

# Research Note

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## Chronology of primary and secondary school closures in Victoria due to COVID-19

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This chronology charts the cessation and resumption of on-site learning for Victorian government primary and secondary schools between March 2020 and November 2021. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school year was modified in an attempt to reduce in-person gatherings and movement across the state. Using predominantly government media releases, as well as information from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the chronology maps the changes to the school year—from the initial transition from on-site learning to remote learning, and then the resumption of on-site learning, in Victorian schools.

A visualisation of this data is [available on the Intranet](#) (internal access only).

## 2020

Date	Announcement	Source
28 January	Term 1 begins.	Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) ' <a href="#">Back to school dates 2020</a> ', DESE website, [archived 19 February 2020].
22 February	Travel exemptions to be granted to senior high school students who cannot travel to Australia, due to restrictions on foreign nationals who have been in mainland China.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) ' <a href="#">Facilitating China-based students to attend Year 11 and 12</a> ', media release, 22 February.
22 March	It's announced that the school holidays will be brought forward to 24 March.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) ' <a href="#">Statement from the Premier</a> ', media release, 22 March.
24 March	Term 1 concludes.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) ' <a href="#">Statement from the Premier</a> ', media release, 22 March.
27 March	Original Term 1 end date.	Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) ' <a href="#">Back to school dates 2020</a> ', DESE website, [archived 19 February 2020].
7 April	It's announced that during Term 2 'all children who can learn at home must learn from home'.	D. Andrews (Premier) & J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) ' <a href="#">Victorian students to learn from home, as VCE timelines revised</a> ', media release, 7 April.
14 April	Term 2 begins with a pupil-free day.	Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) ' <a href="#">Back to school dates 2020</a> ', DESE website, [archived 19 February 2020].
15 April	Students begin Term 2 classes, remotely.	D. Andrews (Premier) & J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) ' <a href="#">Victorian students to learn from home, as VCE timelines revised</a> ', media release, 7 April.
12 May	A timeline for resuming on-site learning is released.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) ' <a href="#">Getting our kids back into the classroom</a> ', media release, 12 May.
22 May	Details on how VCE and VCAL exams will be run are released.	J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) ' <a href="#">Certainty for students with exams to start in November</a> ', media release, 22 May.
25 May	Pupil-free day.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) ' <a href="#">Getting our kids back into the classroom</a> ', media release, 12 May.

## 2020

Date	Announcement	Source
26 May	Prep, Grade 1 and 2, VCE and VCAL students, vulnerable students in Year 3 – 10 and those whose parents cannot work from home resume on-site learning.	J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <i>First wave of students back in the classroom</i> , media release, 26 May.
9 June	Grades 3 – 10 return to on-site learning.	J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <i>All students back in the classroom</i> , media release, 9 June.
26 June	Term 2 concludes.	Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) ' <a href="#">Back to school dates 2020</a> ', DESE website, [archived 19 February 2020].
7 July	The plan for school in Term 2 is released.  VCE students in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will return to on-site learning for Term 3 as planned on 13 July.  Prep – Year 10 students will have an additional week of school holidays.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) <i>Statement from the Premier</i> , media release, 7 July.
9 July	Daily temperature checks to be introduced in schools across metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) <i>Temperature checks to be introduced in Term 3</i> , media release, 9 July.
12 July	Prep – Year 10 students in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will begin Term 3 with remote learning from Monday 20 July until at least 19 August.	D. Andrews (Premier) & J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <i>Return to flexible and remote learning</i> , media release, 12 July.
13 July	Term 3 begins.  Only VCE, VCAL and students whose parents and carers cannot work from home, and those attending local specialist schools, return to on-site learning.  Schools in regional and rural Victoria return to on-site learning.	Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) ' <a href="#">Back to school dates 2020</a> ', DESE website, [archived 19 February 2020].  D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) <i>Temperature checks to be introduced in Term 3</i> , media release, 9 July.
20 July	Most Prep – Year 10 students begin Term 3 remote learning.  Face masks to be required in schools from 23 July.	D. Andrews (Premier) & J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <i>Face coverings and masks for metro schools</i> , media release, 20 July.

