

Victorian School of languages

31 January 2020

Coronavirus advice to Students, Parents and Teachers

Introduction

This notice includes updates from the Department of Education and Training as of 29 January on the emerging outbreak of novel coronavirus. Please note that the situation continues to evolve and we will circulate further information when it becomes available.

Background

Cases have been reported predominantly in the city of Wuhan, in the Hubei province of China, as well as in other Chinese cities and in other countries, including at least two confirmed cases in Victoria at the time of writing.

The Department of Education and Training continues to consult Victoria's Chief Health Officer and the Commonwealth Government's Chief Medical Officer and our school follows the Department's advice.

The Latest Department of Education advice (from 29 January 2020)

"Parents/guardians/carers of students should ensure that any returning student is isolated at home and should not attend school for 14 days:

- **following exposure to any confirmed novel coronavirus case; or**
- **after leaving Hubei Province.**

This same advice applies to any staff who have returned or are returning from Hubei province.

The Chief Health Officer's current advice is that staff and students do not need to be isolated at home if they have recently travelled in other parts of China or other countries and are not showing any symptoms of the virus.

If you think a student or staff member is showing relevant symptoms, please ask the student's parents/guardians/carers or the staff member to call the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to discuss further actions on 1300 651 160."

The school also requests that parents and teachers make contact with the relevant centre Supervisor or Area Manager if an affected student needs support.

Maintaining good hygiene at school and at home

Students and staff are advised that everyone can protect against infections by practising good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene.

- cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a tissue, or cough into your elbow
- dispose of the tissue into a bin and then wash your hands afterwards
- wash your hands regularly, after using the toilet, and before eating.

VSL Centre offices will have health promotion materials to distribute and promote to staff, students and families, namely:

- “Wash your hands regularly” – poster
- “Cover your cough and sneeze” – poster
- “Be a soapy hero” - poster

International Students

International Students need to work closely with their host school staff and with their homestay families who are hosting international students from Wuhan City or other areas where the virus has been reported so that they know how to seek medical advice where appropriate.

Unwell students and staff

In accordance with the Department's regular “Infectious Diseases Policy” send unwell students or staff need to be sent home. Unwell students and staff should remain at home until symptoms resolve and seek medical assistance as required.

In the event that a parent is not aware of the advice from health authorities, and a student arrives at school who should be excluded, the following steps should be taken:

1. Reassure the student if they are anxious.
2. Move the student to a single room away from others, being mindful of the student's wellbeing.
3. Contact parents/carers, inform them of the advice from health authorities and ask them to come and collect their child

Other Information

- Health-related questions can also be emailed to the Department at healthadvice@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Additional advice and information on steps to take can be found on the *coronavirus* webpage.

The emergency affects everyone and we all need to be diligent and work together to ensure the health and wellbeing of our school community. VSL updates will be placed on our school website whenever the Department of Education and training provides new advice.

Frank Merlino
Principal

In accordance with national public health guidelines and current information about the coronavirus from the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, exclusion of well children or staff from school who have travelled to Wuhan, China, or any other areas where there have been reported cases is NOT required, unless the following applies:

- the person is a confirmed case of novel coronavirus; or
- the person is a close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus in the past 14 days.

If schools think a student or staff member may meet one of the above criteria, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services to discuss further actions via phone: 1300 651 160. Please also inform the Department of Education and Training by making an IRIS incident alert.

If a student or staff member is sick with symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat within 14 days of being in Wuhan, China or other countries with cases:

- The student or staff member will need to be excluded from school until reviewed by a doctor
- Where necessary, call the student's parents or guardian to inform them of the need to exclude the child for medical review
- If the school is arranging transport for a student or staff member to a medical facility, call ahead to inform them the patient has been in Wuhan, China, or another country with cases and ensure the travel history is given to the facility on arrival.

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

- Call 000 and request an ambulance, and
- Inform the paramedics that the patient has been in Wuhan, China.

Monday 27 January 2020

Update on the coronavirus outbreak

Dear colleagues,

You will be aware of the emerging outbreak of novel coronavirus. Cases have been reported predominantly in the city of Wuhan, in the Hubei province of China, as well as in other Chinese cities and in other countries, including at least one confirmed case at the time of writing in Victoria, Australia.

The Australian Government has advised that there is no cause for alarm with respect to the coronavirus and that the risk to the Australian public remains relatively low.

The Department of Education and Training has consulted with Victoria's Chief Health Officer and Department of Health and Human Services to provide the following advice to schools and local communities:

Remind your staff and students that everyone can protect against infections by practising good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a tissue, or cough into your elbow, dispose of the tissue into a bin and then wash your hands afterwards. Wash your hands regularly, after using the toilet, and before eating.

