



COVID-19 – Information for parents of children in school or childcare – 17 February 2020 (new information in red)

An outbreak of a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus (COVID-19) was detected in Hubei Province, China in late December 2019

Exclusion from School or Childcare

There is an outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus, which has so far mostly affected people who live in or who have visited mainland China, or those who have had close contact with sick people with the disease.

On Tuesday 11 February 2020, the World Health Organization announced the official name for the new coronavirus disease as “COVID-19”. The CO stands for corona, the VI for virus and the D for disease.

On 13 February, the Australian government extended entry restrictions on foreign nationals who have recently been in mainland China for a further week from 15 February 2020 to protect Australians from the risk of coronavirus.

This means:

- Students or staff who travelled in or transited through mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) on or after 1 February must isolate themselves at home for 14 days after leaving China.
- Students or staff who have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 need to isolate themselves for 14 days from the date of last exposure to the case.

Being isolated at home means that you need to stay at home for the full period, except if you are unwell and need medical attention. You cannot go to work, school, or public areas, and should not use public transportation, ride share or taxis. Visitors to the home should be discouraged.

What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can affect humans and animals. In humans, coronaviruses can cause mild illness, such as the common cold and gastrointestinal infections, as well as more severe illness, such as that caused by SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome).

The length of time that a person is infectious, that is, can spread the infection to others, is not yet confirmed. There is emerging information that some people may be infectious for a short period before they develop symptoms or have very minimal symptoms. However, this information is very limited and preliminary. While this is believed to be uncommon, this is the reason that the Australian government are taking precautionary steps in asking some returned travellers and contacts of cases to self-isolate at home for 14 days.

The Australian Government is closely monitoring the situation and this advice will be updated as necessary.

For parents of children who are excluded from school or childcare

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms include, but are not limited to, fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.

What if my child is unwell with these symptoms?

If your child is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19:

You need to contact Communicable Disease Control (CDC), ACT Health on (02) 5124 9213 during business hours or by calling (02) 9962 4155 after hours.

CDC will assess and advise on what to do next. If you can't contact CDC, see a doctor. Phone the doctor before attending and tell them that you are a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

If your child has travelled to mainland China in the 14 days before the start of the symptoms:

Contact your GP for an assessment. When you call your GP's practice, tell the staff that your child has been in mainland China in the 14 days before the start of your symptoms, so that they can be prepared for your visit.

How can we all help prevent the spread of the virus?

Practising good hand and general hygiene is the best defence against the spread of the virus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water before and after eating as well as after using the toilet,
- Avoid close contact with others, and
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or directly into a tissue and throw the tissue in a bin.

Where can I get more information about home isolation?

We understand this is a stressful period for staff and families in home isolation.

For more information about how to take care of yourself and your family, go to our website for more information.

Where can I get more information about COVID-19?

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/information-about-novel-coronavirus>

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus>

Accessibility

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.



If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

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