

THE LANCET

Child & Adolescent Health

Supplementary appendix

This appendix formed part of the original submission and has been peer reviewed.
We post it as supplied by the authors.

Supplement to: Macartney K, Quinn HE, Pillsbury AJ, et al. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Australian educational settings: a prospective cohort study. *Lancet Child Adolesc Health* 2020; published online August 3. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30251-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30251-0).

The NSW Health COVID-19 Schools Transmission Investigation Project: Parent/Staff Letter and Patient Information Sheet Schools Transmission Study

Dear PARENT/TEACHER,

NSW Health and the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS), based at The Children's Hospital at Westmead, are conducting a joint investigation of cases of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) in order to get a more detailed understanding of the risk of spread in the school setting. This investigation has the approval of the Chief Health Officer of the NSW Ministry of Health and in order to carry it out the NCIRS team will work closely with the Public Health Unit/s responsible for managing the case or cases associated with the school.

Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 is not as severe in children as in adults and mostly causes mild illness. However, it is not clear if children play an important part in community transmission of the virus, particularly in school/childcare settings. The aim of the project is to get an understanding of how contagious COVID-19 is among children and teachers when a case is recognised in a school/childcare. The results of this project are very important to inform public health policy and assist the NSW government in developing policies in response to this new virus in school and child-care settings.

The study has 3 parts. Participation in each part is completely voluntary and independent of the other parts.

1. A nose swab within 5-10 days of last exposure. The nose swab will detect virus in the back of the nose and throat and is used to diagnose active infection. If the nose swab is positive, you will be informed and a Public Health interview and investigation will take place. If the nose swab is negative you will be sent an SMS/email with your result.
2. A short online survey to obtain details about exposures and presence of symptoms. Your answer to this short questionnaire will be really important for our public health response.
3. Blood test. In addition we will talk with you about collecting a blood sample to test for COVID-19 after 21 days from exposure. We will tell you the results of your blood test as soon as they are known. This blood test will tell you if you/your child have been exposed (even if you/your child had no symptoms or the nose swab was negative) and developed an immune response to the virus causing COVID-19.

If you have any queries please contact the NCIRS investigation team on telephone XXX or Email: XXX

Please remember to note other NSW Health advice for the public, available here:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx> .

Kind regards,

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Introduction

This is an invitation for the child in your care to take part in the NSW Health COVID-19 Schools Transmission Investigation Project.

This Participant Information Sheet tells you about the project. It explains the tests and questionnaires involved. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part/your child to take part in the project.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this project is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part/for the child to take part, they do not have to. There will be no consequences for a decision not to take part.

If you decide to you want the child to take part in the project, you will be asked to sign a consent section. By signing it you are telling us that you:

- Understand what you have read
- Consent to taking part in the project/the child taking part in the project
- Consent to having the tests/ the child having the tests that are described
- Consent to the use of your/the child's personal health information as described

You will be given a copy of this Information Sheet and a Consent Form to keep.

What is the purpose of this project?

COVID-19, a novel (new) coronavirus, is a highly contagious viral infection that is responsible for major outbreaks of respiratory illness around the world and sporadic cases are beginning to occur among school aged children.

Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 is not as severe in children as in adults and mostly causes mild illness. However, it is not clear if children play an important part in community transmission of the virus, particularly in schools.

The aim of the project is get an understanding of how contagious and severe COVID-19 is among school children and teachers when a case is recognised in a school. The results of this project will inform public health policy and assist the NSW government in developing policies in response to this new virus in school settings.

Who is conducting this project?

The study will be run by the public health team from the NSW Ministry of Health and doctors, nurses and epidemiologists from National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance at The Children's Hospital Westmead (CHW).

Who can participate in this project?

Any person who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case (as defined by public health criteria) prior to school closure, is invited to participate in the surveillance.

What does my child and I need to do to be in this project?

This project will run for 35 days from the day of the last exposure to the case (the last day at school). Participants who have been identified as contacts of a school case are asked to go into home isolation for 14 days.

Your child may participate in some, or all, of the project. Depending on individual circumstances, your child may not be eligible to participate in all parts of the project.

We would like participants to complete an online questionnaire about any symptoms, exposure to other possible cases of COVID-19 and basic demographic information.

We would like to collect a nose swab from your child to check if they have been infected with COVID-19 without showing any signs. We will contact you and arrange to drop of a swab collection kit to your house, between day 5–14 post exposure. Instructions will be provided to you on how to collect the specimen. The nasal swab will be tested at the Institute for Clinical Pathology and Medical Research (ICPMR). The results of the swabs will be given to you as soon as they are available, likely within 48 hours of the sample being collected.

We would also like to collect a blood sample from participants at least 21 days after last exposure to the case. We will discuss this with you when we contact you with the results of your child's nasal swab.

Are there any benefits to participating in the project?

This study aims to further medical knowledge about COVID-19. You will be given the results of the throat swab and blood samples. Your participation will help us understand more about COVID-19 and may be useful to improve future diagnosis, prevention, and treatment and control of COVID-19 in school settings. Results of the tests will provide information as to whether your child has been

infected with COVID-19. Participation in the study will also provide opportunities for follow up of your child that may benefit other children with this condition in the future.

Are there any side-effects and risks associated with participating in the project?

There are no major risks associated with the nose swab and blood test.

They may feel like coughing or gagging during nose swab. They may feel a sting when the needle is put in their arm to take the blood. It is possible there may be some bruising, swelling or bleeding where the blood test is being taken. Some people can feel a little light-headed when blood is taken.

What will happen to the results?

We will collect information about the participant from the questionnaires. By agreeing to participate you agree to us accessing health records if they are relevant to participation in this project. Any identifying information that we collect about the participant will be treated as confidential.

All information will be stored securely at Kid's Research, The Children's Hospital at Westmead. The information will be re-identifiable. This means that we will remove the name of the participant and give the information a special code number. Only our research team can match your name to its code number, if it is necessary to do so. For the participants in this project who are under 18 years old, we will keep their information at least until the youngest participant turns 25 years old.

Does my child have to take part in this project?

Participation in this study is voluntary and if you decide not to take part or decide to withdraw from the study at any time this will have no consequences. As per public health guidelines any person that reports symptoms does need a throat swab to determine if they have been infected with COVID-19. If you withdraw from the study we will use any information already collected unless you tell us not to.

What happens if I withdraw from the project?

If you decide to withdraw from this project, please notify us before withdrawal.

If you do withdraw consent during the project, we will not collect additional personal information from you. Personal information already collected will be retained to ensure that the results of the project can be measured properly and to comply with law. We will keep data already collected up to the time your child withdraws as this will form part of the project results. If you do not want them to do this, you must tell us before you join the project.

Further information

The person you may need to contact will depend on the nature of your query. If you want any further information concerning this project or if the participant has any medical problems which may be related to involvement in the project (for example, any side effects), you can contact the Public Health Unit.