

## ***Can we still go to school camp?***

### ***Yes, school camps are on!***

The situation in Queensland for the start of Term 2, 2022:

- From the start of the 2022 school year, school camps (outdoor and environmental education) have been legally able to operate in accordance with Public Health Directives.
- The Department of Education decided to suspend school camp for Queensland state schools for several weeks of Term 1 2022 (7<sup>th</sup> February to 4<sup>th</sup> March). Non-government schools made their own decisions regarding attending school camps during that time.
- From 6pm 4<sup>th</sup> March, the Department of Education allowed its schools to return to camps and other activities.

The on-again/off-again situation has created confusion for schools around management of COVID-19 on school camp programs. Outdoors Queensland is aiming to provide clarity. This information is based on publicly available government information and reports from schools and camp operators who have successfully delivered school camps in Queensland during 2022.

Note - COVID-19 requirements can change rapidly and dramatically. This document has been published on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022, and is a snapshot of available information at a point in time.

## **Operating status of venues**

School camp venues have established physical distancing and public health protocols.

School camp venues were required to have specific protocols in place to operate in accordance with the legal requirements that have been in effect during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Although school camp venues are no longer restricted businesses, school camp venues will continue to operate in ways that ensure their clients and workers are safe.

The [COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Workers in a high-risk setting Direction \(No. 2\)](#) applies to operators and workers of school camp venues. This Direction declares early childhood, primary and secondary educational settings as “high-risk” settings, and includes outdoor education facilities within these educational settings. School camp operators are required to comply with this direction, and workers at school camps must comply with the requirements set out in the Direction, including the COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

For school camps, Education Queensland’s advice for State schools is as follows:

### **At a Department of Education facility**

Principals must ensure that a [COVID Safe Event Checklist](#) has been completed for excursions or camps, including those held at Department of Education Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (O&EEC) with residential facilities.

All workers and volunteers must be [fully vaccinated](#) for COVID-19. Facilities may choose to use the [Check In Qld app](#) to verify vaccination status.

### **At a non-departmental facility**

Excursions and camps are permitted at venues with completed [COVID Safe Event Checklist for restrictive businesses](#).

Offsite premises must adhere to [Queensland's COVID Safe Future roadmap \(PDF, 281KB\)](#).

<https://ged.qld.gov.au/covid19/school-operations/covid-normal#activities1>

When hosting school groups, camp venues can comply with the COVID Safe Event Checklist prepared for that activity. Schools can discuss any queries about the COVID Safe Checklist with camp operators.

## **Organising camp**

Education Queensland provides the following advice regarding selection of venue and accommodation arrangements:

### **Accommodation**

As each camp facility will be unique in its layout and configuration, planning should consider the sleeping arrangements for staff and students and the likelihood of individuals being deemed a close contact should a confirmed case of COVID-19 be identified.

Cohorting of students should occur where possible, and the school must ensure there are records of which students shared accommodation and which staff shared accommodation to enable identification of close contacts.

<https://ged.qld.gov.au/covid19/school-operations/covid-normal#activities1>

School camp operators can assist with camp planning and can provide advice regarding the protocols that they have implemented and refined at their specific venue.

Venues have developed detailed management plans that set out specifics around COVID-19 management, with those plans available to schools.

It is standard practice for school camp operators to assign every individual to specified sleeping arrangements and keep appropriate records.

Venues which have capacity to host multiple schools at one time will have measures in place to ensure that people from different school groups do not mingle while at camp.

Attending camp can be a highlight of the school year for some students (and for some teachers), however, to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on camp, a critically important step is ensuring that symptomatic guests do not attend. This needs to be discussed with all potential attendees. Parents of students should be made aware of the expectation that symptomatic students do not attend camp.

Education Queensland has released information encouraging schools to consider the use of Rapid Antigen Testing (RATs) before attending camps to reduce the risk of becoming ill while at camp:

#### COVID-19 testing

Schools could consider providing a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) to families to administer before attending camps to reduce the risk of students becoming ill while away from the school site. Similarly, RATs could be provided to staff for the same purpose.

<https://qed.qld.gov.au/covid19/school-operations/covid-normal#activities1>

If guests (students or teachers) exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 while at camp, Education Queensland advises as follows:

#### Isolation

Anyone who develops COVID-19 symptoms [↗](#) while at camp must be isolated in an appropriate, supervised space.

When a student is unwell, their parent or carer will be contacted and arrangements made for the child to return home as soon as practicable.

Staff who are unwell should speak to their principal or supervisor regarding leave arrangements.

<https://qed.qld.gov.au/covid19/school-operations/covid-normal#activities1>

School camp venues have established parts of their facilities where people can isolate from other attendees.

Education Queensland's advice regarding testing of symptomatic people is as follows:

If students or staff develop COVID-19 symptoms while at camp, they should be provided with a RAT to be administered at home.