## 2020

Date	Announcement	Source
2 August	All school children (including in regional and rural Victoria) to return to remote learning from 5 August. Children of permitted workers and vulnerable children may attend on-site learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) <a href="#">Statement on changes to regional restrictions</a> , media release, 2 August.
4 August	Pupil-free day for those who attend on-site learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) <a href="#">Statement on changes to Melbourne's restrictions</a> , media release, 2 August.
5 August	All students return to remote learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2020) <a href="#">Statement on changes to Melbourne's restrictions</a> , media release, 2 August.
18 September	Term 3 concludes.	Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) ' <a href="#">Back to school dates 2020</a> ', DESE website, [archived 19 February 2020].
21 September	A timeline for the return to on-site learning in regional and rural Victoria is announced.	J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <a href="#">School camps to return for regional and rural Victoria</a> , media release, 21 September.
5 October	Term 4 begins.  All students in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire continue to learn remotely.  Prep – Grade 6 students in standalone schools in regional and rural Victoria return to on-site learning. Year 7 – 10, VCE and VCAL students in regional and rural Victoria continue to learn remotely.	D. Andrews (Premier) & J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <a href="#">Roadmap for all students return to the classroom</a> , media release, 5 October.
8 October	Prep to Grade 6 students in P – 12 regional and rural schools return to on-site learning.	J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <a href="#">School camps to return for regional and rural Victoria</a> , media release, 21 September.
12 October	Primary school, Year 7, VCE and VCAL students return to on-site learning in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.  Years 7 – 10, VCE and VCAL students in regional and rural Victoria return to on-site learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) & J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <a href="#">Metro students head back to the classroom</a> , media release, 12 October.  J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <a href="#">School camps to return for regional and rural Victoria</a> , media release, 21 September.

## 2020 / 2021

Date	Announcement	Source
26 October	Year 8 – 10 students in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire return to on-site learning.	J. Merlino (Minister for Education) (2020) <a href="#">Every student returns to the classroom</a> , media release, 26 October.
19 December	Term 4 concludes.	Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) ' <a href="#">Back to school dates 2020</a> ', DESE website, [archived 19 February 2020].
27 January	Term 1 begins. All students return to learning on-site.	Department of Education and Training (2021) ' <a href="#">School term dates and holidays in Victoria</a> ', DET website, [archived 4 March 2021].
12 February	As part of the circuit-breaker lockdown, students will not return to school on 15 February.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2021) <a href="#">Statement from the Premier</a> , media release, 12 February.
15–17 February	All students return to remote learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2021) <a href="#">Statement from the Premier</a> , media release, 12 February.
18 February	All students return to on-site learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2021) <a href="#">Statement from the Premier</a> , media release, 17 February.
28 May	As part of the circuit-breaker lockdown, students will return to remote learning until at least 3 June.	J. Merlino (Acting Premier) (2021) <a href="#">Statement from the Acting Premier</a> , media release, 27 May.
3 June	In metropolitan Melbourne, Year 11 and 12 students return to on-site learning.  All students in regional and rural Victoria return to on-site learning.	J. Merlino (Acting Premier) (2021) <a href="#">Statement from the Acting Premier</a> , media release, 2 June.
11 June	All students return to on-site learning.	J. Merlino (Acting Premier) (2021) <a href="#">Statement from the Acting Premier</a> , media release, 9 June.
25 June	Term 2 concludes.	Department of Education and Training (2021) ' <a href="#">School term dates and holidays in Victoria</a> ', DET website, [archived 4 March 2021].
12 July	Term 3 begins.	Department of Education and Training (2021) ' <a href="#">School term dates and holidays in Victoria</a> ', DET website, [archived 4 March 2021].

