

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

While media and public commentary in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to raise concern, public health authorities are advising that the current risk remains low in Western Australia. However, precautionary measures are necessary to ensure the safest possible environment for our children.

Western Australians should remain alert, but not be alarmed.

It is important that as a school community we apply a common sense, factual and practical approach to COVID-19. The information to schools is provided through the Department of Education in conjunction with the Department of Health.

Below is a most recent communication from the Department of Health it gives us a snapshot on the current situation in Western Australia.

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

Who cannot attend school

Students or staff cannot attend school and need to self-quarantine if they have:

- a) left or transited through **mainland China** in the last 14 days, they must isolate themselves for 14 days from the date of leaving mainland China;
- b) left or transited through **Iran** on or after 1 March, they must isolate themselves for 14 days after leaving Iran;
- c) left or transited through the **Republic of Korea**, on or after 5 March, they must isolate themselves for 14 days after leaving the Republic of Korea;
- d) left or transited through **Italy** in the last 14 days, they must isolate themselves for 14 days from the date of leaving **Italy**;
- e) been informed by public health authorities that they have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus, they must isolate themselves for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case.

Students or staff who have been tested for COVID-19 should follow the advice of the Department of Health and stay away from school whilst awaiting results.

The above also applies to all parents/carers, contractors, visitors and volunteers on school sites. Parents/carers and staff should notify their school or line manager if the student or staff member will be away for the isolation period and confirm the date in which they were last in mainland China, Iran, the Republic of Korea or Italy, or have been advised by the Department of Health to isolate.

Who can attend school

Students or staff who have travelled to or transited through other countries (excluding China, Iran, Republic of Korea and Italy) can attend school. If students or staff display symptoms (see information below) they should not attend school and seek medical advice.

All returned travellers who have travelled in or transited through “higher risk” countries or a country considered to pose a “moderate risk” of transmission in the last 14 days should self-monitor for symptoms and immediately isolate themselves if they become unwell.

Higher Risk	Moderate Risk
<p><i>Must isolate for 14 days prior to attending</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainland China • Iran • Republic of Korea • Italy 	<p><i>Can attend school, but self-monitor</i></p> <p>All other countries</p>

The most up to date list can be accessed at:

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-covid-19-countries.htm>

Will my school close if there is a confirmed staff or student case?

If a WA school has to close due to a confirmed case, it will be on advice from the WA Health Department’s Chief Health Officer. In this situation the principal will receive direct advice and support regarding the closure process and communication from the coronavirus support team.

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).

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- direct close contact with a person while they are infectious;
- close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes; or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

Most infections are only transmitted by people when they have symptoms. These can include fever, a cough, sore throat, tiredness and shortness of breath.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19

The school is taking some practical steps to prepare in advance of COVID-19 and precautions that can be put in place to slow its transmission.

The Department of Health and school promotes regular and thorough hand-washing through:

- putting alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) dispensers in prominent places around schools/workplaces and make sure these dispensers are regularly refilled;
- briefings at meetings and information to promote hand-washing;
- making sure that staff, contractors and students have access to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water;
- ensuring rubbish bins are accessible; and
- ensuring staff have access to cleaning and disinfectant agents to enable cleaning of staff facilities and work stations.

Staff, parents and students should:

- wash hands with soap and running water when hands are visibly dirty;
- wash hands with soap and water and use alcohol based hand rub (ABHR), before and after eating or prior to food preparation;
- wash hands with soap and water after going to the toilet;
- avoid using handkerchiefs;
- cough and sneeze with a tissue or bent elbow, dispose of used tissues immediately, and use ABHR or soap and water;
- avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose;
- wash hands with soap and water or ABHR when caring for the sick;
- if unwell, avoid contact with others;
- make sure workplaces are clean and hygienic, surfaces (e.g. desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly; and
- wash hands or use ABHR after handling animals or animal waste.

Parents will be updated with any new information as it is made known to the school. Thank you in anticipation of your support in following the necessary steps that have been outlined above.

Yours sincerely

Linda Knox
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