Information for schools and early childhood centres, students and their parents

People who have returned from a country or region that is at high or moderate risk for COVID-19 should monitor their health closely. If you develop symptoms including a fever and cough you should isolate yourself immediately and urgently seek medical attention. Go to www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers for the list of at-risk countries.

People who think they may have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus should also monitor their health and seek urgent medical attention.

Can students or staff members attend schools and early childhood centres?

Specific requirements are in place for people who have returned from a country or region that is at high or moderate risk for COVID-19, or think may they have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus. Go to www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers for the list of at-risk countries and isolation requirements.

The relevant school or childcare centre should be notified. Students may want to seek alternate arrangements for remote learning keeping in mind the isolation period, provided the person remains well, is a maximum of 14 days.

What does isolate in your home mean?

People who need to isolate must stay at home and not attend public places, in particular work, school, childcare or university. Only people they usually live in the household with should be in the home.

Do not see visitors. Where possible, ask others such as friends or family, who are not required to be isolated, to get food or other necessities. If the person in isolation must leave the home or residence, such as to seek medical care, they are instructed to wear a surgical mask if they have one.

What if a student or staff member becomes sick while in isolation?

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

If a student/staff member develops mild symptoms, they must:

- Isolate themselves from others at home and use a separate bathroom if available;
- Put on a surgical mask and if they don't have one, practise good sneeze/cough hygiene;
- Practise good hand hygiene; and
- Call a doctor or hospital and tell them the recent travel or close contact history.

If they have serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing:

- Call 000, ask for an ambulance and notify the officers of the recent travel or close contact history.

If unwell, staff and students should be excluded from attending the school or early childcare centre until they are assessed by their primary care provider. The primary care provider will liaise with the local public health authority to determine when it is safe for them to return to usual activities.

How can we help prevent the spread of coronavirus?

Practising good sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- and if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people).

More information

While coronavirus is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat or tiredness are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness – not coronavirus.

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The phone number of your state or territory public health agency is available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.