Health promotion materials are available to distribute and promote to your staff, students and families, see:

- [Wash your hands regularly - poster](#)
- [Cover your cough and sneeze - poster](#)
- [Be a Soapy Hero!](#)

If you are an International Student Program school, work closely with your homestay families who are hosting international students from Wuhan City or other areas where the virus has been reported so that they are assured of the relatively low risk and know to seek medical advice where appropriate. For information you may wish to provide to your homestay families, see: [Information for the public - Novel Coronavirus](#)

Exclusion of well children or staff from school who have travelled to Wuhan, China, or any other areas where there have been reported cases is **NOT** required, unless the following applies:

- the person is a confirmed case of novel coronavirus; or
- the person is a close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus in the past 14 days.

If you think a student or staff member may meet one of the above criteria, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services to discuss further actions via phone: 1300 651 160. Please also inform the Department of Education and Training by making an IRIS incident alert.

For staff and students who experience flu-like symptoms **AND** have recently travelled to Wuhan City, Hubei province, or had close contact with a confirmed case:

- seek medical advice for any staff or students in your care who experience fever and respiratory symptoms (including but not limited to cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, body aches or fatigue) **AND** have recently travelled to Wuhan City or had close contact with a confirmed case in the 14 days before of the onset of illness. Call ahead to notify the medical practitioner of recent travel; and
- contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 and inform the Department of Education and Training by making an IRIS incident alert. The Department of Education and Training will ensure appropriate support is provided.

The Department of Health and Human Services has developed a factsheet for schools, see [Novel coronavirus - Factsheet for schools and early learning centres \(DOCX\)](#)

The Department of Education and Training will also provide you with further information if the situation changes.

If you have any health-related questions, please email: healthadvice@edumail.vic.gov.au

If you have any questions related to the International Student Program, please email: international@edumail.vic.gov.au, or contact your School Support Officer.

Dr David Howes
Deputy Secretary
Schools and Regional Services

Hi Frank,

Apologies for the un-announced email, I am Natalia's husband and specialise in school risk, audits and legal compliance.

I wanted to share some of my communications to ensure the VSL is equipped in managing parent/staff perception of the Novel Coronavirus before your centres open

Happy to chat if you need any further assistance.

Dear College Community,

As you may be aware, the situation regarding the emerging outbreak of novel coronavirus has continued to evolve.

We are monitoring the situation closely and following Australian Department of Health guidelines along and consulting with the Department of Education and Training.

The Commonwealth's Chief Medical Officer and Victoria's Chief Health Officer have recommended a stronger precautionary approach to managing coronavirus for travellers returned from Hubei province.

This recommendation is that parents/guardians/carers of children should ensure that any child is isolated at home and should **NOT** attend the service for 14 days:

- following exposure to any confirmed novel coronavirus case; or
- after leaving Hubei Province.

This same advice applies to any staff who have returned or are returning from Hubei province.

The Chief Health Officer's current advice is that staff and children do not need to be isolated at home if they have recently travelled in other parts of China or other countries and are not showing any symptoms of the virus.

If you think a child or staff member is showing relevant symptoms, please ask the child's parents/guardians/carers or the staff member to call the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to discuss further actions on 1300 651 160.

The Department of Education and Training has consulted with Victoria's Chief Health Officer and Department of Health and Human Services to provide the following advice to schools and local communities:

If you believe that your child may meet one of the above criteria, please contact the **Department of Health and Human Services** to discuss further actions via phone: **1300 651 160**. The College also requests that you make contact with your **Campus Principal** to discuss plans for support for your child:

Insert Centres or contact at Head Office

If you or a family member has travelled to China over the school holidays and you are unsure as to whether you have cause for concern please view this page on the Department of Health website (in English and Chinese) - [Novel coronavirus information for travellers arriving in Australia from China](#)

The Department of Health and Human Services has developed a factsheet for early childhood services, see: [Information for the education sector - novel coronavirus](#)

The College will consult with The Department of Education and Training and will provide you with further information if the situation changes.



Philip Gruszka | Risk and Compliance Manager

Flinders Christian Community College

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The contents of this email are confidential. Any unauthorised use of the contents is expressly prohibited.

If you have received this email in error, please advise by telephone (reverse charges) immediately and then delete/destroy the email and any printed copies. Thank you.

Coronavirus advice

This page includes advice as of 29 January on the emerging outbreak of novel coronavirus.