<https://qed.qld.gov.au/covid19/school-operations/covid-normal#activities1>

Some schools are choosing to administer RATs on camp (with appropriate permission) to determine the COVID-19 status of students and staff before requiring them to return home. The position on this should be decided by the school and communicated to the camp operator.

How are close contacts determined if someone at camp tests positive?

If one person at a school camp tests positive for COVID-19, then all of the other people at that camp are NOT automatically considered close contacts. Whether someone is a close contact of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 is primarily determined by the sleeping arrangements at the camp.

[Isolation for Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Management of Close Contacts Direction \(No. 6\)](#) contains the following regarding close contacts:

**Close contact** means a person who is a **household** member at the time the **diagnosed person** undertakes the COVID-19 test that produces a positive test result, or a **household-like contact** of a **diagnosed person**.

**Household-like contact** means, except in exceptional circumstances determined by the Chief Health Officer, a person who has spent more than four hours with the **diagnosed person** in a house or other **place of accommodation**, such as a residential aged care facility, disability accommodation, hospital or similar setting, unless the person has been in a separate part of the house, **place of accommodation**, that has a separate point of entry, no shared common areas, where the person does not share that area for more than four hours, and the person has no contact or interaction with the **diagnosed person** for more than four hours.

*Example: a person in a self-contained unit with a separate point of entry and access to shared common areas for less than four hours is not a **household-like contact** of a **diagnosed person** in another unit within a larger place of accommodation, such as a unit in mining camp accommodation.*

Education Queensland has provided the following interpretation of the rules regarding close contacts in the school camp setting:

#### **Close contacts**

Similar to the [state school residential boarding school guidelines](#), staff and students attending a camp may be considered a close contact if they shared sleeping quarters with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in any of the following conditions:

- an enclosed bedroom, e.g. twin room
- a cubicle and adjacent cubicles where rooms are partitioned and the partitions do not create separate rooms
- 2 adjacent beds on either side of the confirmed case in an open dormitory.

Staff and students who were not accommodated overnight in any of the above conditions will not be considered a close contact.

Anyone who is deemed a close contact will be required to leave camp and [quarantine at home](#) in line with Queensland Health directions. Staff or students must not attend school during their quarantine period.

Students who are not deemed to be a close contact can continue attending the camp and then return to school as usual.

<https://qed.qld.gov.au/covid19/school-operations/covid-normal#activities1>

A person who stays overnight on the night prior to the positive test in the same enclosed bedroom or tent (or in adjacent sleeping arrangements for cubicles and dormitories) as a person diagnosed with COVID-19 would be considered a close contact under the Education Queensland interpretation.

However, people who have tested positive for COVID-19 are NOT considered close contacts for a 12-week period after concluding their mandated isolation period, so could continue on camp.

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#### **In the 12 weeks after ending isolation**

You are unlikely to get COVID-19 again in the 12 weeks after completing isolation. You are considered a “cleared case” for 12 weeks after your isolation ends.

During this time, if you get symptoms, you do not need to get tested but you are recommended to stay at home until you feel better. This is important to help you to recover and prevent the spread of any other viruses in the community.

If you are immunocompromised, you must quarantine if you become a close contact, even if you had COVID-19 within the previous 12 weeks.

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/i-have-covid/after-having-covid-19>

Schools should consider how they will deal with a person who is considered a “cleared case” who would otherwise be a close contact of a person diagnosed with COVID-19, and discuss that with the school camp operator. This may require the addition of a specific question on the school’s medical questionnaire for camp attendees.

### **Summary**

School camps are on in Queensland. School camps deliver a range of benefits for students, teachers and schools. Your school should not be missing out.

#### *Actions for your consideration:*

- Contact your school camp providers – discuss concerns, obtain more information
- Develop a policy regarding testing attendees prior to departure for camp
- Provide clear guidance to attendees around what happens if someone develops symptoms while at camp – isolation, possible testing, possible return home
- Discuss management of close contacts
- Discuss management of cleared cases (people who are within 12 weeks of having emerged from COVID-19 isolation)
- Clearly communicate that people with COVID-19 symptoms must not attend camp (unless they are “cleared cases”)
- Book in for school camp to make sure your students are not missing out on wonderful outdoor learning experiences

### **Acknowledgement**

Outdoors Queensland thanks Queensland Conferencing and Camping Centres for their contributions to this document. We acknowledge the important work that QCCC and other school camp operators have done and are doing to keep their guests safe while at camp.

## **About Outdoors Queensland**

Outdoors Queensland is the peak body for the outdoor sector in Queensland. We represent outdoor organisations and individuals in Queensland, consisting of a range of outdoor industry stakeholders, including local governments, schools with outdoor education programs, small businesses and commercial operators, outdoor activity-focused peak bodies, clubs, community organisations and individuals.

The mission of Outdoors Queensland is to ensure that all people have opportunities to create connections with Queensland's outdoors. Our vision is to create a world where the outdoors is a vital part of every healthy life.

Find out more about Outdoors Queensland – [www.outdoorsqueensland.com.au](http://www.outdoorsqueensland.com.au)

