



# 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.***

On 1 February 2020, the Australian Government updated advice for people who have recently returned to Australia from mainland China based on the latest and best medical advice.

### Can I attend school or early childhood centre?

In the following scenarios you **can not** attend school or childhood centre:

- If you have travelled from Hubei Province within the past 14 days, you must isolate yourself until 14 days have elapsed after leaving Hubei Province.
- If you have left, or transited through, mainland China **on or after 1 February 2020** you must isolate yourself until 14 days after leaving China.
- If you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus, you must isolate yourself for 14 days after last contact with the confirmed case.

In the following scenarios your child **can** attend school or early childhood centre:

- Students and staff who have travelled from other provinces of mainland China (and have not been in Hubei province) who arrived prior to 1 February 2020.
- Students and staff who have only been to Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan.

By way of example,

- if someone left the city of Wuhan in Hubei Province on 22 January 2020 he/she is required to isolate until 6 February 2020.
- if someone left Shanghai on 28 January 2020 and comes to Australia via another country on 3 February 2020, he/she would **not be required** to isolate (as he/she left China **before** 1 February 2020).
- If someone left Beijing on 3 February 2020 and arrived in Australia the same day, he/she **would** be required to isolate for 14 days, until 17 February 2020.

If you develop symptoms (listed below) within 14 days of leaving anywhere in mainland China or within 14 days of last contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus, you should arrange to see your usual doctor for urgent assessment. You should telephone the health clinic or hospital before you arrive and tell them of your travel history or that you have been in contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus. Your doctor will liaise with Public Health authorities to manage your care. You must then remain isolated either in your home or a healthcare setting until Public Health authorities inform you that it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

### 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 seen in mainland China is called 'novel' because it is new. It has not been detected before this outbreak. Most people currently infected live in, or have travelled to mainland China. There have been some cases of 2019-nCoV reported in 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 I have a student or staff member who is sick within 14 days of being in mainland China?

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-nCoV 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 2019-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 National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

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 call 08 9328 0553