

# COVID-19 – Information for parents of children in school or childcare

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*An outbreak of a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus (COVID-19) was detected in Hubei Province, China in late December 2019*

## Exclusion from School or Childcare

There is an outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus that has not previously been detected in humans. The outbreak originated in Hubei Province in China and has spread to a number of other countries outside China.

On Tuesday 11 February 2020, the World Health Organization announced the official name for the new coronavirus disease as “COVID-19”. The CO stands for corona, the VI for virus and the D for disease.

The Australian government has placed entry restrictions on foreign nationals who have recently been in mainland China, Iran or South Korea, to protect Australians from the risk of coronavirus. In addition, there are quarantine requirements in place for Australian citizens and permanent residents returning from these countries.

### **This means:**

- People who travelled in or transited through mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) or Iran must quarantine themselves at home for 14 days after leaving China or Iran.
- People who travelled in or transited through South Korea on or after 5 March must quarantine themselves at home for 14 days after leaving South Korea.
- People who have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 need to quarantine themselves for 14 days from the date of last exposure to the case.

Being quarantined at home means that you, or your children, need to stay at home, except if you are unwell and need medical attention. You cannot go to work, school, or public areas (such as shops or cafes/restaurants) and should not use public transport, ride share or taxis. You also need to tell people not to visit you while you are in self-quarantine.

## What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can affect humans and animals. In humans, coronaviruses can cause mild illness, such as the common cold and gastrointestinal infections, as

well as more severe illness, such as that caused by SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome).

There is emerging information that some people may be infectious for a short period before they develop symptoms. While this is believed to be uncommon, this is the reason that the Australian government is taking precautionary steps in asking some returned travellers and contacts of cases to self-quarantine at home for 14 days.

The Australian Government is closely monitoring the situation and this advice will be updated as necessary.

## For parents of children who are excluded from school or childcare

### What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms include, but are not limited to, fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath. Other symptoms can include runny nose, chills, body aches, and headache.

### What if my child is unwell with these symptoms?

*If your child is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or has travelled to mainland China, Iran or South Korea in the 14 days before the start of their symptoms*

Contact Communicable Disease Control (CDC), ACT Health on (02) 5124 9213 during business hours, or by calling (02) 9962 4155 after hours. CDC will assess and advise on what to do next.

If you can't contact CDC, see a doctor for an assessment. Phone the doctor before attending and tell them that your child is a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or that your child has recently been in mainland China, Iran or South Korea, so they can be prepared for your visit.

### How can we all help prevent the spread of the virus?

Practising good hand and general hygiene is the best defence against the spread of the virus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty. Do this before handling food, before eating, as well as after using the toilet. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with others.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or directly into a tissue and throw the tissue in a bin.

## Where can I get more information about home quarantine?

We understand this is a stressful period for staff and families in home quarantine.

For more information about how to take care of yourself and your family, go to our website for more information.

## Where can I get more information about COVID-19?

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/information-about-novel-coronavirus>

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus>

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