

# INTERPRETING DET REQUIREMENTS FOR PE

Over the last week, we have been inundated with questions around the advice provided to schools for return to on-site learning and how this will affect PE classes. This Tip of the Week HPE (TOTW) aims to expand on the advice with some potential options and considerations which meet the Department of Education and Training (DET)'s [health and safety guidelines for the return to on-site schooling](#). Please note our advice reflects the knowledge and expertise of the Professional Learning team and other professionals we have consulted with.

**Before commencing your teaching, we recommend you discuss your plans with your leadership team to ensure the plans are appropriate for the school context in which you teach and are supported.**

*NOTE: All statements taken directly from DET guidelines have been preceded by the acronym - DET*

## Essential actions during staged return

*DET: Cleaning – schools will be supported to implement enhanced cleaning, including cleaning throughout the day of high-touch surfaces such as bathrooms and door handles*

- Consider leaving the door to the gym open so students are not touching the door constantly to open, or only allow you / PE staff to open the doors. Where possible create signs asking doors to remain open.
- Speak with your school principal to make sure you know who is responsible for cleaning equipment and the PE space.

*DET: Physical Distancing – The school workforce will be supported to practice physical distancing, but physical distancing is not considered necessary between students in the school setting*

- If teaching at the same time as other classes, look to spread classes out in different areas of the school if possible.
- Ensure teachers who are working in the same space position themselves on opposite sides of the teaching space.

*DET: Hygiene – Frequent hand washing will be encouraged among staff and students and where soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitiser will be used.*

*DET: All staff and students should undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet. This should be directed or supervised by staff where required.*

- Set up a hand sanitiser station for students as they enter / exit the gym / PE space, or direct students to wash hands in a bathroom if you have one close to your teaching area. Liaise with classroom teachers asking them to have students wash their hands on the way to PE.
- If students sneeze, cough on equipment remove that equipment for the remainder of the class and make sure it is cleaned before it is used again.

## Essential actions during staged return (continued)

*DET: It is recommended that students do not drink directly from drinking fountains at this time. Instead they should bring their own water bottle for use (and refilling) at school.*

- You will likely have a routine in place for students to bring their own water bottles to PE. This should be continued, but you may want to encourage students to be responsible for their own bottle rather than a water bottle monitor collecting and distributing bottles. All water bottles should have the students name marked clearly on it.

## Health and safety

**Health and safety advice for the return to on-site schooling** advice shares the following information relating to general teaching areas.

*DET: Reducing mixing between different cohorts (classes or year levels) is recommended as a precautionary measure to minimise risk of spread of transmission and aid containment in the rare event of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) on site.*

- Consider how your students move between the classroom and your teaching space – is there crossover with other classes? Are they required to wait in the same area? Look for options where students take different paths to and from your lessons to minimise interactions with other classes.
- Do you have multiple classes running at the same time? Do you team teach? If yes, you should consider moving classes to different teaching spaces where possible, or at least ensuring classes are not mixing during the session. Consider splitting teaching areas into smaller spaces for each class.

The information below can also be found on the **DET health and safety advice for return to on-site schooling** and focuses on **sport and recreation**. Although they are not PE specific, these guidelines provide similarities to the PE environment.

*DET: Sport and recreation – in line with community advice, reasonable precautions are still advised to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the context of sport and recreation:*

*DET: Playground equipment can be used, however students should be directed to practice hand hygiene before and after use (these should only be used if the playground is not accessible to the public??)*

- Discuss with your principal whether you will allow students to use playground equipment at your school. This may be impacted by whether or not your playground is accessible to the community during out of school hours.
- Playgrounds could be used for locomotor activities and obstacle courses – can students move in /around / under / through different pieces of equipment without using their hands?
- If students are using the equipment, ensure they are practicing good hand hygiene before and after use.
- When using playground equipment facilities you will need to consider how frequently you clean the equipment after student use.

*DET: Swimming and aquatic facilities should not be used*

- As per the recommendation – don't use swimming and aquatics facilities!
- If you still want to run swimming and aquatics units, please take a look at some of the **at home and classroom-based water safety resources** developed by Life Saving Victoria.

## Health and safety (continued)

*DET: Outdoor facilities are preferred for the purpose of physical education and recreational play. Where indoor facilities are used, please limit the number of students*

- It is fantastic to be able to get students outdoors and moving, so look for spaces and opportunities to be outdoors (weather dependent of course!).
- It is likely your gym or hall (if you have one) is larger than a classroom, so running a class in a gym will enable students to practise physical distancing. If you have to run multiple classes in a gym or hall due to lack of spaces or inclement weather, ensure you divide your space up so students remain spaced apart and are only interacting with a small group rather than the whole class or other classes. [TOTW 96](#) introduced how you can separate a netball court into 6 areas with just a few cones! When using this method or other previously established routines, it will be important for you to select activities which can be safely and effectively completed within the designated space, remind students about how they can retrieve equipment that goes into another space and have clear procedures for rotating students between stations.

*DET: Non-contact sports should be encouraged. Hand hygiene must be practised before and after use of any sporting equipment.*

- There are a range of non-contact activity options you could cover in your PE classes:
  - Orienteering – a fantastic option to get students outdoors and learning about their school grounds. Students could work individually or in small groups. Provide different starting points so students are staggered around the course.
  - Health and performance related fitness – with many students participating in health-related physical activity and fitness units over the remote learning period, look for ways to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Develop a fitness circuit of bodyweight activities that focus on different energy systems, different fitness components, including mobility and flexibility. Build walking / jogging / skipping into the fitness circuits. You could also extend the chalk courses like primary PE teacher Charlotte has done in this photo! [Click on image to enlarge >>](#)
  - Gymnastics / Dance – set parameters for students to develop routines (with or without music, and with or without equipment).
  - Athletics – provide students the opportunity to practice events at school on marked out tracks or using proper equipment. Have students peer assess and act as a coach to help improve their performance. Connect skills (e.g.: running, jumping, leaping, throwing) to application in other sports and activities the students may participate in.
  - Net / Wall games – our [net wall unit plan](#) provides some great ideas here for activities. Tennis Australia teaching resources and their new HomeCourt initiative could also provide useful ideas (search #homecourttennis on internet or social media)
  - Target games – take a look at our [target games unit plan](#) or [at-home teaching resources](#) for more ideas.
  - FMS / sport specific skill practice and challenges.



### Health and safety (continued)

- The VCAA have released some [advice](#) for remote and flexible learning with [ideas](#) aligned to the Movement and Physical Activity Strand for HPE levels F-10.
- Using less equipment in class or looking to minimise the pieces of equipment used by the whole class will help to reduce potential spread. Look to allocate students one or a few items of equipment which only they use. You could also allocate a selection to a small group of students working in a designated area.
- Whether equipment is used or not, ensure students practice good hygiene before and after sessions.

### Further questions or comments?

If you have further questions regarding your situation, principals and school staff are encouraged to contact the **Coronavirus (COVID-19) phone line (1800 338 663)**.

Should you need further support during this time, have any questions or comments relating to this TOTW, a topic you'd like to learn more about or would like to contribute to a future tip please feel free to email a member of our Professional Learning Team [Bernie Holland](#), [Dr Trent Brown](#) or [Adriana Pinder](#) or phone (03) 9274 8906.

Find all TOTWs in the series released to date [here](#) and to access all ACHPER Victoria's HPE at Home Resources please [click here >>](#)