

## Catholic sector welcomes additional COVIDSafe school initiatives

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) has welcomed today's announcement of additional state government funding and support for initiatives to assist low-fee Catholic schools to further minimise the risk of coronavirus spreading in educational settings.

CECV Acting Executive Director Paul Sharkey said the safety of students and staff is the highest priority for Catholic schools, and today's announcement will assist them to deliver enhanced ventilation and be as safe as possible.

'In addition to ongoing measures to improve ventilation, the CECV will work closely with the state government to roll out air purification devices from the start of Term 4, as well as encourage schools to access funding available to create additional outdoor learning spaces by using shade sails', he said.

Dr Sharkey said that in line with advice from Victoria's Chief Health Officer, vaccination would also become mandatory for teachers and staff in Catholic schools.

'Vaccination will be made a requirement of work for staff in our schools to help protect students, staff and the wider community.

'As per health advice, staff in our schools will be required to have a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine by 18 October with full vaccination required by 29 November, unless a medical exemption applies.

'Principals and schools will support their staff to have adequate time and access to achieve the vaccination timelines.

'We know that it is best for students' wellbeing and learning for them to be at school with their teachers and friends.

'These measures will assist us to get students back to school and keep our schools open.

'These are challenging times, and we must all pull together to keep our schools and communities as safe as possible', Dr Sharkey said.

More than 20% of all Victorian students attend one of 498 Catholic primary and secondary schools across the state.

**Media contact:** Gerard Delaney on 0413 274 176 or [gdelaney@macs.vic.edu.au](mailto:gdelaney@macs.vic.edu.au)