

31 January 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers

As you may be aware, Novel coronavirus was detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province in China in late December 2019. There have been a number of recent cases of the virus confirmed in Australia, although to date there have been no confirmed cases reported in Western Australia.

The Department of Health advises that if a student has been in contact with someone who has contracted the virus, they should seek medical advice and stay away from school until they are clear of symptoms for 14 days.

As a further precaution, late yesterday the Ministers for Education and Health requested that students who have travelled to, or transited through, China or Hong Kong in the past two weeks be asked to stay away from school for a period of 14 days from the date they returned to Australia. This request applies to children in all schools, including Catholic, Independent and Government.

Consequently, I am writing to request that you keep your child or children away from school should the above apply to them. Current medical advice is that while the risk of the virus being transmitted in Australia is low, this voluntary exclusion will cover the incubation period. Should your child not exhibit any symptoms for 14 days after returning to Australia, he/she may attend school.

I am providing this information today to give parents and caregivers as much time as possible to make arrangements for the care of their children during the period of non-attendance from school, should the above apply.

Please contact the St Munchin's school office on 92347555 if you will be keeping your child at home because of recent travel to or transiting through China or Hong Kong. I would also request that you provide the school with the anticipated period of absence.

I know that this situation has the potential to cause significant issues with respect to care arrangements for your children. I hope that you will understand that the option to keep your child at home during any potential incubation period is precautionary and designed to minimise the potential transmission of the Novel coronavirus.

Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) is working closely with the Department of Education and health authorities to monitor the situation, and further advice will be provided as required.

Should you wish to access more information about the virus, including a parent factsheet, please visit the [Department of Health website](http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/coronavirus) (ww2.health.wa.gov.au/coronavirus) or call the Healthdirect helpline on 1800 022 222.

Thank you for your support in this significant public health matter.

Joe Musitano
Acting Principal