

College has a plan to reopen

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WODONGA Senior Secondary College has come up with an action plan if the suspicious mould recently found at the school cannot be all cleaned up by Monday.

The call comes after a mould specialist from Perth arrived at the college yesterday morning to inspect and collect samples of the black, furry growth found under the school.

The mould had been caused by a leaking pipe.

Up to two-fifths of the total facility is in lockdown with all students except for year 12 staying home.

Early yesterday afternoon about a quarter of the school had been inspected and samples taken.

The rest of the work is schedule to be completed today.

Dr Heike Neumeister-Kemp, director and chief mycologist and mould investigator at Mycologia Australia, said it was too early to tell what species of mould they were dealing with.

But she said there were three health risks associated with mould including allergic reaction, pathogenic reaction and a toxic reaction.

“We can’t say much about our findings yet because we are still going through the school and taking scientific samples,” she said.

“Based on the outcome of our samples we will work out a remediation plan and give that information to the education department and they will make a decision as to what they are going to do.”

But principal Peter MacLean said the plan was to have all students back on Monday.

“If the rooms haven’t got clearance we are in communication with Wodonga TAFE and the Middle Years College, so if the worst case is that we don’t have full access we will have a series of shuttle buses running to these institutions,” he said.

“We are still waiting on a report to see how long it will take to clear the mould, it might take half a day to clean a room and we don’t know whether we are talking one room or five rooms yet.”

Dr Neumeister-Kemp is being accompanied around the school with a team of restoration companies, builders and representatives from the Department of Education.

“We are taking samples in every room, looking at every single wall cavity and will be taking air and surface samples as well as visual inspections and moisture readings,” Dr Neumeister-Kemp said.

Dr Neumeister-Kemp said Galvin Hall had been cleared of any mould and the team had set up in the school’s foyer to test the samples.





Dr Heike Neumeister-Kemp and principal Peter MacLean during the inspection. Picture: RAY HUNT