



Novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

Information for parents and schools / early childhood centres regarding students returning from China, Iran or the Republic of Korea

Advice on Returning to Schools and Early Childhood Centres

Parents **MUST NOT** send their children to school / childcare within 14 days of the child's departure from mainland China, Iran. They must also not send their children to school if the child has travelled, or transited through, the Republic of Korea on or after 5 March 2020 for 14 days after leaving the Republic of Korea.

Although the risk to children is very low, this is a precautionary approach to ensure the safest possible environment for children. Children do not require a medical certificate or clearance to return to school / childcare but must remain at home until their self-quarantine period is over.

If a child has a recent travel history to a country or region that is considered high risk of COVID-19 transmission (currently mainland China, Iran, the Republic of Korea or Italy) **and** develops symptoms (listed below), they should contact their GP. Their GP will liaise with Public Health Units and determine whether the child needs a medical assessment.

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 has not been detected before this outbreak. 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/or shortness of breath.

What if a child who has been to mainland China, Iran or the Republic of Korea attends school/childcare before the end of the 14-day exclusion period?

The risk of infection with novel coronavirus for other students and staff at the school / childcare centre is very low. Novel coronavirus is spread from person to person through close contact with an infected person or through contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze.

There is no requirement for any other students/children or staff at the school to be isolated because of being in contact with the child.

For detailed information on what action the school or childcare facility should take if a child attends while they should still be in self-quarantine, please see the “[Advice for schools about self-isolation requirements](#)”

What if my child is sick now or becomes sick within 14 days of returning from China or Iran?

If your child develops respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and/or shortness of breath, please call your GP. Your GP will liaise with Public Health Units and determine whether the child needs a medical assessment. If you are attending a GP, or require urgent medical assistance at an emergency department, ring ahead and notify them of your child’s symptoms and travel history. This will prevent other people at the health service potentially being exposed. If your child is experiencing a life-threatening emergency (such as severe shortness of breath) dial 000.

If your child is diagnosed with COVID-19 they must not attend school or childcare until they are cleared by public health authorities. The usual exclusion criteria apply to children with other infective illnesses when COVID-19 has been ruled out.

How can I protect myself and others against COVID-19?

- Frequently washing your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand gel
- Refraining from touching mouth and nose
- If coughing or sneezing, covering your nose and mouth with a paper tissue or flexed elbow. Dispose of the tissue immediately after use and perform hand hygiene and
- Avoiding close contact with anyone if you, or they, have a cold or flu-like symptoms (maintain a distance of at least 1 metre).

Where can I get more information?

The WA Department of Health has updated information including frequently asked questions about the novel coronavirus. To view this information, you can visit www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus

You can also call the national Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080

Version 4

Last updated 7 March 2020

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2020

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.

health.wa.gov.au