



Department of Health and Human Services

50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: 1300 650 172
GPO Box 4057
Melbourne Victoria 3001
www.dhhs.vic.gov.au
DX 210081

One of the reasons why schools have been kept open by governments across Australia, on the basis of the advice from the health and medical experts, is that people remaining in their routine daily activities, whilst decreasing non-essential social and mass gathering activities, will decrease the opportunities for spread in our community, including those to teachers.

There is evidence that children in households may be infected by adults within the households, which is why all household contacts of confirmed cases are placed into home isolation when a case is confirmed. This will continue throughout the COVID-19 response.

Thus far, approximately 2% of total cases in China have been in children, and there have been no deaths in children under 10 years with very few hospitalisations. There is emerging evidence indicates that the people who are most unwell, and most symptomatic are more infectious than those with very mild or minimal symptoms.

There is not widespread community transmission at this point, and levels of COVID-19 illness are likely to be very low. Children who are at all unwell are advised to be at home, and schools and teachers should exclude any unwell children who present to school. Any children with undetected symptoms are likely to be minimally infectious.

At this point there is no evidence of any school clusters where infections were driven by the student population or student introductions. The evidence is reviewed daily and advice will continue to be tailored to the evidence. Any change in policy advice will consider the risk to teachers as well as the broader community.

Adj Clin Prof Brett Sutton
Victorian Chief Health Officer
Health Protection Branch

19/03/2020