

Covid 19 Update 20032020 From the Secretary for Education:

Rules on gatherings do not apply to schools

You may have seen today that the Government has announced that indoor gatherings of more than 100 people are to be cancelled. This does not apply to schools, early learning services, tertiary providers, workplaces, supermarkets or public transport. We will continue to provide you with guidance around events and gatherings that could be relevant to schools.

Why a school would close

There is a lot of discussion about school closures in the media with many varying opinions being expressed and some misinformation being deliberately spread.

At the time of writing we have already seen one temporary closure following direction from a Medical Officer of Health. This was following confirmation that one student had been tested positive for COVID-19. That student is self-isolating and all their close contacts (150 students and staff) have been tested for the virus. It has just been announced that all of those tests have come back negative.

The school will reopen next week however those 150 students and staff will remain away from the school for a period of 14 days from when they last had contact with the student confirmed with the virus. This is a precaution only, to keep those people and those around them safe.

Medical Officers of Health – will direct schools to close if needed

Medical Officers of Health have the authority to close a school. They would only do so if there was a medical reason for this, **or**, after a confirmed case in the school they need to close it for a short period of time while they determine if there is any risk to others (which means staff and students stay away while they undertake contact tracing).

If you have a confirmed case in your school, or your school community

If there was a confirmed case linked with your school, you will be quickly advised of that by the Medical Officer of Health.

Our regional Ministry of Education staff will work with you and local health authorities to agree a plan for the school. That will happen quickly and support will be provided to assist you to communicate with and support your parent community. Closure for a short period of time is one option for the Medical Officer of Health.

Decision tool for early learning and school responses to COVID-19

The Ministry is working with other government agencies to align our planning for a range of possible scenarios relating to schools and early learning services. [An overview of our decision tool is available here for your information](#) [DOCX]. This tool tells you what will happen in different situations.

We have seen this in practice already. An example for Level 1 was Westlake Girls High School, where a students' parents were both confirmed with the virus but the student had no symptoms (and continues to have no symptoms). An example of Level 2 is Logan Park High School, where a student has tested positive for COVID-19.

You will see that higher levels of risk also have plans in place, which could include school closures for longer periods of time. Most of the scenarios at these higher risk levels relate to community transmission. Community transmission is when a confirmed case had no known contact with another confirmed case, and hasn't recently arrived from overseas. There is currently no community transmission in New Zealand.

When is sick, sick?






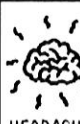






























The messaging remains clear – that if you are feeling unwell please stay home, and the same goes for children and young people. However at the tail end of a cold, there will be runny noses and probably some coughing. This might be worrying for some people who are being vigilant about their own and others' health.


A diagram has been developed by Dr Siouxsie Wiles to assist you when considering symptoms (sent to us by a teacher who found it useful). What it tells us is:


- A dry cough and a high temperature are common to both flu and COVID-19


- Sneezing is not a symptom of COVID-19, however if someone has COVID-19, then sneezing can spread droplets containing the virus


SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19, FLU AND COLD


	 DRY COUGH	 FEVER	 RUNNY NOSE	 SORE THROAT	 BREATH- LESSNESS	 HEADACHE	 BODY ACHES	 SNEEZE	 FATIGUE	 DIARRHOEA
COVID -19			~							~
FLU										
COLD		~				~				

 FREQUENTLY

 SOMETIMES

 LITTLE

 RARE

 NOT

@SIOUXSIEW @XTOTL thespinoff.co.nz

SOURCE: WHO, CDC, COV-19-1

We know COVID-19 feels scary and of course people are concerned for the wellbeing of our children. Please be assured that with no case confirmed in our school, your children are safe here.

Good hygiene is a priority at our school, and we are reinforcing this regularly with all students and staff. We know that practicing good hygiene is still the best thing we can all do to prevent illness.

We are getting the most up to date advice and guidance so that we can confidently make informed decisions about the safety and wellbeing of our school community.

**Buses are no longer accepting cash as from Monday March 23.
Everyone needs to have a "Hop" card.**