

Letter #2 - 17th March 2020

Kia ora Parents and Caregivers

You will have read and seen a lot of information regarding COVID-19. Please be assured that our Pandemic Plan is ready to be implemented should it be required and we will take immediate action if directed to do so by the Ministry of Education and/or Ministry of Health. Following the announcement from the government last night (16/03/2020) there will be **no more whole school assemblies until further notice.**

In the meantime we will continue to focus on good hygiene practices. Hand washing and good cough etiquette are very important tools in preventing the spread of illness including colds, flu and COVID-19. Please reinforce the importance of regular and thorough hand washing at home.

Prevention – how to protect yourself and others

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues.
- Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds).
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Avoid personal contact, such as kissing, sharing cups or food with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.
- Stay at home if you feel unwell.
- Call Healthline on 0800 358 5453 if you have any symptoms and have been to any countries or territories of concern or have been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19.

If you have been in any country in the last 14 days stay at home (self-isolate) for 14 days from date of departure or close contact. As much as possible, you should limit your contact with people other than the family members/companions you travelled with. If you are in a home where the others who live with you haven't travelled you should minimise close contact with them by avoiding situations where you have face-to-face contact closer than 2 metres for more than 15 minutes. The other household residents do not need to self-isolate provided these precautions are followed.

Please be vigilant about your own health and the health of your children. Please keep your children away from school if they are unwell. Colds and flus are common in schools and by staying away, seeking medical attention and practicing good hygiene, we can all help to minimise the spread of any illness.

As you will understand the situation is extremely fast changing. We will share any new information with you as soon as practically possible.

Ngā mihi

Zara McIndoe
Principal

Pandemic Plan

It is important that our school takes steps to protect staff, students or children from **pandemics** (global disease events such as influenza) or **epidemics** (local disease events such as: measles, hepatitis, tuberculosis, norovirus, whooping cough etc...) The **Ministry of Health** leads the Government's response to a pandemic. It is the responsibility of other agencies to plan for and respond to a pandemic in their respective sectors and settings, based on the direction set out by the Ministry of Health. At all times updates and latest information should be accessed from the Ministry of Health.

Pandemics by their nature are unpredictable in terms of timing, severity and the population groups that are most affected. Planning for an infectious disease outbreak is as important as planning for other emergencies.

Pre-Response and Response actions (as appropriate) - Planning Stage

- We encourage all staff and children to stay away from school if they are unwell.
- We provide (optional) annual flu vaccinations for all staff.
- We have a supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) gloves, antiseptic hand wash etc... for staff directly treating infected children and sanitiser & tissues for classrooms (as available)
- We have developed a communications plan for staff, students, families and other interested members of the community. Seesaw, our School Facebook Page and our School website page www.ops.school.nz will be our main means of communication. Text and or email via eTap is also available as/if required.
- We have defined an appropriate space to be used as an isolation area. We have identified our School Hall as the isolation area to be used if required.
- <https://ops.schooldocs.co.nz/> - Our school policies and procedures are kept up to date via School Docs.

Response – when a pandemic has been advised or declared

- We regularly check for updates on the Ministry of Health website [Ministry of Health NZ](http://www.ministryofhealth.govt.nz) and Ministry of Education website <http://www.education.govt.nz/>
 - We reiterate the importance of hygiene and hand washing and/or use posters available from Ministry of Health [re cough / sneeze etiquette, handwashing](#)
 - We consider social distancing strategies. Information on this is available from the [Ministry of Health](#) and also discourage handshaking, high fiving, hongis and hugs.
 - We implement an enhanced cleaning routine of touch points and common spaces as a precaution.
 - We will close the school if directed to do so by the Ministry of Health and/or Ministry of Education. We will provide online learning for children by one or some of the following: Seesaw, School Website for Learning Apps, Twinkl, Facebook, Google Classrooms, Projects etc....
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