**Homestay family coronavirus (COVID-19) information**

**Last reviewed: May 2023**

The Department of Education (the department) greatly appreciates the amazing work homestay families do to provide a home away from home for international school students. We know this is more than just providing a room and board, with homestay parentsoftenbecoming the student’s Australian parents. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support.

This factsheet provides information about how to stay safe and healthy, and what to do if a member of your home (particularly an international student) needs support or medical assistance due to COVID-19.

## Latest COVID-19 information

For the latest information and how to help reduce transmission in Victoria, see: [Coronavirus (COVID-19) Victoria](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au).

## Severe symptoms

Dial Triple Zero (000) if you are having trouble breathing or have chest pain. Inform the ambulance officer of the symptoms and follow their advice.

## International student arrivals

For information to support students upon arrival in Victoria, see:

* [Australian Government: Entering and leaving Australia](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/covid19/entering-and-leaving-australia)
* [Information for travellers](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/information-travellers).

## Managing COVID-19

It can be a stressful experience if a homestay family member is suspected of having, or tests positive to, COVID-19. Please see below some helpful tips on how you can prepare for, and manage, should COVID-19 impact your homestay family, see:

* [Protect yourself and others](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/staying-safe)
* [Preparing for COVID-19 isolation](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-prepare-covid-isolation)
* [Checklist for COVID-19 cases](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-cases)
* [Checklist for COVID contacts](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-contacts)
* [Managing COVID-19 at home](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/managing-covid-19-home).

In addition to the above checklist activities, please also advise the student’s natural parents and international student coordinator.

**Getting tested**

COVID-19 testing in Australia may be different to what students have experienced in their home countries. For the latest testing information to share with your students, see:

* [About rapid antigen tests](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/rapid-antigen-tests)
* [Get a COVID-19 test](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/get-pcr-test-covid-19).

**If an international student is a confirmed case**

If an international student is a confirmed case of COVID-19, the international student coordinator must be notified so they can advise next steps. In addition, the student will need your ongoing care and support. Students should not be moving house when positive with COVID-19.

**Medical attention for students**

Homestay students’ medical attention in response to their positive test result can be initiated by the school principal, international student coordinator or homestay family. Students are required to be accompanied for any medical assessment (if they are not able to do so individually) and the homestay family is requested to maintain communication with school representatives.

All international students are required to have overseas student health cover as a condition of their student visa. Many international students choose Medibank. For more information, contact Medibank’s 24/7 Student Health and Support Line on 1800 887 283, or the student’s alternative overseas student healthcare provider.

## Supporting physical and mental health

International students are at the same risk of contracting COVID-19 as any other member of the Victorian community. However, international students are at a higher risk of feeling isolated and vulnerable. We encourage you to talk with them as part of the family about staying physically and mentally healthy, maintaining positive wellbeing and limiting activities outside of the home.

All international students have access to the school’s international student coordinator and wellbeing team, including during school holidays. Alternatively, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 46 36 if you or the student have feelings of stress, worry, anxiety or depression. To access free interpreting services for these providers, see below:

Lifeline

* Call Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450 and ask to talk to Lifeline on 13 11 14 in the language required
* TIS will call 13 11 14 on behalf of the caller.

Beyond Blue

* A free interpreter service is available for Beyond Blue phone counselling, see [Beyond Blue](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support)

Kids Helpline

* If your student doesn’t feel confident speaking in English, Kids Helpline can also arrange a translating and interpreting service. The student will need to ask when they call or get someone to help them. For more information, see: [Kids Helpline](https://kidshelpline.com.au).

Students may also wish to contact their local consulate. For a list of overseas embassies and consulates in Australia, see: [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](https://protocol.dfat.gov.au/Public/ConsulatesInAustralia/7).

## Further information

**COVID-19 information**

For more information on COVID-19, see: [Coronavirus (COVID-19) Victoria](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au)

**Homestay resource kit**

For information on good practice and tips for being a homestay family, see: [Homestay resource kit](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/Homestay_Resource_Kit_Family.pdf)

**Contact Us**

Alternatively, please email us at: international@education.vic.gov.au or phone +61 3 7022 1000.