

INFORMATION REGARDING THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS



29 January 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

'I CAME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE
AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL.'
JOHN 10:10

As you may be aware, Novel coronavirus was detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province in China in late December 2019. There have been a number of recent cases of the virus confirmed in Australia, although to date there have been no confirmed cases reported in Western Australia.

The Department of Health advises that if a student has been in contact with someone who has contracted the virus, they should seek medical advice and stay away from school until they are clear of symptoms for 14 days.

As a further precaution, late yesterday the Ministers for Education and Health requested that students who have travelled to, or transited through, China or Hong Kong in the past two weeks be asked to stay away from school for a period of 14 days from the date they returned to Australia. This request applies to children in all schools, including Catholic, Independent and Government.

Consequently, I am writing to request that you keep your child or children away from school should the above apply to them. Current medical advice is that while the risk of the virus being transmitted in Australia is low, this voluntary exclusion will cover the incubation period. Should your child not exhibit any symptoms for 14 days after returning to Australia, he/she may attend school.

I am providing this information today to give parents and caregivers as much time as possible to make arrangements for the care of their children during the period of non-attendance from school, should the above apply.

Please contact the College office on (08) 9297 7600 if you will be keeping your child at home because of recent travel to or transiting through China or Hong Kong. I would also request that you provide the school with the anticipated period of absence.

I know that this situation has the potential to cause significant issues with respect to care arrangements for your children. I hope that you will understand that the option to keep your child at home during any potential incubation period is precautionary and designed to minimise the potential transmission of the Novel coronavirus.

Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) is working closely with the Department of Education and health authorities to monitor the situation, and further advice will be provided as required.

Should you wish to access more information about the virus, including a parent factsheet, please visit the [Department of Health website](http://www2.health.wa.gov.au/coronavirus) (www2.health.wa.gov.au/coronavirus) or call the Healthdirect helpline on 1800 022 222.

Thank you for your support in this significant public health matter.

Yours sincerely

Peter Collins
Principal



Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Information for Parents

An outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in late December 2019.

Exclusion from School or Early Childhood Centres

If you have been informed by Public Health authorities that your child is a close contact of a confirmed case of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), even if they don't have symptoms, they cannot attend school or childcare until Public Health informs you that it is safe for them to do so.

If your child has recently travelled to mainland China and has developed symptoms (listed below), contact your usual doctor for assessment who will liaise with Public Health authorities and determine whether or not your child needs to be excluded from school or child care.

If your child has recently travelled to mainland China and has not developed any of the symptoms (listed below), they may attend their school or early childhood centre and should not be excluded.

What is this virus?

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness similar to the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

The virus originating in Hubei Province, China is called 'novel' because it is new. It had not been detected before this outbreak. Most people infected live in, or travelled to, Hubei Province, China. There have been cases of 2019-nCoV reported in other Chinese provinces and other countries. It is likely that the virus originally came from an animal, and there is now evidence that it can spread from person-to-person.

What are the symptoms?

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

What if my child is sick now or within 14 days of being in Hubei Province?

If your child develops mild symptoms:

- keep your child at home and do not send them to school or child care;
- call your usual doctor or local hospital and tell them your child may have novel coronavirus infection; and
- when you get to the doctor's clinic or hospital, tell them again that your child may have novel coronavirus.

If your child has serious symptoms such as shortness of breath:

- call **000** and ask for an ambulance; and
- tell the paramedic that your child may have novel coronavirus infection.
- your doctor will test your child for 2019-nCoV and provide advice on management. You will also be contacted by Public Health officers who will provide you with more information.

Students with symptoms should be excluded from attending schools and early childhood centres until symptoms have resolved. If they have been diagnosed with 2019-CoV they should not attend school or childcare until they are cleared by public health authorities. If students have other respiratory illness (i.e. flu), they should not attend school irrespective of whether there is a concern about nCoV.

How can I help prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV?

- teach and encourage your children to wash their hands often with soap and water before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet;
- avoid contact with others by keeping children home if they are unwell;
- teaching children to cough and sneeze into their elbow; and
- while it's not possible to avoid touching, kissing, and hugging children, parents and guardians should do their best to follow these steps too.

Where can I get more information?

Visit the Australian Government Department of Health homepage at www.health.gov.au

Call the Public Health Information Line on 1800 044 599.

Contact your state or territory public health agency:

- ACT call 02 5124 9213 during business hours or (02) 9962 4155 after hours
- NSW call 1300 066 055
- NT call 08 8922 8044
- Qld call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- SA call 1300 232 272
- Tas call 1800 671 738
- Vic call 1300 651 160
- WA visit <https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/> or call your local [public health unit](#)