

# Factsheet for parents and guardians of unaccompanied minors arriving from overseas

**This information applies to unaccompanied minors. An unaccompanied minor is a person under the age of 18 years old and who is travelling without a parent or guardian.**

## Is hotel quarantine mandatory for unaccompanied minors?

Unaccompanied minors who have applied for and been granted an exemption do not need to go into hotel quarantine, and are instead able to self-isolate at home. Conditions apply, please see section below How do I apply for an exemption?

Unaccompanied minors who have not been granted an exemption will need to stay in a government quarantine facility. This usually means staying in a government quarantine hotel (if accompanied by a parent or guardian) or a quarantine facility managed by NSW Health. A parent, guardian or other adult authorised by the parent/guardian are asked to accompany the minor into hotel quarantine. Both the minor and parent/guardian will need to stay in quarantine for a minimum of 14 days.

## What happens if there is nobody available to quarantine with the minor?

NSW Health strongly encourages that a parent or guardian joins their child. It is in the best interest of the child. If the parent/guardian is unable to meet the minor on arrival at the airport and accompany them into a quarantine facility, the minor will be placed into NSW Health Special Health Accommodation (SHA), where the parent/guardian can join them when they arrive.

Where the minor is quarantining on their own, the suitability of quarantine accommodation will be assessed individually by NSW Health. The minor is likely to be placed in NSW Health Special Health Accommodation (SHA), and given a room close to the nurses' station to allow for frequent observation. Allied health staff will monitor their wellbeing and provide them with activities, including encouraging completion of school work where relevant. Very young children are cared for in a hospital children's ward equipped with isolation facilities.

The parent/guardian is permitted to leave with the minor after the minor has completed the minimum 14-day quarantine period and satisfied the quarantine from quarantine requirements, which includes a negative COVID-19 test taken on day 12 of the quarantine period.

## Do I have to pay for hotel quarantine?

Quarantine facility fees will be waived for minors and their accompanying parent(s) or guardian(s).

To access this document electronically please scan the QR code.



## Factsheet for parents and guardians of unaccompanied minors arriving from overseas

### How do I apply for an exemption?

To apply for an exemption, you will need to complete an online application available at: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/quarantine-exemptions.aspx>

Exemptions will be considered where the following conditions can be met:

- Special circumstances exist (for example, medical or compassionate reasons), and
- Public health precautions can also be met:
  - o the minor, or their parent or guardian, agrees for the minor to have a day 0 COVID-19 swab before departure from the airport (infants are not required to be swabbed)
  - o a parent/guardian or other adult nominated by the parent/guardian must collect the minor from the airport in NSW
  - o the applicant must demonstrate that strong safety measures are in place to limit the public health risk posed by long journeys. Where practicable, no stops should be made en route
  - o the minor can safely isolate at home, following the requirements outlined in the NSW Health COVID-19 Self-Isolation Guideline
  - o if the minor declines to have a day 12 COVID-19 test, they and their household members will be required to quarantine for a full 24 days
  - o all household members will be required to self-isolate for the full 14 days with the minor, and
  - o all household members should get tested and continue to isolate at any time they develop symptoms.

### Testing requirements for minors

Minors with an exemption to government quarantine who are self-isolating at home will be tested on arrival into NSW (day 0) and will need to arrange a further test prior to release from self-isolation at day 12. In some circumstances, additional days of testing will be recommended. For example, if there are others in the household who are aged, or have chronic illness, or a household member works in a high risk setting (such as an aged care facility or hospital)

Minors quarantining in NSW Health Special Health Accommodation will be tested on arrival into NSW (day 0) and again at day 10.

Minors quarantining in a government quarantine hotel with a parent or guardian will be tested at the hotel on day 2 and again at day 10.

Test results are typically ready within 24-48 hours which means they should be received prior to the expected date of release from isolation.

If no symptoms develop within the quarantine period, it is very unlikely that you have been infected but everyone returning from overseas including unaccompanied minors should still be alert for symptoms.

## Factsheet for parents and guardians of unaccompanied minors arriving from overseas

### Self-isolation information for unaccompanied minors who have been granted an exemption from hotel quarantine

#### How long do I need to be in home isolation?

The minor, together with all members of their household, will need to self-isolate for the entire quarantine period, even if they are feeling well. This is because they may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

The quarantine period for travellers returning from overseas starts on the day the traveller arrives in NSW (day 0) and ends when:

- at least 14 full (24 hour) days have passed and, as a result of testing, the Chief Health Officer (or delegate) is satisfied that you would not pose a risk of infecting other people with COVID-19 or
- 24 full days have passed.

If the minor is tested at the beginning of the quarantine period and tests negative for COVID-19, the whole household still needs to remain in home isolation until the end of the quarantine period. This is because people can get a negative test result during the quarantine period even if they are infected with the COVID-19 virus.

#### Getting to your home for self-isolation

Unaccompanied minors who have been granted an exemption and live a long distance from the airport, may travel home:

- By private car with a parent/guardian. Where practicable, no stops should be made en route.

Or

- By aircraft. A negative COVID-19 test is required before boarding a domestic flight, and, if travelling interstate, permission for onward travel must first be given by the final destination State or Territory. A rapid test (2 - 4 hours) may be possible to be taken at the airport. The unaccompanied minor must (together with their parent/guardian if relevant) wear a mask and practice physical distancing (remaining at least 1.5 metres from other people) where possible.

