




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Education; Coronavirus, Schools

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.05 am): Term 2 was an unprecedented time for schooling in Queensland and, indeed, Australia. From transitioning to remote learning for the first five weeks of term and then back into the classroom as restrictions had begun to ease, we have shown how successfully we can pull together to protect our community and adapt to challenging times. Over the past couple of months it has been inspiring to witness the adaptability and creativity of our educators, departmental staff, students and the wider school communities, with no shortage of positive stories to be told. Our long-term investment in high-quality curriculum materials, digital classroom technologies and differentiated teaching and learning has paid off as we have worked to meet the needs of an incredibly diverse state.

As we implement Queensland's plan to recover from the global health pandemic, things are slowly beginning to return to normal in our state schools. However, even as restrictions progressively lessen across the state, it is important that we remain vigilant in what continues to be an ever-changing situation. Here are some of the highlights of the new guidelines for term 3. Excursions and camps will return and be held at locations or businesses that have approved COVID-safe industry plans and Department of Education outdoor and environmental education centres. Formals and graduations are permitted to be held at businesses—

Mrs Frecklington: Hear, hear!

Ms GRACE:—that have approved COVID-safe industry plans—great news for our senior students, and I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. School cleaning will continue to prioritise frequently used areas, with extra attention to high-frequency touch point surfaces such as doorhandles, light switches, desks, toilets, taps and sinks. Additional cleaning funding has been provided to schools and will continue until further notice.

School assemblies may commence, with the principal ensuring that physical distancing requirements are maintained for all adults and other COVID-19 control measures are implemented. Support has been provided to schools to help plan for the return of intra- and interschool sport. Transport arrangements will continue to operate for students, including specialist school transport for students with a disability. Transport operators will ensure buses and surface touch points are cleaned according to COVID-19 cleaning and disinfection recommendations.

Principals may negotiate the use of their facilities for external uses if the external user has met the requirements of the Queensland Health approved COVID-safe industry plans and schools will need to continue to ensure any visitors, including parents, carers, adult volunteers and visiting specialists, entering the school grounds to deliver additional programs at the school comply with the onsite health and safety measures outlined in these guidelines. We are looking forward to a successful term 3 as students were welcomed back this week for the start of the term, with all schools returning closer to normal. A big thanks for the mighty efforts of all our school communities throughout Queensland as we unite and recover.