

How to manage a suspected case of COVID-19 in a young person



A person becomes a suspected case after seeking health advice (GP or PHU) and the medical practitioner confirms that a test for the virus is necessary.

When a young person becomes a suspected case, the way they should be treated is similar to a confirmed case of COVID-19. The difference being the potentially temporary nature of the circumstances. As soon as a young person is identified as a suspected case, the following procedures should be carried out:

Action	Risk Mitigation Strategies
1. Inform the Relevant Parties	<p>Staff to inform supervisor of suspected case.</p> <p>Supervisor to speak immediately with staff and young people who may be affected.</p> <p>Staff to inform next of kin.</p> <p>Staff to notify DCJ contract manager.</p> <p>Organisation and staff to enact their business continuity plan if there is one in place.</p> <p>The Central Access Unit (CAU) will notify providers if a young person who is a suspected case is being referred for a placement.</p>
2. Facilitate Testing	<p>Transport the young person to and from the testing facility (ensuring they are wearing a mask in the vehicle, at the testing facility and going through the house).</p>
3. Support Young Person to Self-Isolate while deciding next steps	<p>Support the young person to self-isolate until test results have been received (negative) <i>or</i> recovery criteria have been met (positive). Where possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confine the young person with suspected case to an individual room e.g. bedroom (where the young person's bedroom is unsuitable, the house may have identified a particular area as an interim solution while testing necessity is being determined) • Designate one bathroom in the house to the young person with suspected case, where possible • Have them stay out of common areas and deliver food directly to them (see below) • Ensure they have a mechanism to contact a staff member if feeling worse e.g. mobile phone or bell by the bed • Dedicate a single staff member to check in on young person with suspected case <p>Move young person to more appropriate accommodation to self-isolate as required.</p> <p><i>Note: If the young person is required to move to temporary accommodation (e.g. motel/Airbnb), their care workers would also move to this setting to ensure that there is 24/7 care cover.</i></p>
4. Minimise Staff Rotations and Segregate Care	<p>Minimise the number of staff providing care to the young person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise Rotations: Hours of work could be extended to minimise the number of rotations required in line with the COVID-19 Individual Flexibility Agreements and related guidelines developed by ACWA/ASU • Segregate Care: One staff member should be allocated to care for the suspected or confirmed case on each shift. (Any other young people in the residential setting who do not meet testing criteria or are COVID-19 negative should be cared for by a different group of staff in the same home)

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The advice in this fact sheet has been taken from the *Guidelines: Residential Care Settings for Young People in Out of Home Care (OOHC) and COVID-19*, prepared by the Department of Communities and Justice, in consultation with ACWA and an expert group of service providers, and the Australian Services Union (ASU).

Action	Risk Mitigation Strategies
5. Sanitise Bedroom Young Person is Self-Isolating in	<p>Plan to clean the room daily (or more frequently as appropriate).</p> <p>The young person may support cleaning activities themselves if they feel well and it is safe to give them cleaning products.</p>
6. Encourage Safe Hygiene Practices	<p>Encourage frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitiser.</p> <p>Encourage the young person to cough/sneeze into their elbow area or cover their mouth with tissues or paper towels.</p>
7. Practice Physical-Distancing in Meal Delivery	<p>Deliver meals directly to the room, where feasible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave food at door of room • Stay 1.5m away from the young person • Wear a mask and gloves if you need to get in close proximity to the young person e.g. in the case of a high-needs young person with a disability <p>Dispose of mask immediately in designated bin when you leave the room.</p>

More information can be found in the *Guidelines: Residential Care Settings for Young People in Out of Home Care (OOHC) and COVID-19*. E.g. Section 5.4.1 Determine Appropriate Scenario Based on Accommodation Suitability and Section 6.2 Appropriate use of personal protective equipment.

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