



St Francis de Sales Catholic Primary School

626 Pascoe Vale Road Oak Park 3046

Tel: (03) 9306 9444 Email: principal@sfoakpark.catholic.edu.au

ABN: 87 246 330568



School Note

Information for Parents – Novel Coronavirus

29 January 2020

Dear Families

I am writing regarding the recent outbreak of novel coronavirus. As you would be aware, an outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in late December 2019.

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness similar to the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). The virus originating in Hubei Province, China is called 'novel' because it is new. It had not been detected before this outbreak. Most people infected live in, or travelled to, Hubei Province, China. There have been cases of 2019-nCoV reported in other Chinese provinces and other countries. It is likely that the virus originally came from an animal, and there is evidence that it can spread from person-to-person.

Health authorities have advised schools including ours that **only students who have been in contact with a person who has contracted coronavirus or who are displaying symptoms of coronavirus should be excluded from attending school**. Attached to this school note is an extract from an email I received from the Catholic Education Commission regarding their official advice.

However, it is possible that members of our community may have recently visited Hubei Province in China or have been in contact with visitors from high risk areas in the past few weeks. Therefore, in consultation with our School Leadership Team we believe it to be prudent to take additional precautions.

As an additional precaution for our community if the following applies to your family please call me:

Families who have returned from China over the school holiday period, especially but not exclusively if you were in Wuhan or the Hubei Province or have been in close contact with anyone who recently has.

We will be requesting that children from families meeting these criteria delay commencing school for 2 weeks.

If you are concerned about any symptoms:

- you can contact the Public Health Information Line on 1800 044 599;
- a link to the Department of Health factsheet for parents can be accessed <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-information-for-schools-and-early-childhood-centres>

The safety, health and wellbeing of all children in our care is our number one priority and we will continue to monitor the situation and notify you of any changes.

Finally, it has never been more important to wash hands thoroughly and to remind our family members to sneeze or cough into a tissue or their elbow rather than their hands.

Kind regards

John Rudd | Principal | john.rudd@sfoakpark.catholic.edu.au



Bloom where you are planted



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Extract from email received from Catholic Education Commission:

From: **CECV Executive Director** <cecv@cecv.edu.au>
Date: Tue, 28 Jan 2020 at 11:31
Subject: CECV Special Message - Update on the coronavirus outbreak

Dear Principal

You will be aware of the emerging outbreak of novel coronavirus. 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 one confirmed case at the time of writing in Victoria, Australia.

The Australian Government has advised that there is no cause for alarm with respect to the coronavirus and that the risk to the Australian public remains relatively low.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) has consulted with the Department of Education and Training which, in collaboration with Victoria's Chief Health Officer and Department of Health and Human Services, has provided the following advice to schools and local communities:

Remind your staff and students 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.

Health promotion materials are available to distribute and promote to your staff, students and families:

- Wash your hands regularly – poster
- Cover your cough and sneeze – poster
- Be a Soapy Hero!

If you are an International Student Program school, work closely with your homestay families who are hosting international students from Wuhan or other areas where the virus has been reported so that they are assured of the relatively low risk and know to seek medical advice where appropriate. For information you may wish to provide to your homestay families, see [Information for the public – novel coronavirus](#).

Exclusion of well children or staff from school who have travelled to Wuhan, China, or any other areas where there have been reported cases is **NOT** required, unless the following applies:

- the person is a confirmed case of novel coronavirus; or
- the person has been in close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus in the past 14 days.



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If you think a student or staff member may meet one of the above criteria, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services to discuss further actions via phone at 1300 651 160. Please also inform your Diocesan Emergency Management Officer.

For staff and students who experience flu-like symptoms **AND** have recently travelled to Wuhan, Hubei province, or had close contact with a confirmed case:

- seek medical advice for any staff or students in your care who experience fever and respiratory symptoms (including but not limited to cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, body aches or fatigue) **AND** have recently travelled to Wuhan or had close contact with a confirmed case in the 14 days before the onset of illness. Call ahead to notify the medical practitioner of recent travel; and
- contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 and inform your Diocesan Emergency Management Officer.

The Department of Health and Human Services has developed a factsheet for schools: Novel coronavirus – Factsheet for schools and early learning centres.

We will also provide you with further information if the situation changes.

If you have any further queries please contact your Diocesan Emergency Management Officer.

Yours sincerely
Dr Paul Sharkey
Acting Executive Director