

Message to Parents, Carers and Students from Victoria's Chief Health Officer

I am writing to Victorian parents, carers and students today to seek every family's support in slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Victoria.

As the school holidays commence, we can't ease up on looking after ourselves and our families. The only thing between us and a second wave is what we do next.

Wherever you go, please be mindful of the risks. Be aware others may be carrying the virus and practice physical distancing.

We are currently experiencing the highest case numbers we've seen in more than two months. Current evidence suggests that the rise in case numbers in Victoria is being driven by families having get-togethers and not following advice around physical distancing and hygiene.

Unfortunately, we are still in a pandemic and people's lives are still at risk. As we've seen across the world, this virus has the ability to turn a small number of cases into hundreds in a matter of days.

This is not where we want to be and we must all act now – while we can.

This is why we've had to implement a number of revised restrictions. The number of visitors you can have at your home is now reduced to five. Outside the home, families and friends can meet in groups up to ten.

This is how each and every member of the community can help:

- Stay safe while out in the community,
- Stay safe at home. And that means only seeing those you need to. Don't have big family gatherings and remember to keep your distance and maintain good hygiene,
- Don't share food or drinks,
- If you, or anyone in your family is feeling unwell – stay at home. Don't visit friends and family. Don't go on holiday if you are unwell and don't go to work. Don't send your kids to school, childcare or kindergarten if they are unwell - stay home,
- And if you have symptoms, get tested.

The vast majority of Victorians are doing the right thing, but this is a wake-up call and we cannot be complacent.

It's up to all of us to keep our friends and families safe.

For current information and updates on coronavirus (COVID-19) visit the Victorian Government's coronavirus website. <https://www.vic.gov.au/CORONAVIRUS>

If anyone in your family has any of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), however mild, they should stay at home, seek advice and get tested. These symptoms include fever, chills or sweats, a cough, a sore throat, shortness of breath or runny nose, or loss of sense of smell or taste. For more information about where to get tested visit the getting tested for coronavirus web page. <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/getting-tested-coronavirus-covid-19#what-are-the-symptoms-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

If you're concerned yourself or a family member has contracted the virus and need more information, please call the 24-hour coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.

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Victorian Chief Health Officer

Matt Pearce
Principal