Dear [name]

Thank you for your enquiry regarding mask requirements at school for students and staff.

[school] is fully committed to the safety and wellbeing of our school community. As Principal of the school, I need to reassure Catholic Education Ballarat that I am providing a safe workplace for my staff and children and where possible reduce the risk of transfer of COVID-19 for those people on-site. As such, I request that you provide evidence of yours and/or your children’s medical exemption from wearing a mask.

The current directives from the Victorian Chief Health Officer for face masks in school settings are:

* School staff and secondary school students aged 12 or older must always wear a face mask indoors and outdoors at school, including when attending an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program, unless a lawful exception applies.
* School staff and secondary school students aged 12 or older must always wear a face mask when travelling to and from school on public transport, taxis or ride share vehicles.
* School staff must wear face masks while teaching wherever practicable, except where removal of a face mask is necessary for effective communication.
* Students in Year 3 to Year 6 must wear face masks when indoors on school premises, unless an exception applies.
* It is recommended that all other children wear face masks when at school, attending an OSHC program, or when travelling to and from school on public transport, taxis or ride share vehicles.

There are a number of lawful reasons for staff and students not wearing a face mask, including due to the nature of their disability, medical or a mental health condition. Further details about exemptions are available on the Victorian Government Coronavirus website: [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/face-masks-when-wear-face-mask](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/face-masks-when-wear-face-mask)

Face masks, along with other preventative measures, improve the safety of the school environment and contribute to reducing risk of COVID-19 transmission within the school community and the wider community. To be effective, a face mask must be worn correctly, covering the nose and mouth. Face shields, scarves or bandanas do not meet these requirements.

Please note that when school is open for on-site learning, remote learning will not be facilitated. Students who do not attend in-person will be supported as per the school’s normal procedures for students who are absent from school.

The requirements also state that a continued compliance with the Directions currently in force is expected and therefore, I also ask that you minimize your presence on the school grounds to support the safety of all school members, in line with the current Public Health Order (6).

As the COVID crisis in Victoria continues, I recognise there is heightened anxiety in our community. The school is obliged to comply with government health directives and ensure the safety and wellbeing of our school community.

It should also be noted that people who do not wear a face mask when required and do not have a lawful exemption can be fined $200. Further information is available on the Victorian Government Coronavirus website: [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/fines-enforcement-and-reporting](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/fines-enforcement-and-reporting)

[school] will keep the school community up to date with the latest advice on school COVID requirements in as directed by the Australian and Victorian governments.

**Should you have further concerns about this matter then these concerns would be best addressed to the Victorian Government who are making and enforcing these measures.**

I thank you for your support as we continue to work through the challenges of the Coronavirus pandemic as a school community.

Yours sincerely