



Otakiri School

- Learners Forever, Leading the Future -

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COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) Update – 18 March 2020

Tena Koutou Parents, Whanau and Otakiri Community

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION ANNOUNCEMENT

The World Health Organisation has declared COVID-19 to be a world wide pandemic.

The Ministry of Health has been working through its pandemic plan since January. You will also know the Government has already implemented a range of measures to minimise the impacts to New Zealand. This now includes stricter border restrictions including a requirement for ALL travellers to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival in New Zealand.

We now have 12 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand. While we expect that more cases will arise, the Ministry of Health says that with continued vigilance the chance of widespread community outbreak is expected to remain low in New Zealand. We all have a role to play in this.

OTAKIRI SCHOOL RESPONSE

Our school has responded to the announcements made by the Prime Minister over the weekend. We are being proactive and have made the following decisions to ensure that the health of our students, staff and whanau are our priority.

1. Pandemic Planning

Otakiri School is following Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health guidelines. The school already has a pandemic plan, which has been in place with early actions being undertaken e.g. a focus on good hygiene practices that are very important tools in preventing the spread of illness including colds, flu and COVID-19.

The school will continue to adhere to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health recommendations. The Pandemic Manager for Otakiri School is our Principal - Sharon Theobald.

2. Social Distancing

Our school is open and you are still welcome to come and go. However, we ask that you follow the basic hygiene guidelines as listed in this letter. We are stopping handshakes, hongi and hugging at school. We will be speaking with staff and students about how best to do this.

3. Education Trips postponed or cancelled until further notice.

We are limiting all education trips outside the classroom to our immediate school environment. This means that NO school trips / events outside of the Otakiri Community area will be approved until further notice. These include all camps, sports, arts and curriculum endeavours.

4. School Closure

We are also putting in place measures to respond to school closure should this become necessary.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH ADVICE

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to a range of other illnesses such as influenza and include:

- fever
- coughing
- difficulty breathing

If you have any of the symptoms associated with Coronavirus, or have recently been to a country or area of concern, or have been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19, please telephone Healthline (for free) on 0800 358 5453 or your doctor immediately. For further information on Coronavirus please refer to the Ministry of Health Guidelines.

Basic hygiene measures include:

- hand hygiene – that is, washing hands regularly with soap and water, or cleansing with hand sanitiser
- staying at home if you are sick
- coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow and then performing hand hygiene
- cleaning surfaces regularly

Our teachers use the following procedures at school:

- Reminding our students to wash hands before eating and after using the bathrooms
- Encouraging the use of tissues for anyone who is sneezing or coughing
- Washing of hands using the following procedure (please reinforce this at home)

Hand Hygiene Procedure

- Wet hands, preferably with warm water and use soap
- Rub hands vigorously together and rub all areas
- Wash for 20 seconds (about the same time as it takes to sing Happy Birthday)
- Rinse well and dry hands thoroughly, the following examples are considered thorough:
- 20 seconds by paper towel (2 towels 10 seconds on each towel)
- 45 seconds by air dryer
- 10 seconds by towel followed by 20 seconds by air dryer

Times when hands should be washed

- After coughing or sneezing (when the hands have been used to cover the mouth or nose)
- After using the toilet or after handling animals
- Before, during and after the preparation of food
- When hands are dirty
- More often if someone is sick

We all need to be vigilant about our own health and the health of our children. We have been, and will continue to encourage our staff to stay away from school if they are showing signs of illness such as coughs and colds. We ask that you please do the same with your children. Colds and flus are common in schools and by staying

away, seeking medical attention and practising good hygiene, we can all do our bit to keep any spread of illness to a minimum.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. We will keep you updated on our response actions.

Nga mihi nui

Sharon Theobald
PRINCIPAL / TUMUAKI