



SCHOOL EXCURSIONS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS *ACCOMMODATION CHECKLIST*

Background to the School Excursion Protocols

School Excursion COVID-19 Protocols were endorsed by the [ACT Health Directorate](#) in 2020, addressing all components of how schools can travel safely to Canberra from departure to return, including travel, accommodation and visits to attractions.

The National Capital Educational Tourism Project (NCETP) has updated: the Protocols in the light of developments since 2020, following further discussions with [Aspen Medical](#), Teachers, tour operators, national attraction staff and accommodation providers.

The NCETP has also updated user-friendly Guidelines to help schools travel safely to and from Canberra, and Checklists to aid different industry sectors to follow the COVID-19 Protocols.

Important Contact Details – 7 days a week

Capital Territory COVID-19 Helpline	02 6207 7244 8 am – 8 pm
National Coronavirus Hotline	1800 020 080 24 hours a day
National Capital Educational Tourism Project	02 6162 4460 24 hours a day

School Children as a Cohort

Maintaining separate cohorts during travel and excursion activities mitigates the risk of COVID-19 transmission into the broader community.

A cohort is defined as a group of people with shared characteristics (e.g. a school class, a year level) that has been established within a school environment.

A cohort should move as 1 unit while maintaining physical separation and distance from other cohort groups or members of the public – for instance, cohort movement could, take the form of:

1. A year level (~100 children) plus adults who already share a common space within the school environment.
2. They are transported as 1 cohort by coaches to a community venue where they are not required to maintain 1.5 metre physical distancing within their established school cohort but are required to practise physical distancing from other cohort groups (e.g. another school group from a different school) and members of the public.
3. During this time, a high level of personal hygiene, including hand hygiene and cough etiquette, should be maintained.
4. Precautionary measures such as designated toilets and eating areas should be considered to ensure this cohort does not mix with other similar cohort groups at a venue.
5. The return journey should consist of the original cohort of children and adults on board the same coaches with the same Drivers used to transport the group to the venue.

Remaining as 1 cohort will ensure it is unnecessary for these children to adhere to 1.5 metre physical distancing requirements.

Hygiene Practice

School children should follow good hygiene practices including:

- Regularly washing hands and using hand sanitiser.
- Not sharing drinks or food.
- Coughing or sneezing into the crook of an elbow, or a tissue which is immediately discarded.
- Monitoring of symptoms and isolating children with fever, cough, sore throat, or lethargy.

Accommodation Checklist

Shared Accommodation

Accommodation providers must have a COVID-19 safety plan specific to their operation.

Shared Accommodation – Health & wellbeing

1. Ensure staff and customers who are unwell are excluded from the premises.
2. Ensure staff complete a health screen before each shift.
3. Ensure customers/guests complete a daily health screen.
4. Provide staff with information and training on COVID-19, including advice related to when to get tested, physical distancing and cleaning.
5. Encourage each adult within a cohort not to share a room with anyone else.
6. Where possible, for each cohort, use separate doors for:
 - 6.1. entry and exit
 - 6.2. check-in
 - 6.3. baggage storing points.
7. Reduce crowding wherever possible.
8. Promote physical distancing with markers on the floor in areas where people are asked to queue (e.g. reception and hand hygiene stations).
9. Where reasonably practical ensure all venue staff always maintain 1.5 metres physical distancing (including at meal breaks) and assign workers to specific workstations.
10. Review regular deliveries and request contactless delivery and invoicing where practical.
11. Manage group activities in common areas (e.g. movie rooms, games rooms) to ensure appropriate physical distancing.

Shared accommodation – Physical distancing

1. Ensure cohorts are physically distanced from each other at all times.
2. Encourage Teachers and Drivers to physically distance from each other and from students – students within a cohort do not need to physically distance from each other.

Shared Accommodation – Hygiene & Environmental Cleaning

1. Adopt good hand hygiene and cough etiquette practices.
2. Ensure hand hygiene facilities are available to customers and staff.
3. Ensure bathrooms are well stocked with hand soap and paper towels and contain posters with instructions on how to wash hands.
4. Make hand sanitiser available at key points and encourage frequent use.
5. Consider strategies to reduce the number of surfaces touched by customers.
6. Clean public areas frequented by staff or customers at least daily with detergent/disinfectant.
7. Clean frequently touched areas and surfaces several times per day with a detergent/disinfectant solution or wipe.
8. Maintain disinfectant solutions at an appropriate strength.
9. Use disinfectant solutions in accordance with manufacturer instructions.
10. Ensure staff wear gloves and face mask when cleaning.
11. Ensure staff wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after cleaning.
12. Engage a professional cleaning service with expertise in Environmental Cleaning & Disinfection to decontaminate all relevant areas if a potential COVID-19 case is identified.

Food Services & Dining Rooms

Food Services & Dining Rooms – Health & Wellbeing

1. Exclude from the premises staff and customers who are unwell.
2. Ensure staff complete a health screen before each shift.
3. Ensure customers/guests complete a daily health screen.
4. Provide staff with information and training on COVID-19, including advice related to when to get tested, physical distancing and cleaning.
5. Make staff aware of their leave entitlements if they are sick or are required to self-isolate.
6. Assign 1 staff member as a COVID-19 Safe Hygiene Marshall, who will utilise distinctive clothing (e.g. a hi-vis shirt or badge) and be responsible for ensuring all aspects of the COVID-19 Safety Plan are being adhered to, including overseeing physical distancing and cleaning, and ensuring the accuracy of recordkeeping.

