



Monday 8 November

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you all had a good weekend. You may have seen the announcement today regarding a rollout of Rapid Antigen Testing in schools across Victoria. While this is very much in the trial stage, this update will provide you with some further information about a possible rollout at Castlemaine Secondary College. I have also included information and flyers for two parent webinars being hosted by Headspace, coming up in a few weeks.

### **Rapid Antigen Testing**

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved the use of rapid antigen testing for home use from Monday 1 November.

The Department of Education and Training is currently working with the Department of Health to roll-out a state-wide program for any new COVID-19 exposures on school sites from Monday 15 November. This program will help unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students to return to school as quickly as possible after being identified as a primary close contact (PCC) after a seven-day quarantine, instead of a 14-day quarantine.

We will have more information for parents and carers ahead of the statewide roll-out, including factsheets, web copy, video content and other materials to assist with the program.

#### *How the rapid antigen testing program will work*

The at-home rapid antigen testing program is an opt-in program for unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated, students. Our college will provide you with rapid antigen test kits. You do not need to buy these test kits.

Following an exposure at Castlemaine Secondary College, if you are notified your child has been identified as primary close contact (PCC) of a confirmed COVID-19 case, you will have the option of participating in the at-home rapid antigen testing program.

Your child must quarantine at home for seven days. On day six of quarantine, your child must get a standard (PCR) test at your local COVID-19 testing site. If the test is negative, you must provide the results to us, and your child can then return to school on day eight.

Students will then be required to return a negative rapid antigen test result **each morning** from days eight to 14 on school days, which must be reported to the college by 8:30am before they arrive on-site. We will provide further advice about how this needs to be reported.

Parents should continue to follow current school policy and public health advice. If your child is unwell, even with the mildest of symptoms, they must stay at home and get tested for COVID-19 with a standard (PCR) test, regardless of a negative rapid antigen test result.

This pilot, and later statewide roll-out of rapid antigen testing is one of many strategies currently in place to support schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information about what strategies are in place, please visit the [department's website](#) or call the department's COVID-19 hotline on 1800 338 663.

### **Headspace Parent/Carer Webinars**

There are upcoming two parent webinars on supporting young people with their mental health and well-being. These webinars are being delivered in conjunction with headspace National and headspace Bendigo. It is a very simple process to register for these webinars; you just open the attached flyer and click here.

#### **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November at 7:00pm**

##### **Connecting and Communicating with your young person (60 minutes)**

This session focuses on what parents might notice with their young person and how to have a conversation about it. It looks at how parents need to be aware and notice changes in emotions, thoughts, actions and behaviours. It covers how to better connect and communicate with young people and what are some skills you can learn to improve and assist that communication.

#### **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 7:00pm**

##### **Accessing help for my young person. Who, how and where (60 minutes).**

This session is about what you can do to provide support for your young person around their mental health. We have focused on a wide range of support services that are free and accessible. We have also looked at what is available online including the use of phone apps. The hope is that this webinar will provide parents with multiple options from where they can access support for their young person.

I hope you find these sessions useful.

I will continue to provide updates when there is information which needs to be shared with you all.

Take care of yourselves and each other.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Wood', written in a cursive style.

Simon Wood

Acting Principal – Castlemaine Secondary College