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## 2021

Date	Announcement	Source
16 July	All students return to home learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) (2021) <a href="#">Statement from the Premier</a> , media release, 15 July.
28 July	All students return to on-site learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) & M. Foley (Minister for Health) (2021) <a href="#">Lockdown lifted across Victoria</a> , media release, 27 July.
6 August	All students return to remote learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) & M. Foley (Minister for Health) (2021) <a href="#">Seven day lockdown to keep Victorians safe</a> , media release, 5 August.
9 August	Regional and rural students return to on-site learning.	Victorian Government (2021) <a href="#">Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria restrictions from 11:59pm Monday 9 August 2021</a>
23 August	Regional and rural students return to remote learning.	Victorian Government (2021) <a href="#">Statewide restrictions from 1:00pm Saturday 21 August 2021</a> .
10 September	Prep-Grade 2 and Year 12 students in regional and rural Victoria return to on-site learning.	D. Andrews (Premier) & M. Foley (Minister for Health) (2021) <a href="#">Coronavirus Restrictions To Lift For Regional Victoria</a> , media release, 8 September.
17 September	Term 3 concludes.	Department of Education and Training (2021) <a href="#">School term dates and holidays in Victoria</a> , DET website, [archived 4 March 2021].
4 October	Term 4 begins.	Department of Education and Training (2021) <a href="#">School term dates and holidays in Victoria</a> , DET website, [archived 4 March 2021].
	A staged return to school for on-site learning is announced.	
6 October	Prep to Year 2 and Year 12 (inc. unit 3 and 4 VCE, VCAL and IB students) students in regional and rural Victoria return to on-site learning.	Victorian Government (2021) <a href="#">Staged return to onsite learning for schools</a> , Victorian Government website, reviewed 17 October [archived 22 October]
	Year 12 students (inc. unit 3 and 4 VCE, VCAL and IB students) in metropolitan Melbourne return to on-site learning.	
	Year 11 students in regional and rural Victoria return to on-site learning Monday to Friday.	

## 2021

Date	Announcement	Source
11 October	<p>In regional and rural Victoria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades 3 and 4 return to on-site learning on Tuesday and Wednesday.</li> <li>• Grades 5 and 6 return to on-site learning on Thursday and Friday.</li> <li>• Year 7 students return to on-site learning Monday to Friday.</li> <li>• Year 8 and 9 students return to on-site learning on Tuesday and Wednesday.</li> <li>• Year 10 students return to on-site learning on Thursday and Friday.</li> </ul>	<p>Victorian Government (2021) '<a href="#">Staged return to onsite learning for schools</a>', Victorian Government website, reviewed 17 October [archived 22 October]</p>
18 October	<p>In metropolitan Melbourne:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prep students return to on-site learning on Monday to Wednesday.</li> <li>• Grades 1 and 2 return to on-site learning on Thursday and Fridays.</li> </ul>	<p>Victorian Government (2021) '<a href="#">Staged return to onsite learning for schools</a>', Victorian Government website, reviewed 17 October [archived 22 October]</p>
22 October	<p>In metropolitan Melbourne:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades 3 and 4 return to on-site learning on Tuesday and Wednesday.</li> <li>• Grades 5 and 6 return to on-site learning on Thursday and Friday.</li> <li>• Year 7 students return to on-site learning on Monday to Friday.</li> <li>• Years 8 and 9 return to on-site learning on Tuesday and Wednesday.</li> <li>• Year 10 students return to on-site learning on Thursday and Friday.</li> <li>• Year 11 students return to on-site learning on Monday to Friday.</li> </ul> <p>All year levels in regional and rural Victoria return to on-site learning Monday to Friday.</p>	<p>Victorian Government (2021) '<a href="#">Staged return to onsite learning for schools</a>', Victorian Government website, reviewed 17 October [archived 22 October]</p>
5 November	<p>All students return to on-site learning full time.</p>	<p>Victorian Government (2021) '<a href="#">Staged return to onsite learning for schools</a>', Victorian Government website, reviewed 17 October [archived 22 October]</p>
17 December	<p>Term 4 concludes.</p>	<p>Department of Education and Training (2021) '<a href="#">School term dates and holidays in Victoria</a>', DET website, [archived 4 March 2021].</p>

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