

# Coronavirus: Is it safe for kids to go back to school? And what about the new mutant strain?

January 20 2021, by Asha Bowen, Et Al.

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A year ago, in late January 2020, Australia reported its first cases of COVID-19. Since then, we have seen almost [29,000 confirmed cases](#) and 909 deaths.

As cases climbed in Australian cities in 2020, many students did their [schoolwork from home](#). Australia, including Victoria, came out of lockdowns at the end of last year. But due to outbreaks in New South Wales and Queensland over Christmas and New Year, that impacted on Victoria, restrictions remain in some places.

So what now, for the new [school](#) year? Is it safe for students to go back to school?

## What we learned in 2020

Australian health officials, pediatricians, and federal and state education departments worked together to understand how SARS-CoV-2—the virus that causes COVID-19—is transmitted in Australian schools.

They also kept updating, as more information came to light, what schools can do to provide a safe learning environment for children and staff.

Up to the end of term 3 in [New South Wales](#), 49 [student](#)- and 24 staff-cases were linked to schools and early learning centers. Each of these cases, and their contacts, were followed since the pandemic began. Schools had [low rates of transmission](#)—with 51 transmission events (38 students, 13 staff) out of 5,793 contacts traced (

Citation: Coronavirus: Is it safe for kids to go back to school? And what about the new mutant strain? (2021, January 20) retrieved 22 November 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-coronavirus-safe-kids-school-mutant.html>

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