The Commonwealth's Chief Medical Officer and Victoria's Chief Health Officer have recommended a stronger precautionary approach to managing coronavirus for travellers returned from Hubei province.

For parents, carers and guardians

[Coronavirus factsheet - Department of Health and Human Services \(docx - 50.68kb\)](#)

For schools, principals and teachers

School attendance

This recommendation is that parents/guardians/carers of students should ensure that any student is isolated at home and should not attend school for 14 days:

- following exposure to any confirmed novel coronavirus case; or
- after leaving Hubei Province.

This same advice applies to any staff who have returned or are returning from Hubei province.

The Chief Health Officer's current advice is that staff and students do not need to be isolated at home if they have recently travelled in other parts of China or other countries and are not showing any symptoms of the virus.

If you think a student or staff member is showing relevant symptoms, please ask the student's parents/guardians/carers or the staff member to call the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to discuss further actions on 1300 651 160.

If schools think a student or staff member is a confirmed case or a contact of a confirmed case, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services to discuss further actions via phone: 1300 651 160. Please also inform the Department of Education and Training by making an IRIS incident alert.

In the event that a parent is not aware of the advice from health authorities, and a student arrives at school who should be excluded, the following steps should be taken:

4. Reassure the student if they are anxious
5. Move the student to a single room away from others, being mindful of the student's wellbeing
6. Contact parents/carers, inform them of the advice from health authorities and ask them to come and collect their child

For more advice on coronavirus, see [Factsheet for schools and early learning centres - DHHS \(docx - 51.23kb\)](#)

Unwell students and staff

In accordance with the Department's regular [Infectious Diseases Policy](#) send unwell students or staff home. Unwell students and staff should remain at home until symptoms resolve and seek medical assistance as required.

Maintaining good health hygiene at school

Remind your staff, families and children that everyone can protect against infections by practising good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene. Here are some tips that everyone at your school can follow:

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a tissue, or cough into your elbow
- dispose of the tissue into a bin and then wash your hands afterwards
- wash your hands regularly, after using the toilet, and before eating.

Health promotion materials are available to distribute and promote to your staff, students and families, see:

- [Wash your hands regularly - poster](#)
- [Cover your cough and sneeze - poster](#)
- [Be a Soapy Hero!](#)

If you have any health-related questions, please email: healthadvice@edumail.vic.gov.au

Continuity of learning

Schools should support students who are unable to attend school by providing educational materials that can be completed at home. The Department is working with Virtual School Victoria in preparing further educational resources to assist schools and these will be made available next week.

Schools with concerns regarding the impact of the Coronavirus on delivery of their learning programs are encouraged to contact the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority on (03) 9032 1700.

International Student Program

The Department is working to support the small number of schools hosting students from Hubei Province, China.

If you are an International Student Program school, work closely with your homestay families who are hosting international students from China or other areas where the virus has been

reported so that they are assured of the relatively low risk and know to seek medical advice where appropriate.

It is important that you closely monitor the wellbeing of international students, particularly from China, who may feel vulnerable at this time, and connect them to support services as required.

For information you may wish to provide to your homestay families, see: [Information for the public - Novel Coronavirus](#)

For specific questions please email international@edumail.vic.gov.au

International travel

Schools are reminded to monitor the travel advice level from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the SmartTravel website.

The Department's [Overseas Travel Requirements](#) and [Travel Policy](#) provide advice on the action schools should take at each advice level.

Approval for travel to countries and areas identified as 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' locations by DFAT must only be given after careful consideration of the risks involved in travelling to such destinations.

For early childhood education services

Attendance

This recommendation is that parents/guardians/carers of children should ensure that any child is isolated at home and should not attend their service for 14 days:

- following exposure to any confirmed novel coronavirus case; or
- after leaving Hubei Province.

This same advice applies to any staff who have returned or are returning from Hubei province.

The Chief Health Officer's current advice is that staff and children do not need to be isolated at home if they have recently travelled in other parts of China or other countries and are not showing any symptoms of the virus.

If you think a child or staff member is showing relevant symptoms, please ask the child's parents/guardians/carers or the staff member to call the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to discuss further actions on 1300 651 160.

If schools think a child or staff member is a confirmed case or a contact of a confirmed case, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services to discuss further actions via

phone: 1300 651 160. As required by the National Law and Regulations governing all early childhood education and care services, you must report a confirmed case of coronavirus involving a child attending your service to:

The Victorian Regulatory Authority - for reporting requirements visit the Department's website at [NQF Notifications Required](#) or contact us on 1300 307 415 (toll-free).

