



Keilor student positive

School closed, deep cleaned

NEW CASE

CATHERINE LAMBERT

A SCHOOL in Melbourne's northwest has been temporarily closed after a student tested positive to coronavirus.

Keilor Downs Secondary College was yesterday shut for deep cleaning amid concerns that the student was infectious while at school on Tuesday.

The student contracted the virus from a "family cluster" and the case is not thought to be linked to a teacher at the same school who tested positive last Friday.

A St Albans Secondary College student and six students at Taylors Lakes Secondary College are now in isolation after attending a VET class with the infected student.

Chief Medical Officer Brett Sutton confirmed that 78 students from the three schools had come into contact with the student.

He said the risk of transmission from this student to others "is there but I wouldn't expect significant numbers" of new cases.

"We have obviously had a handful of cases associated with schools but it really has been a very few number of cases," Prof Sutton said.

"The understanding of transmission in schools is that it is really pretty rare and we haven't seen transmission from students to teachers."

Keilor Downs Secondary College is expected to reopen on Monday.

The Education Department told the *Herald Sun* yesterday that "we've expected it to come at some point."

"There are hot spots and outbreaks that will happen as restrictions ease," a spokesman said.

"Everyone was prepared for



A cleaner at Keilor Downs College, where a student returned a positive COVID-19 test. Picture: ANDREW HENSHAW

this possibility of something more widespread. That is why we're doing a staggered return so we can have a look at where we get more cases and look again for the potential level of spread."

A new testing facility has been set up in Keilor Downs in response to what could be "low level of community transmission" in the suburb.

Victoria's coronavirus cases rose to 1634 yesterday, including three cases discovered through routine testing and two in hotel quarantine.

Across the country, fewer than 20 new cases are being diagnosed a day and only 0.05 per cent of 30,000 tests each day are returning positive results. Just two people remain on ventilators.

Parents Victoria yesterday backed schools, saying they were well prepared to deal with any outbreaks.

"The parent community

will still have mixed reactions to this latest outbreak when anxiety and uncertainty continues as we head into colder weather," boss Gail McHardy said.

Essendon Keilor College principal Lisa Nugent said the case had not raised anxiety levels among her own school community that was also in the northern suburbs though about 30 minutes from the affected school.

"Unfortunately, you can catch this on the bus, at home, work, the supermarket and there's nothing to say it's from the school," Ms Nugent said.

"There is normal coronavirus anxiety but nothing extra in light of this case. Every time children leave one of our classrooms, the tables and door handles are all being cleaned thoroughly and we've let parents know everything we're doing to keep their kids safe."

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