

EXCLUSIVE NATIONAL NSW CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

# Source of infection a mystery for 17 COVID cases among children in NSW

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By [Kate Aubusson](#)

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Health authorities have no idea how more than one in four children with locally acquired COVID-19 were infected in a clear sign the virus is capable of spreading through stealth.

A report released by NSW Health on Thursday covers all 81 cases of children testing positive for the coronavirus up to May 23, including 59 with locally acquired infections.

Contact tracers were able to identify the likely source of infection for 75 per cent of those locally acquired cases, meaning 15 children were infected from unknown sources.



Waverley College students leave school after a student tested positive to COVID-19 on Tuesday. LOUISE KENNERLEY

The report does not include the two children who tested positive this week - a 10-year-old at Moriah College and a 12-year-old boy at Waverley College in Sydney's eastern suburbs.

It's not known [how the students caught the virus](#), with none of their close contacts at school, or their family testing positive at this stage, taking the total number of children with mystery infections in NSW to 17.

Gladys Berejiklian says schools went back at the right time- despite two cases this week already.

They are among the 369 confirmed cases that were locally acquired from an unidentified source.

The report showed the rate of diagnosed infections in adults was roughly 10 times that of children (0.48 per 1000 people aged 18 and over, compared to 0.05 per 1000 children aged 0 to 17).

Test rates were lower in children compared to adults, but so was the proportion of positive tests "indicating limited spread of COVID-19 among children", the report said.

For 0-4 year-olds, the proportion of positive tests was 0.1 per cent. For 12-17 year-olds it was 0.3 per cent compared to 0.6-1 per cent in adults.

No child diagnosed by a PCR test (naso-pharyngeal swab) was found to have been infected by another child, the report said.

An [investigation commissioned by NSW Health](#) that tracked all confirmed cases in school students diagnosed in term one found just two cases in students who may have transmitted the virus to another student after taking blood samples from all close contacts.

"While children are known to spread other respiratory diseases within households, this was not observed for COVID-19," it read.

There were nine cases in which a child was the first member of a family household known to be infected.

"Child-to-adult transmission was likely in only one household involving a 17-year-old and his father," the report said.

None of the other eight children appear to have infected other members of their household.

NSW has a total of 3090 confirmed COVID-19 cases, with one additional case reported on Thursday morning - an overseas traveller in hotel quarantine.

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