

GUIDANCE FOR ADMINISTERING STUDENT TEMPERATURE SCREENING

In order to support community awareness of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and to help identify children displaying symptoms, all schools located in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will commence temperature screening of students while the Stay at Home restrictions are in place.

This is an important public health measure to promote awareness of symptoms associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) and to ensure that unwell students remain at home.

This document provides guidance to education staff to support administering temperature screening at schools in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, as well as schools attended by students and children residing in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.

Temperature screening at schools in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire

Students at schools in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will receive a temperature screen every morning before starting school while the stay at home restrictions are in place.

Schools will continue to implement multiple entry points where required, to reduce the number of adults congregating at school grounds. All schools will continue to implement physical distancing measures for staff and adults.

Rationale

Temperature screening can be used during a pandemic to identify the presence of fever in an individual. Fever, whilst not present in all cases, is a common symptom of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Temperature measurements in the context of a holistic assessment may help schools and early childhood centres to decide if a child should return home.

Temperature screening will be conducted using non-contact infrared thermometers where possible.

Temperature screening as a public health measure in schools will support the identification of unwell children. Temperature screening does not replace the need for other important public health measures such as hand hygiene, and enhanced cleaning and disinfection.

The most important action that staff, students, children and families can take is to ensure that unwell staff, students and children remain at home.

This fact sheet is to be read in conjunction with the [DET guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).

Implementation

- Schools should communicate to families the temperature screening procedure, along with any changes to arrival arrangements and explain why it is important.
- DET will supply infrared thermometers to schools in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, at a ratio of approximately 1 per 60 students. Thermometers will be provided to all schools delivering on-site learning in the first instance, with thermometers provided to all schools across metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.
- For schools outside metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, the widespread routine use of temperature screening is not required. However, DET advises that temperature screening of

students from metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire should be undertaken if they are attending a school outside these areas. To avoid the risk of stigmatisation, these temperature screens will be conducted in a way that avoids public identification of any student. Where a school outside these areas has 50% or more of the student population enrolled from within metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, then all students in that school will be temperature screened. Should schools require thermometers to support screening, they can request supply from DET.

- Written consent is not required as the process is non-intrusive., Schools are advised to record the temperature of students who are deemed to have a fever or are unwell. Schools are not advised to keep a record of the temperature of every student. If there is any concern about a student having their temperature screened, the school will discuss these concerns with the family and confirm that any student who is unwell is unable to attend school.
- The DET-supplied infrared thermometers will include a user manual that details how to operate the device.

Administration and thermometer use

- Schools are requested to identify staff to administer temperature screening of students each morning.
- Schools are to ensure staff undertaking screening are competent with the use of the equipment and interpreting results (refer to *Temperature thresholds and required actions*).
- Schools are to establish appropriate arrangements to administer screening, ensuring that it allows appropriate physical distancing between adults. Any temperature screening procedure needs to be organised in a way that does not increase congregation and mixing of staff, students and parents. It is recommended that temperature screening is conducted at school gates or entries to school buildings depending on schools' assessment of their site layout.
- Schools may consider administration of temperature screening in the context of multiple entrances. Further information is contained in the [Return to school operations guide](#).
- A single use face mask or cloth mask [made to DHHS standards](#) is recommended for staff performing temperature checks. See [DHHS guidance for taking on and off masks safely](#) (following information that relates to hand hygiene and masks only). Note that a cloth mask must be washed after each use before being worn again.
- Educators should practise hand hygiene before and after conducting the temperature screening each morning.

Cleaning and storage of thermometers

- Schools are to ensure that devices are cleaned and disinfected at the completion of the day's screening using disinfectant wipes or spray. Schools are encouraged to ensure an infrared thermometer is available to temperature screen any students that arrive throughout the day.

Management of students who record high temperatures

- Students or other individuals who are unwell, even in the absence of a fever, should stay home.

Temperature thresholds and required actions

TEMPERATURE READING	REQUIRED ACTION
Less than 37.5°	Student advised to proceed to class.
Equal to or greater than 37.5° on first reading	The student should be asked to wait in a separate room and have their temperature re-checked in 15 minutes. If the student is wearing outerwear, the staff member should suggest the child remove this once they are indoors.
Equal to or greater than 37.5° on second reading	The student should return home with their parent/carer. If parent/carer is not present, the student will need to be isolated and the parent/carer contacted to collect them from school as soon as possible. Families should be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps and coronavirus (COVID-19) testing.

- A fever will be classified as temperature reading at or above 37.5° Celsius¹, with the following thresholds and required actions outlined below.
- If a person has a temperature of 37.5° or above on screening, the school should enact its protocols for managing unwell students. It is important that any staff member or student who becomes unwell while at school returns home. While it is unlikely that every staff member or student who is unwell with flu-like symptoms will have coronavirus (COVID-19), there are some sensible steps schools can take while a student awaits collection by a parent or carer as a precaution.
 - Staff, children or young people experiencing symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19) should be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps and coronavirus (COVID-19) testing.² Urgent medical attention should be sought where indicated. It is not suitable for an unwell student to travel home unsupervised.
 - Where staff, children or a young person are experiencing symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19), the important actions to follow include hand hygiene, physical distance, and where possible, putting on a single use face mask. See [DET guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).
 - In the context of schools supporting children with complex health needs, if the care of an unwell child or young person is prolonged (for example, because it will take some hours for a parent to collect a child) and maintaining distance is not practical when providing direct care, gloves, gown and eye protection could be considered if available.
 - Face masks should not be used in situations where an individual is unable to safely or practically tolerate a mask (for example, a child with complex medical needs including existing respiratory needs, and younger children).

¹ <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm>

² Steps to isolate the child or young person must be consistent with the DET's policy on seclusion of students under the Education and Training Reform Regulations that states students must not be confined in a room or area from which their exit is prevented by a barrier or another person.

- If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell it is advisable in the first instance to contact the parent/ carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the student, and taking a precautionary approach, request the parent/ carer to collect their child if concerns remain.
- Follow cleaning guidance according to the situation of the case. If a student spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), clean surfaces immediately with disinfectant wipes while wearing gloves.
- Staff or students experiencing symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19) should be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps. Staff and students are generally not required to present a medical certificate stating they are fit to return to an education setting after a period of illness, however, staff and students should not return until symptoms resolve. If a staff member or student is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19), they cannot return until advised by DHHS that it is safe for them to do so. Staff continue to be required to present a medical certificate in accordance with personal leave policy for periods of absence on personal leave.