

COVID-19 Health Advice for students and families

Advice current as at 17 April 2020

The advice of Australia's top health experts is schools continue to be a safe and healthy environment.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, symptoms include runny nose, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath and sometimes it includes fever.

COVID-19 can spread through close contact and droplets. You can reduce the spread of COVID-19 by washing hands with soap, covering coughs and sneezes, putting tissues in the bin and practicing physical distancing, and importantly stay home when feeling unwell

The focus is reducing transmission.

Current situation in the NT

There is currently no community transmission in the Northern Territory.

Community transmission occurs when a locally acquired case has not been able to be traced back to a known confirmed case.

The NT has experienced to date a very small number of cases and no death.

All Northern Territory cases are connected to international or interstate travel and have been traced to their source.

Keeping children healthy at school

The easiest way to reduce the risk of viruses of any sort is to practise good hygiene:

- Keep your hands to yourself
- Try not to touch your face
- Sneeze and cough into your elbow or a tissue, NEVER into the air
- Wash your hands with soap, **PROPERLY** for 20 seconds
- Wash your hands before you eat or touch your face
- Wash your hands after playing outside or with other people or animals

- Wash your hands after going to the toilet
- Don't suck your fingers, pencils or other things
- Don't share food or drink bottles
- Spread out and avoid close contact with others
- Use hand sanitiser after sharing things like laptops, iPads and toys.

How families can help the school community to stay healthy

- Keep sick children at home, just as you would have done before coronavirus
- Stay 1.5 metres away from others when doing pick up and drop off
- If you do enter the school, wash hands with soap beforehand
- Practise and show children good hygiene
- Monitor coronavirus.nt.gov.au for up to date information
- Talk to your child about what is happening, remain calm and reassuring. Help your child feel informed so they understand what is happening.

How can schools can stay healthy

- No more assemblies, read notices over the PA system and deliver awards in class
- Children to stay in designated areas in the playground and avoid close contact with each other
- Cancel contact sports and interschool activities until further notice
- Restrict excursions and visitors to the school until further notice
- Extra care to be taken to clean the school every afternoon
- Adapt activities to avoid mixing between different classes and year levels
- Encourage increased space between students, for example, by placing markings on the floor , increasing space between desks and chairs
- Encourage students to maintain 1.5m distance when entering or leaving a classroom
- Close all communal water fountains/bubblers
- Wipe surfaces regularly, including door handles, desks, computers, phones and touch screens

How can teacher can help children stay healthy

- Stay home when feeling unwell
 - Make sure there is plenty of hand sanitiser and soap in your class
 - Show children good hand washing skills
 - Encourage children to wash hands with soap often and **PROPERLY**
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- Show children how to cover a sneeze or a cough
- Arrange desks so that your class is spread out
- Organise learning activities that don't require close contact
- Clean shared things like laptops, iPads, toys and desks, and limit use of shared objects like pencils
- Try and incorporate more lessons outside in areas with better ventilation
- Talk to students about what is happening, remain calm and reassuring. Help them feel informed so they understand what is happening.

Further information

Contact your school.

You can seek updates via: www.coronavirus@nt.gov.au

National covid-19 health information hotline: 1800 020 080

The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Your local GP or Community Health Centre

Education NT Facebook page

Download the "Coronavirus Australia" government app in the Apple App Store or Google Play

Join Coronavirus Australia WhatsApp channel on iOS or Android.

Mental health support

Such a large scale event can take a toll on our mental health. Professional and confidential support is available staff can seek assistance through their HR unit or arrange counselling sessions directly with one of the nominated providers through Employee Assistance Program.

During these testing times it is important to remember that you are not alone and there is always someone available to speak to if you are struggling. There are a number of support services you can reach out to, including:

- [Beyond Blue](#) 1800 512 348 - Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service
 - [Lifeline](#) 13 11 14
 - [Suicide Call Back Service](#) 1300 659 467
 - [MensLine Australia](#) 1300 789 978
 - [TeamTALK](#) 1800 832 600
 - NT Mental Health Line 1800682 288
 - Lifeline Text 0477 131 114 (6pm - Midnight (AEST) 7 days a week)
 - Your GP can also help you access the services you need.
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