

# COVID-19

## Information for boarding schools and families

19 May 2020

### What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include:

- fever ( $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) *OR* history of fever (e.g. night sweats, chills)
- acute respiratory infection, such as cough, shortness of breath, sore throat
- headache, fatigue, muscle aches and pains, temporary loss of smell, change of taste sensation and vomiting

### What to do when a boarder or staff member comes to school with respiratory symptoms?

Anyone who has a fever (or history of fever) or acute respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, should see a doctor or attend a fever clinic to check for COVID-19 infection. Before the appointment, they should call ahead and advise of their symptoms so any necessary precautions can be taken.

Unwell staff should not attend the school until they have recovered and been cleared by a medical practitioner.

Unwell boarders should be isolated in a separate room until they can be assessed by a doctor. Consent processes for testing of students would be in accordance with consent protocols for other health procedures.

### Can interstate boarders return to Queensland to recommence their studies?

The Chief Health Officer has granted a blanket exemption under the *Border Restrictions Direction (No. 5)* to allow all boarding school students to enter Queensland from interstate to recommence their studies. The exemption is granted on the condition that boarding students returning to Queensland from interstate complete 14 days of self-quarantine from the date of their arrival in Queensland unless they meet specific criteria (see section below 'Which students are exempt from self-quarantine?').

All boarders returning from interstate will require a **Queensland Entry Pass**. This can be obtained online at [www.qld.gov.au/border-pass](http://www.qld.gov.au/border-pass).

### Which students are exempt from self-quarantine?

The following boarding school students entering Queensland from interstate are exempt from 14 days of self-quarantine:

- Any boarder travelling to Queensland from the Northern Territory who has been in the Northern Territory for the 14 days preceding their entry into Queensland

- Any boarder from across Australia travelling to Queensland from interstate where they are travelling from a rural or remote property where they have been resident exclusively at that location for the 14 days preceding their travel to Queensland and within the local government area there are **no** known locally acquired cases of COVID-19 with an unknown source of infection
- Any boarder living within a border community (approximately 200 kilometres from the New South Wales, South Australian or Northern Territory border with Queensland).

This is based on the assumption that these persons have had no contact with known or suspected cases of COVID-19 in the preceding 14 days. Schools and parents will need to make their own assessment as to whether a boarder meets the categories outlined above. There is no need to apply to Queensland Health for a specific exemption if a boarder falls into one of the categories outlined above.

However, a **Queensland Entry Pass** will still be required and can be obtained online at [www.qld.gov.au/border-pass](http://www.qld.gov.au/border-pass).

## Can international boarders return to Queensland to recommence their studies?

Currently only international boarders that are Australian citizens or permanent residents can return to Queensland to recommence their studies. International boarders that are not Australian citizens or residents need to obtain an exemption from the Australian Border Force Commissioner before attempting to return to Queensland. Applications can be lodged at <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/covid19-enquiry-form>. International boarders will be required to complete 14 days self-quarantine from the date of their arrival in Queensland. Unaccompanied minors should not be accommodated in Queensland Government funded quarantine hotels, rather parents/guardians or the school should make arrangements for the quarantine of these students.

All boarders returning from overseas will require a **Queensland Entry Pass**. This can be obtained online at [www.qld.gov.au/border-pass](http://www.qld.gov.au/border-pass).

## Where should students self-quarantine?

Where possible, it is preferable that self-quarantine occurs in the community away from the school environment as this will further limit the possible spread of infection within the school premises.

Parents/ carers are primarily responsible for arranging the care of students while in quarantine, noting that parents/ carers may choose to involve the school in this process.

## Can students self-quarantine on school premises?

If a boarder is to self-quarantine in the boarding house, then they will be required to have a single room with single access to a bathroom and toilet facilities, and room service of all meals must be provided.

Boarding schools should also ensure that there is appropriate mental health support for students completing quarantine as this can be stressful.

## What are the requirements for self-quarantine?

When in self-quarantine, it is expected that boarders:

- stay in a room away from others
- sleep in a separate enclosed bedroom (not a room with partitions)
- use a separate bathroom
- not have visitors
- wash their hands regularly with liquid soap and water
- practice social distancing (maintaining at least 1.5 metres of distance) if interacting with others in the location
- not go out into the community until the quarantine period has ended, or unless they need essential medical care or are escaping an emergency.

Please always refer to the latest information on self-quarantine on the Queensland Health website at [www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/protect-yourself-others/self-quarantine](http://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/protect-yourself-others/self-quarantine) as printed information sheets are uncontrolled and may be superseded.

Cohorting of boarders (sharing of accommodation) in self-quarantine is not recommended.

## Can a parent/carer transport a student across the Queensland border without needing to self-quarantine?

The Chief Health Officer has granted a blanket exemption under the *Border restrictions Direction (No. 5)* for persons transporting a child across the border to convey them to a boarding school. The border crossing should be for the minimum time necessary to convey the child to boarding school. While in Queensland the person/s should ensure that they practice social distancing and good hand and respiratory hygiene.

A **Queensland Entry Pass** will be required and can be obtained online at [www.qld.gov.au/border-pass](http://www.qld.gov.au/border-pass). A separate application is required for each individual, including the boarder/s and any other accompanying children. All travelers accompanying the student must be eligible for an exemption. For the purpose of obtaining a Queensland Entry Pass, the address to be used is the student's usual family residential address.

## Can a parent/carer remain with the boarder during the student's self-quarantine?

Should any person wish to enter Queensland and remain with the boarding school student for the period of the student's self-quarantine, exemption could be granted to enable this to occur. Any request for exemption on these grounds should be applied for in the usual manner by visiting <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/contact>. Any request for exemption needs to include details about how self-quarantine will be undertaken in the community.

## What happens to a child if another boarder becomes a case while both are in self-quarantine in the same area?

The intent of the quarantine guidelines is to ensure a sufficient level of physical separation between students to minimise the risk posed to others by a student who develops coronavirus infection. In the event a COVID-19 infection occurs in a student in quarantine, the local public health unit will conduct a detailed assessment to determine whether any other students or staff members may be considered close contacts. Close contacts must undertake quarantine for 14 days from their last contact with the confirmed case. It is for this reason that cohorting quarantined boarders is not recommended.

## Can my child still attend classes if they are in self-quarantine?

Students in quarantine cannot physically attend classes until their quarantine period ends. Arrangements for schooling during this time will need to be organised with the school.

## If my child has had COVID-19, can the school require a letter of clearance before they can return to school?

If the school requires a clearance letter, a parent/carer should obtain this from their GP or health provider.