#### What happens if the minor is transiting through NSW to another State or Territory?

Unaccompanied minors that do not reside in NSW are encouraged to fly directly to their home State or Territory, rather than transiting through NSW. Permission for onward travel must be given by the final destination State or Territory.

In the event that unaccompanied minors who reside in other jurisdictions do need to complete their quarantine in a NSW government quarantine facility, parents/guardians are asked to travel to NSW to meet the minor and accompany them into quarantine in NSW.

#### Monitor symptoms and seek help if anyone in your household develops symptoms

If the returned traveller does not have COVID-19 [symptoms](#), or are tested and receive a negative result, this does not mean they will not become sick later. This is because people who are incubating the infection typically only test positive a day or two before symptoms appear.



## Factsheet for parents and guardians of unaccompanied minors arriving from overseas

This is why it is so important for the returned traveller, along with the people in their household they are isolating with, to monitor for any symptoms of infection and if they appear be tested as soon as possible. During the quarantine period monitor for any new symptoms. Watch particularly for:

- fever (37.5°C or higher) or history of fever (night sweats or chills)
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- runny nose
- sore throat
- loss of smell or loss of taste.

Other reported symptoms of COVID-19 include headache, fatigue, muscle pain, joint pain, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting and loss of appetite. Unexplained chest pain and conjunctivitis have also been reported as symptoms of COVID-19.

If you develop symptoms you should seek help and get tested as soon as possible.

Please see below for testing options:

- Visit your nearest [COVID-19 clinic or drive through clinic](#).
- Call your local doctor to make an appointment.
- If you are unable to do either of the above please contact your local [Public Health Unit](#).

**Note:** If you are in self-isolation and go to the doctor, you will need to wear a surgical mask. You should travel directly to the doctor or COVID-19 clinic by private car. NSW Health advises not to use public transport.

**If you are in self-isolation and become severely unwell, and it is a medical emergency, you should phone 000.** You should tell the ambulance staff that you have been in home isolation for COVID-19 as a returned traveller.

### Can I go to work or school? Can I have visitors?

No. Home isolation means you must stay at home and restrict normal activities. You cannot go to work, school, childcare, university, recreation facilities, public areas, or go shopping.

You should not allow people who do not have an essential need, to be in the home to visit while you are in self-isolation.

You cannot leave the house, apart from medical care, unless you have been given a specific exemption to do so and follow any directions given to reduce the risk of close contact with other people.

**Note:** You can leave home to seek medical care or because of an emergency (including to avoid injury or escape a risk of harm from domestic violence), but you must wear a surgical mask. Make sure the mask always covers the nose and mouth and avoid touching the mask while wearing it.

## Factsheet for parents and guardians of unaccompanied minors arriving from overseas

### Can I go into the garden or go for a walk?

You can go into your private garden or courtyard or onto your private balcony, if you have one.

### Wash hands

You should wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use a hand sanitiser. Make sure hands are washed:

- before entering an area used by other people
- before touching things used by other people
- after using the bathroom
- after coughing or sneezing
- before putting on and after removing facemasks.

### Tips for you and your family to help cope with home isolation

Being in home isolation can be frightening, particularly for young children. We've put together some tips for coping.

- Talk to the other members of the family about COVID-19 to reduce anxiety. You can find accurate, up to date information on [NSW Health - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#).
- Reassure young children using age-appropriate language.
- Keep up a normal daily routine as much as possible.
- Ask your child's school to supply lesson information and homework by email.
- Think about how you have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassure the unaccompanied minor they will cope with this situation too. Remember that isolation won't last for long.
- Keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or social media.
- Exercise regularly at home. Options could include streaming exercise workouts, dancing, floor exercises, yoga, walking around the backyard or using home exercise equipment, such as a stationary bicycle, if you have it. Exercise is a proven treatment for stress and depression.

### Do I need to be tested before leaving home self-isolation?

It is important that every returned international traveller has a COVID-19 test on arrival (day 0) and again on day 12 of the quarantine period, even if they feel well. Evidence of a test result will be needed to assess whether the minor and their household can leave quarantine. If the returned traveller declines to have a day 12 COVID-19 test, they and their household members will be required to quarantine for a full 24 days.

If the returned traveller tests negative for COVID-19 on days 0 and 12 of the quarantine period, other members of the household do not need to be tested for COVID-19 unless they develop symptoms.



## Factsheet for parents and guardians of unaccompanied minors arriving from overseas

If you develop any of the symptoms listed in the 'monitor symptoms' section of this factsheet during the quarantine period, then you need to get assessed and tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.

If the returned traveller tests negative, the whole household will still need to remain in isolation until the quarantine period finishes. For more information, refer to [Release from isolation](#).

### More information and support

For more information and support while in home isolation:

- [Lifeline Australia](#): 13 11 14  
A crisis support service that provides short term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe.
- [Kids Helpline](#): 1800 551800  
A free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years.
- NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511  
Mental health crisis telephone service in NSW.
- Visit [NSW Health - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

To access this document electronically please scan the QR code.

