

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Tuesday, 7 April 2020

VICTORIAN STUDENTS TO LEARN FROM HOME, AS VCE TIMELINES REVISED

Most Victorian students will be educated from home when Term 2 starts next week to ensure the physical distancing will help slow the spread of coronavirus, with free internet access and laptops for those students who need it most.

Premier Daniel Andrews joined Minister for the Coordination of Education and Training – COVID-19, James Merlino to announce that following advice from the Chief Health Officer all Victorian government primary, secondary and special schools will move to remote and flexible learning and teaching .

VCE students will still receive an ATAR score, but there will be a number of changes to the academic timetable for VCE and VCAL students:

- The GAT test will move from June to October or November
- End of year exams will be postponed until at least December
- School based assessment tasks will be reduced where possible to relieve some pressure on students as they move to remote and flexible learning arrangements
- Universities will be asked to delay the start of the 2021 university year to account for impacts of coronavirus on senior secondary students.

VCE study scores will continue to be a combination of school-based assessment and external exams. VCAL students will have more time to complete their courses and this will be consistent with the revised dates for the VCE.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is also examining a compressed end-of-year exam schedule – including slightly shortening each exam – in recognition of the disruption caused by the pandemic.

A small number of students undertaking VET may have the award of their VCE or VCAL delayed until the beginning of 2021 so they can complete mandatory practical or workplace learning requirements – ensuring that they are not disadvantaged by the lack of hands on practice while we fight this pandemic.

As we act to slow the spread of coronavirus, the message to students and parents of government schools is clear: all children who **can** learn at home **must** learn from home – with exceptions only in extremely limited circumstances.

On-site learning will only be available for children whose parents can't work from home and vulnerable students without access to a suitable learning environment at home. Small groups of VCE and VCAL students can also attend on-site for short periods if their learning requirements cannot be conducted at home. Physical distancing provisions will be made for the safety for teachers and kids.

To ensure more kids can learn from home, the Government will loan more than 6,000 laptops and tablets to students who don't have access to digital technologies. Schools will also distribute other classroom devices as required to ensure all students who do not have access to a laptop or tablet at home will be provided one.

Internet access should not determine a child's access to education – so we will deliver free SIM cards or dongles to thousands of students at government schools who need them the most. This includes an agreement with Telstra to provide 4000 SIM cards for government primary and secondary school students. The Government has also purchased an extra 1000 SIM-enabled dongle devices.

Priority for the SIM cards and dongles will be given to senior secondary students, students in bushfire affected areas, and families who cannot afford an internet connection at home.

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Victorian government schools will recommence on Tuesday 14 April with a pupil-free day, with students to begin classes on Wednesday 15 April. These new arrangements will remain in place for the duration of Term 2 and will then be reviewed.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"I know this year will be different to any that students, teachers and families have experienced before – but we are making sure that our kids still get the education they deserve."

"We've done the work and planning so we're ready to make the move to remote and flexible learning, and I want to thank everyone involved for their dedication to our kids' education at this unprecedented time."

Quotes attributable to Minister for the Coordination of Education and Training – COVID-19 James Merlino

"Every student will get the support they need, whether they are learning at home or attending school on-site. We will provide a device to every child that needs one and provide thousands more with free internet."

"We know this is a difficult time, particularly for VCE and VCAL students, but we will support our students, our teachers and our schools every step of the way."