

30 January 2020

Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

FAQs for Department of Education Principals and Staff

What is the current advice from health authorities regarding education providers?

- anyone who has been in contact with any confirmed novel Coronavirus cases must self-isolate (self-isolation means staying at home and not accepting visitors) for 14 days following exposure
- travellers who have visited Hubei Province of China need to self-isolate for 14 days after leaving Hubei Province
- returned travellers who have visited China cannot attend school, childcare or TAFE for 14 days after leaving China including Hong Kong.

Travellers includes students, staff and volunteers.

What are the symptoms of novel Corona virus?

A number of clinical symptoms have been reported in identified cases of novel coronavirus. These symptoms include:

- Fever
- Flu-like symptoms such as a cough, sore throat or headache
- Difficulty breathing.

Anyone with these symptoms who has travelled to or through China in the past 14 days should visit a GP immediately. Please call ahead and advise of your symptoms and recent travel before your appointment so the clinic can take necessary precautions.

People with suspected novel coronavirus will be tested and may also need to have a chest x-ray. There is no specific treatment for 2019-nCoV infection. Antibiotics are not effective against viral infections. However, most of the symptoms can be treated with supportive medical care. There is currently no vaccine for coronavirus.

If you have travelled to China in the last 14 days and are unwell you can call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) for health advice.

What type of leave do I use if I meet any of the above criteria?

If you are able to work from home and your supervisor/manager supports this arrangement, you need not apply for leave.

If you are not able to work from home, for the period covering your isolation you can apply for paid special leave through your Principal or line manager. Please contact your Regional HR Team who can assist schools/workplaces with the process as required.

As with other applications for special leave, you will need to provide your principal/supervisor with appropriate evidence of your travel dates or other information to support your special leave application.



When does the self-isolation period start?

The 14 day period starts when the person has left China (including Hong Kong).

What if I have already attended work and I meet any of the above criteria?

You are not to return to the workplace until 14 days have elapsed (and you are symptom free) since you left China (including Hong Kong).

I am currently on planned leave (e.g. long service leave, recreation leave) and I meet one of the above criteria – what do I do?

You should continue your planned leave. If the 14 day exclusion period has not elapsed by the time you are due to return to work, contact your Principal or line manager to apply for special leave (as above) for the remainder of the exclusion period.

My child has already attended school/childcare and meets one of the above criteria – do they need to stay away from school/childcare?

Yes, they are to cease attending school/childcare and not return until 14 days have elapsed and they are symptom free.

I don't fit any of the criteria but my dependent child fits the above criteria and cannot attend school. What leave type do I use?

You would normally use sick leave for carer/family responsibility leave in such circumstances so you should continue to use the normal leave category you would access.

I have not travelled to China (including Hong Kong) but have someone staying with me who has. Do I also need to be in isolation?

No. Only those people who have themselves travelled to the affected areas or who have been in contact with a confirmed case should self-isolate.

I haven't been out of Australia but I have been in contact with students or staff who have been to China (including Hong Kong). Do I also need to self-isolate?

No. Only those people who have themselves travelled to the affected areas or who have been in contact with a confirmed case should self-isolate.

You should continue to monitor your own health as you would normally do and if you feel unwell consult your medical practitioner.

I transited through a Hong Kong/Chinese airport but spent no time in the country. Do I need to self-isolate?

No. The advice from health authorities is that only people who have travelled throughout the country are to self-isolate.

Do I require a medical certificate/clearance to return to school/work after my period of isolation?

No. If you have been isolated for the nominated 14 day period following your departure from China/Hong Kong, and developed no symptoms, you may return to school/work.

**Will schools provide education materials to students who are unable to attend school?**

Schools may provide support materials for students as they would normally do in the case of student absences depending on the nature and duration of that absence. This may take the form of worksheets, curriculum materials or access to class discussions and activities via alternative means.

Day 8 enrolment collection processes are due to take place next week. Will Day 8 still proceed on Thursday 6 February?

No. Given the disrupted start to the year with rain events in the north of the state and the emergence of the Corona virus, the Day 8 2020 process will now take place on Day 13 (Thursday 13 February 2020) for all schools. Other enrolment collections will remain as scheduled.

The Day 8 protocols do cater for the counting of students who have effectively enrolled but who have been absent for valid reasons and there is documented evidence that their enrolment is continuing.

It is important that schools take early action to confirm class arrangements for the 2020 school year rather than waiting for the enrolment collection to occur. Please discuss staffing matters with your Regional HR team.

Further advice will be provided about the Day 8 (now Day 13) enrolment collection process in the near future.

<https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/careers/workforcemanagement/Pages/day4day8staffingenrolmentcollections.aspx>

Is there anything else we should be doing to manage this situation in our school/workplace?

Queensland Health advises you can protect yourself and others from infection by practising good hand and respiratory hygiene including:

- Cleaning hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue or flexed elbow when coughing or sneezing
- Avoiding contact with anyone who has flu-like symptoms.

For more information refer to the Queensland Health website:

<http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/217/838/novel-coronavirus>