

Victorian School of Languages

8 February 2020

Coronavirus Advice to Students, Parents and Teachers

Introduction

This notice includes updates from the Department of Education and Training as of 1 February 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 four 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

Parents/guardians/carers of students should ensure that any student returning from mainland China (not including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) on or after 1 February 2020 is isolated at home and should not attend school until 14 days after they were last in mainland China.

This recommendation does not apply retrospectively. It applies only to students who were in mainland China on or after 1 February 2020.

The existing advice remains 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 impacted staff.

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 from China should work closely with their host school staff and with their homestay families 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” unwell students and staff need to be sent home. They 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 be emailed to the Department at healthadvice@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Additional advice and information on steps to take can be found on the Education Department's *coronavirus* web page.

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

Victorian School of Languages - Department of Education & Training

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