permits

In metropolitan Melbourne from midnight last night, a permit is required for any permitted employee to attend their workplace and travel between their home and workplace. You may travel to your workplace once without a permit in order to collect it. Principals/employers are responsible for issuing the permits to school staff who are required to be onsite for supervision, assessments, and any other critical tasks that can't be done remotely. Employees are required to carry their permit or have a digital version available on their device. There are significant penalties for employers and employees who breach the scheme requirements.

Childcare, kindergarten and school supervision for children of school staff.

In metropolitan Melbourne, a staff member who is a permitted worker or who is performing work from home and who can attest that there is not another person in their household who is able to provide care to their child will be entitled to access childcare or kindergarten. A permit signed by the employer and co-signed by the employee is required.

Permitted workers will be able to access school supervision programs for their child if there is nobody else in their household to provide care. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of clarity around arrangements for the school-aged children of school staff working from home – we are urgently seeking this.

On-site staffing

We have heard concerning reports of some schools proposing blanket arrangements such as requiring certain categories of staff to attend the workplace for all their normal hours. We cannot emphasise strongly enough that this is not acceptable. The starting point in consideration of who and how many staff are onsite is just that – who do we need onsite on any day to supervise the students who are there and perform other essential tasks that can only be performed on the school property. It is not about whether or not an employee's usual tasks can be done from home, rather it is about whether those tasks absolutely need to be undertaken at this time.

Genuine consultation with staff, HSRs and the IEU rep should occur in all workplaces. In planning for the next few weeks, it is essential that the personal circumstances of staff as well as issues of equity be taken into consideration.

We know this is a challenging time for everyone - school leaders and staff. There are big changes being implemented very quickly, and we will continue to advocate for you and keep you informed.

Please don't hesitate to contact us for advice or support – you can reach us at info@ieuvictas.org.au or by sending a text message to 0480 092 251. You can find further information and updates on the [dedicated section of our website](#) and by following us on [Facebook](#), [twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

In unity

Debra James

General Secretary