In the event that a parent is not aware of the advice from health authorities, and a child arrives at service who should be excluded, the following steps should be taken:

1. Reassure the child if they are anxious
2. Move the child to a single room away from others, or if not available, an area well removed from contact with others, being mindful of the child's wellbeing
3. Contact parents/carers, inform them of the advice from health authorities and ask them to come and collect their child

For more advice on coronavirus, see [Factsheet for schools and early learning centres - DHHS \(docx - 51.23kb\)](#)

Unwell children and staff

In accordance with [Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#) send unwell children or staff home. Unwell children and staff should remain at home until symptoms resolve and seek medical assistance as required.

Maintaining good health hygiene at early childhood education services

Remind your staff, families and children that everyone can protect against infections by practising good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene. Here are some tips that everyone at your service can follow:

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a tissue, or cough into your elbow
- dispose of the tissue into a bin and then wash your hands afterwards
- wash your hands regularly, after using the toilet, and before eating.

Health promotion materials are available to distribute and promote to your staff, children and families, see:

- [Wash your hands regularly - poster](#)
- [Cover your cough and sneeze - poster](#)
- [Be a Soapy Hero!](#)

For TAFE and training providers

Attendance

This recommendation is that any student is isolated at home and should not attend TAFE or a training provider for 14 days:

- following exposure to any confirmed novel coronavirus case; or
- after leaving Hubei Province.

This same advice applies to any staff who have returned or are returning from Hubei province.

The Chief Health Officer's current advice is that staff and students do not need to be isolated at home if they have recently travelled in other parts of China or other countries and are not showing any symptoms of the virus.

If you think a student or staff member is showing relevant symptoms, please ask the student or the staff member to call the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to discuss further actions on 1300 651 160.

If you think a student or staff member is a confirmed case or a contact of a confirmed case, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services to discuss further actions via phone: 1300 651 160.

In the event that one of your staff or students is not aware of the advice from health authorities, and arrives at a TAFE or training provider who should be excluded, the following steps should be taken:

1. Reassure the person if they are anxious
2. Move the person to a single room away from others, being mindful of the person's wellbeing
3. Inform the person of the advice from health authorities and ask them to seek immediate medical attention

[Maintaining good health hygiene](#)

Remind your staff and students that everyone can protect against infections by practising good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene. Here are some tips that everyone can follow:

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a tissue, or cough into your elbow
- dispose of the tissue into a bin and then wash your hands afterwards
- wash your hands regularly, after using the toilet, and before eating.

Health promotion materials are available to distribute and promote to your staff and students, see:

- [Wash your hands regularly - poster](#)
- [Cover your cough and sneeze - poster](#)
- [Be a Soapy Hero!](#)

[Back to top](#)

Last Update: 29 January 2020

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Wednesday 29 January 2020

Updated advice on coronavirus: Wednesday 29 January 2020

Dear colleagues,

As you may be aware, the situation regarding the emerging outbreak of novel coronavirus has continued to evolve.

The Commonwealth's Chief Medical Officer and Victoria's Chief Health Officer have this afternoon recommended a stronger precautionary approach to managing coronavirus for travellers returned from Hubei province.

This recommendation is that parents/guardians/carers of students should ensure that any returning student is isolated at home and should not attend school for 14 days:

- following exposure to any confirmed novel coronavirus case; or
- after leaving Hubei Province.

This same advice applies to any staff who have returned or are returning from Hubei province.

The Chief Health Officer's current advice is that staff and students do not need to be isolated at home if they have recently travelled in other parts of China or other countries and are not showing any symptoms of the virus.

If you think a student or staff member is showing relevant symptoms, please ask the student's parents/guardians/carers or the staff member to call the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to discuss further actions on 1300 651 160.

Schools should inform their staff, students and families of this new advice by providing a copy of the factsheet available [here](#) through your school's communication channels with parents.

Translated versions of the factsheet will also be available shortly.

Additional advice and information on the steps to take can be found on the [coronavirus web page](#) which also includes advice on:

- continuity of learning for students who are not attending school
- international students and families hosting
- international travel
- maintaining good health hygiene at school
- health promotion posters and materials
- information, resources and contacts related to coronavirus.

Thank you for your continued support and work to ensure the health and wellbeing of your school community.

This new advice is based on the latest expert recommendations of the Commonwealth's Chief Medical Officer and Victoria's Chief Health Officer. Thank you for your cooperation in implementing these recommendations.

Dr David Howes

Deputy Secretary

School and Regional Services