



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Information for parents and schools/early childhood centres regarding students returning from China

There is currently an outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) in mainland China.

If students or staff have travelled from mainland China or been in close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days, special restrictions apply.

Advice on returning to schools and early childhood centres

Students or staff **cannot** attend school or early childcare centre if they have:

- been in, or transited through, mainland China in the last 14 days (they must isolate themselves for 14 days from leaving mainland China) **OR**
- been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days (they must isolate themselves for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case).

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

Children and staff do not require a medical certificate or clearance to return to school/childcare but must remain at home until 14 days after leaving mainland China.

If a child has a recent travel history to mainland China **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 COVID-19 virus originating in Hubei Province, China 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 attends school/childcare before the end of the 14-day exclusion period?

The risk of infection with COVID-19 for other students and staff at the school / childcare centre is very low. COVID-19 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 within 14 after returning from mainland China, please see the "Advice for schools about self-isolation requirements" at healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus

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

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 tell them that your child has been to China and is unwell. 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.
- 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 COVID-19. To view this information, you can visit healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus

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

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