Food Services & Dining Rooms – Physical Distancing

1. Each cohort is to be physically distanced from others within a dining room for the duration of a visit.
2. Students within a cohort do not need to physically distance from each other; however, Teachers and Drivers must physically distance from each other and from students.
3. A cohort is considered to be the school travel group, including Drivers, Teachers and students.
4. Ensure no contact or mingling between cohort groups and groups at other tables.
5. Move or remove tables and seating to support 1.5 metres of physical distance between cohorts.
6. Reduce crowding and promote physical distancing with markers on the floor where people are asked to queue, (e.g. at entrances to dining rooms and at food service and beverage stations).
7. Where possible, ensure venue staff maintain 1.5 metre physical distancing (including at meal breaks and in office or meeting rooms).
8. Assign workers to specific workstations.
9. If a premises has multiple food and drink areas staff should work in an assigned area and not work across different areas.
10. Stagger start times and breaks for staff members, where practical.
11. Consider physical barriers such as plexiglass around counters with high-volume interactions with customers.
12. Review regular deliveries and request contactless delivery/invoicing where practical.

Food Services & Dining Rooms – Hygiene & Environmental Cleaning

1. Adopt good hand hygiene practices and cough etiquette.
2. Where possible, restrict the use of public access to bathrooms in dining room.
3. Visitors should all use bathrooms in their allocated accommodation.
4. Reduce the number of surfaces touched by customers, wherever possible.
5. Do not supply serve buffet style food service areas, communal snacks, communal condiments, or self-service options (e.g. beverages or toast).
6. If condiments are offered, they should be single-serve items.
7. Design food service areas to be protected from cross-contamination, including through implementing measures such as sneeze guards.
8. All meals prepared for offsite activities (e.g. packed lunches) are to be provided in single-use packaging for each person (there should be no shared meals or cutlery).
9. Ensure cutlery and tableware is cleaned with detergent and hot water, or with a commercial grade dishwasher.
10. Maintain disinfectant solutions at an appropriate strength.
11. Use disinfectant solutions in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
12. Ensure staff wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after cleaning.
13. Clean frequently used indoor hard surface areas at least daily with detergent/disinfectant.
14. Clean frequently touched areas and surfaces several times per day.
15. Clean tables, chairs, and any table settings between each cohort group.
16. The Department of Health has published [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information about routine environmental cleaning and disinfection in the community](#).

1. Vaccination

- 1.1. The best method to protect all children who are unable to be vaccinated from COVID-19 is to ensure the vaccination of those around them.
- 1.2. High vaccination rates of adults around school-age children who are unable to be vaccinated will reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and infection, in a process called cocooning.
- 1.3. All frontline vaccine-eligible adults – such as Teachers, Drivers, attraction staff and accommodation staff – should be fully vaccinated before coming into contact with a school excursion cohort, in line with the AHPPC's advice related to reducing the opportunities for the virus to enter school populations.¹
- 1.4. Unwell students, Teachers, Drivers, attraction staff and accommodation staff should not attend excursion-related sites, regardless of their vaccination status, and should seek medical advice as to whether COVID-19 testing is required.

2. Masks

- 2.1. Mask wearing should be consistent with ACT Government mandates and recommendations related to school environments.²
- 2.2. It is recommended that Teachers, accompanying adults and attraction employees should protect themselves and others by wearing well-fitted masks while at attractions.
- 2.3. Wearing a mask is not dependent on whether an individual is vaccinated or mandated by public health orders.
- 2.4. Masks protect you and the broader community, including those who are unable to get vaccinated, such as young children.
- 2.5. While mask wearing requirements have eased, the Canberra community is strongly encouraged to continue to wear a face mask when entering public indoor settings where it could be difficult to maintain physical distancing.³

¹ AHPPC <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-statement-on-covid-19-schools-and-early-childhood-education-and-care>

² ACT Government <https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/covid-school-arrangements>

³ ACT Government <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/face-masks>

Management of Suspected & Confirmed Cases on Excursions

1. Schools should develop their own management plan for school visits to Canberra, including management of a sick child or a child or staff member who develops COVID-19 symptoms, or has a positive COVID-19 test.
2. If a Teacher, Parent/Guardian/Carer or child becomes a suspected COVID-19 case during a school excursion or is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should be isolated from the cohort in an appropriate space until symptoms resolve.
3. ACT Government advice regarding Interstate school excursions should be referred to.
4. Standard precautions should be adopted when providing care / first aid to a person suspected of having COVID-19.
 - Gloves, masks and, if available, a protective gown or apron should be used, including when dealing with blood or body fluids/substances.
 - Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) used should be double bagged and disposed of.
 - Wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after providing care / first aid.
5. Teachers will remain with their cohort and maintain duty of care in contact with Parents/Guardians/Carers.
 - 5.1. If a person quarantined separately is a child they must be supervised by a Teacher.
6. A Parent/Guardian/Carer will be able to come to Canberra and isolate with their child.
7. Teachers may contact the [COVID-19 Helpline](#) for advice.
8. People exposed to COVID-19 are advised to following the guidance published at [Information for people exposed to COVID-19](#).
9. Where tests are negative a cohort can resume its excursion itinerary.
10. Schools returning home must contact their State/Territory health department before travel and heed advice provided to them.
11. If a cohort has travelled by coach, it may return home by coach (if the destination can be reached without stopping), and then isolate for at least 7 days.
12. A child with symptoms should remain separate to avoid passing on illnesses and should be collected by a Parent/Guardian/Carer as soon as possible.
13. Drivers will be encouraged to wear PPE and must isolate on return, dependent on the quarantine requirements within the relevant jurisdiction.
14. Importantly, Teachers should:
 - Create a list of potential [close contacts](#).
 - [Notify the NCETP](#) so all attractions visited by a school can be notified.