

FAQs – Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

12 March 2020

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

What is the advice for those travellers who arrive from or who have transited through mainland China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and Italy?

Based on the Federal Government advice any child or staff member who has left, or transited through mainland China since 1 February, Iran since 1 March, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) since 5 March or Italy since 11 March, is excluded from early childhood education and care services, school or work for 14 days from the date they left mainland China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) or Italy. These children or staff members are also required to self-isolate from the community for a period of 14 days, as the COVID-19 incubation period can be as long as two weeks.

Does this relate to employees who visited China, Iran, the Republic of Korea or Italy in the last 2 weeks?

Yes. Employees who have visited or transited through mainland China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) or Italy should also refrain from attending work for 14 days after their departure from China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) or Italy. Affected employees are asked to contact their line manager to advise of their departure date from China, Iran, The Republic of Korea and Italy and indicate the number of days they will be absent based on their departure date.

Is Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Singapore or any other country included?

Those travelling from countries other than China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and Italy are able to remain at services

and attend work but should monitor for symptoms. If symptoms develop they should self-isolate immediately and seek medical assessment from their local health practitioner.

Does this apply to staff and children who return from China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and Italy in the coming weeks?

Yes, refer to question 1. This will remain in place until formal advice is provided to services that the arrangement is to cease.

How should we advise children who are known to have travelled to China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and Italy in the last 14 days, arriving at services without an understanding of these changes?

Services are asked to contact the families of any children who arrive at services, who have travelled to China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and Italy within the last 14 days, to ensure that they are aware of this advice.

Any child who has left, or transited through mainland China since 1 February, Iran since 1 March, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) since 5 March and Italy since 11 March is excluded from early childhood services, school or work for 14 days accordance with the advice from the Australian Government Chief Medical Officer. Refer to question 1.

The following information may assist you with your conversation with the family:

- You will have seen the news of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the news or radio. While this news can be upsetting for many people it is important that we work together to support those who have been

in the impacted areas and take steps to minimise the spread of the virus to protect our community.

- You must come and collect your child/ children and they should not return until XXXXX date.

How does this advice apply to students in Before and After School Care if they are deemed to be a close contact?

Children who have been in or transited through China, Iran from 1 March, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) from 5 March or Italy from 11 March must not attend Before and After School Care.

Do children require a medical certificate to return to a service?

Where staff or children remain without symptoms during the 14 days self-isolation period after returning from China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and Italy, they do not require a medical certificate to return to school after the 14 days.

If a staff member or child has become unwell within 14 days of returning from China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and Italy, or if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 they will need a medical certificate confirming they are able to return to work or the service.

Are any children currently required to be excluded from school due to travel restrictions?

Yes, the children currently excluded are those who:

- Have been in or transited through China within the last 14 days
- Have been in or transited through Iran within the last 14 days commencing 1 March 2020
- Have been in or transited through

the Republic of Korea (South Korea) commencing 5 March 2020

- Have been in or transited through Italy commencing 11 March 2020
- Are under medical assessment or
- Have been diagnosed with the COVID-19
- Have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 infection.

EARLY CHILDHOOD OPERATIONS

If I think there is an outbreak of COVID-19 or a respiratory illness at my Early Childhood service, who do I need to report this to?

Services are encouraged to seek advice from their local public health unit when they suspect an infectious disease outbreak is affecting their service, including outbreaks of COVID-19 or respiratory illnesses.

Report outbreaks of infectious disease to:

- Your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055
- The NSW Regulatory Authority

How do I report to the Regulatory Authority?

Notifications about coronavirus must be made by services to the Regulatory Authority via NQA ITS or by contacting the Regulatory Authority directly (Email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au or Phone: 1800 619 113).

How does the COVID-19 outbreak affect the payment of childcare fees?

Under the National Law and Regulations, the Department does not have the power to intervene in operational decisions of individual services. The payment and provision of fees is a commercial decision for each early childhood education service to

determine, in accordance with their policies and procedures.

Should you have concerns about how your service is charging you, you should discuss this with your service in the first instance. If your concerns are unresolved, you can discuss this with NSW Fair Trading, through www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au or 13 32 20.

What if I have a question about the Child Care Subsidy?

Please contact the [Australian Government Department of Human Services](http://www.australian.gov.au).

How does this advice apply to students in Before and After School Care?

Children who have been in or transited through China, Iran from 1 March, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) from 5 March or Italy from 11 March must not attend Before and After School Care.

Are services able to continue planned visits or excursions to aged care facilities?

Based on advice from NSW Ministry of Health we advise from 5 March 2020, services should not visit aged care facilities until further notice to minimise the spread of respiratory infections, such as influenza and other respiratory viruses.

What if NSW Health advise that a child is considered a close contact?

Any child who is considered a close contact by NSW Health will be advised to self-isolate for period of 14 days.

What do I do if a staff member or child presents with flu-like symptoms?

If it is a staff member, you are to request that they leave immediately to seek appropriate medical advice from their treating health practitioner. They are to remain away from the workplace until they have recovered from their illness.

If it is a child they are to be taken to the sick bay with appropriate staff supervision and where possible have staff maintain a distance of 1.5m. Contact parents to come and collect the child and seek medical advice from their treating health practitioner.

Are staff required to wear face masks?

No staff should be wearing face masks inside workplaces. According to NSW Health the only people required to wear masks are those with flu like symptoms. If you have flu-like symptoms or are not well you should not be at work.

WAIVERS

If my service is impacted by the current coronavirus outbreak, which National Quality Framework (NQF) requirements can I get a waiver for?

You can apply for a waiver for any NQF staffing requirements, including ratio and qualification requirements.

What is the process for getting these waivers?

Submit an application for a temporary waiver through NQA ITS and provide all relevant information. If you have problems completing the process, call the Early Childhood Education Directorate on 1800 619 113.

The Department will expedite waiver applications related to the coronavirus situation and the application fee will be waived.

The Department will assess waiver applications, case by case, and by considering all individual circumstances. This includes how the service can uphold the health, safety and wellbeing of children should a waiver be granted.

How will the Department waive fees for these waivers?

On NQA ITS, the application fee must be paid to submit a waiver application. The Department will then refund the application fee.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

What steps should services take to ensure parents are aware of these arrangements?

Services must take all reasonable steps to advise parents of new requirements where appropriate. Parents can access information from NSW Health and the Department's website.

How should we advise parents who wish to keep their children at home due to fear of contracting COVID -19?

In line with the medical advice there is no reason why those who have not travelled should not be at services. The expectation is where children have not returned from travel to China, Iran, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) or Italy that children will attend as usual.

What if a parent refuses to comply with the request and send their child/children to a service?

If a child who has been in China within the last 14 days, returned from Iran from 1 March, returned from the Republic of Korea (South Korea) from 5 March or Italy from 11 March, attends a service, appropriate steps must be taken to isolate the child while at the service. The parents should be contacted and asked to come and collect the child immediately.

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