



# Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

## Information for Schools and Early Childhood Centres

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

## Exclusion from Schools and Early Childhood Centres

If a child or staff member has been informed by Public Health authorities that they are a close contact of a confirmed case of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), irrespective of whether they have developed symptoms, they cannot attend their school or early childhood centre until their local public health unit informs them that it is safe for them to do so.

If a child or staff member has a recent travel history to mainland China and develops symptoms (listed below), they should contact their primary care provider. Their primary care provider will liaise with Public Health units and determine whether or not the child/staff member needs to be excluded from their school or early childhood centre.

If a child or staff member has 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 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, in the last 14 days, a student or staff member has been to Hubei Province?

Provide them (or the parent(s) or guardian(s)) with the fact sheet and counsel them to monitor their health closely and report any symptoms to their primary care provider.

## What if I have a student or staff member who is sick within 14 days of being in Hubei Province?

If the student/staff member develops mild symptoms:

- isolate the student/staff member in a single room away from others;
- inform the parent/guardian or staff member and advise them to arrange an urgent medical review;
- when possible, the student/staff member should be isolated at home while waiting for a medical assessment; and
- the parent/guardian or staff member should phone ahead to the GP or hospital and inform them that the student/staff member may have novel coronavirus.

If the student/staff member has severe symptoms, such as shortness of breath:

- call 000 and request an ambulance;
- if they are a student, inform their parent(s) or guardian(s); and
- inform the paramedics that the student/staff may have novel coronavirus infection.

Staff and 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 staff or students have other respiratory illness (i.e. flu), they should not attend school irrespective of whether there is a concern about nCoV.

## How can we help prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence. Encourage all children and staff 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; and
- cough and sneeze into their elbow

## Where can I get more information?

Visit the Australian Government Department of Health homepage at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

Call the Public Health Information Line on 1800 044 599.

Discuss any questions you have with the Public Health Agency monitoring you.

Contact your state or territory public health agency:

- ACT call 02 5124 9213
- 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](#)