



Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update 10/3/20

Now updated with excursion exclusions to United States and Canada

The updated information from the education sector as provided through collaboration with the WA Health Department is as follows:

- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an international public health situation.
- The education sector in Western Australia is working collaboratively to respond to advice provided by the WA Health Department.
- While the risk of transmission in Australia remains low, the situation is evolving.
- Western Australians should remain alert, but not be alarmed.
- The current focus is on minimising and preventing transmission and making sure that our school system is prepared for a possible case. Whilst we will not be immune – we will be well prepared.
- To assist in reducing the spread, and keeping our students and staff safe, from 3 March, school travel restrictions were put in place.
 - There is a ban on all school-related international excursions – with the exception of travel to New Zealand.
 - This ban affects staff and students from public, Independent and Catholic schools in Western Australia.
 - Based on the most recent advice from the WA Chief Health Officer, this travel ban will mitigate risks to students and staff.
 - We are adopting a higher level of precaution than the current Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) travel warning for Australians because of our duty of care to students.
 - The decision to ban overseas school excursions to countries other than New Zealand, is taken with the wellbeing of students as the most important consideration.
 - In banning overseas school excursions, the Minister has considered the difficulties in care arrangements for students in an emerging health crisis if, for example, a staff supervisor or students became ill while travelling.
 - Advice will continue to be taken from the WA Chief Health Officer and there will be an ongoing review in the event the ban needs to be extended to include New Zealand.
 - Parents should speak to their child's school about insurance arrangements for any refunds for cancelled travel.
- The Premier has also announced that non-essential work-related international travel by all WA public servants will be on hold until further notice.

CURRENT SITUATION

- The Australian Government announced on 22 February that Year 11 and 12 students can apply for an exemption to the current travel restrictions that are applied to foreign nationals who have been in mainland China.
- Western Australia is finalising the process for consideration for students to return.
- On Wednesday, 5 March 2020, the Prime Minister announced an extension until 7 March 2020 of the travel ban for non-Australian citizens or permanent residents travelling from China and also Iran and South Korea.
- For arrivals from Italy, there will be enhanced health screening and temperature testing arrangements.
- Australian citizens and permanent residents will be permitted to enter Australia but must self-isolate for 14 days after departing The Republic of Korea, Iran or mainland China.

CURRENT POSITION FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

- The Australian Government requires:
 - Children or staff returning from (including transiting through) mainland China or Iran must stay at home until 14 days after leaving mainland China or Iran.
 - Children or staff who have been in the Republic of Korea on or after 5 March 2020 must self-quarantine for 14 days after leaving the Republic of Korea.
 - Children or staff returning from Italy will undergo extra screening at the borders when they arrive in Australia and do not need to self-quarantine unless they are advised to do so by border control.
- Staff and students who have been informed by public health authorities that they are close contacts of a confirmed case of the Novel Coronavirus, irrespective of whether they have developed symptoms, must also remain home, in isolation for 14 days.

Examples of how school principals are engaging with students who are staying away from school, in line with Department of Health advice. These are not isolated incidents and are indicative of what schools are doing around the State.

Support for course work

Example: School A

Six students wrote to the principal informing they had recently visited China and would be self-isolating for 14 days to support the health and safety of the school community. The school has supported these students:

- to allow them to work as a study group so they don't fall behind;
- sending them study content and homework via email;
- providing individual advice and support, as requested e.g. Specialist Maths teacher;
- delaying major assessment tasks until they had returned and settled back to school;
- maintaining contact through the school's EAL/D and International Education coordinator; and
- all staff have been asked to be mindful of the students' concerns about keeping up with class work and not feeling they are falling behind.

Work packages and personalised contact made available for affected students

Example: School B

In addition to communicating procedures in place based on current Department of Health advice:

- Students identified for isolation at home have had personalised contact from the principal saying that staff and their classmates cannot wait to see them on 'Tuesday or Thursday' (individualised return dates).
- Further, the deputy principals coordinated the development and distribution of common work packages based on feedback from year-level teaching teams about specific welcome activities and projects to help them feel part of their new year level. These were emailed to the students at home and are being completed then returned by email back to the deputy. Coordinated effort through the deputy allowed for an equitable and personalised response, which also supported classroom teachers.
- Parent responses indicate that, in addition to feeling supported in their learning, the students felt included and part of the school at a sensitive time.

School newsletters

Example: School C

In addition to communication procedures in place based on current Department of Health advice, the first school newsletter included comments from the principal expressing concern and support for families – either directly affected or with extended family overseas – affected by the virus, encouraging the whole school community to consider these impacts and offer support to neighbours. Work packages were made available to affected students.