

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

You will be aware that there is some uncertainty around the development and spread of coronavirus COVID-19. In New Zealand, COVID-19 is a notifiable disease. While the Ministry of Health has confirmed a second case in New Zealand today, they maintain that the **chance of a widespread community outbreak is expected to remain low.**

We are following the advice and guidance of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education who are closely monitoring the situation and providing regular updates and information. We continue to support the health and wellbeing of our tamariki by encouraging basic hygiene practices amongst students and providing soap and hand drying facilities in all classroom blocks along with hand sanitiser.

In terms of keeping yourself and your family well, the Ministry of Health suggests the following:

- Wash hands (for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap and dry thoroughly) before eating as well as after attending the toilet.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with clean tissues or your elbow.
- Put used tissues in the bin.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell.

If you are concerned that someone is showing symptoms of fever, cough or shortness of breath, encourage them to first ring Healthline (0800 358 5453) or contact their GP by phoning ahead of their visit to explain symptoms and travel history.

We will keep you updated as new information comes to hand. The Ministry of Health website also has some useful information.

[COVID-19 \(novel coronavirus\) – Ministry of Health](#)

Kind regards

Lynda Taylor

COVID-19 Update

Kia ora

Many of you will be aware that three of the four cases of COVID-19 confirmed in New Zealand have had links to four school communities. We appreciate this could be unsettling for some of you so wanted to provide you with a further update.

It was very reassuring to read the information from the Auckland Regional Public Health Service that the children in these families are not showing any symptoms of COVID-19 and are doing well. Because the children continue to not show any symptoms, they were not infectious when they were at school and the Ministry of Health is confident there is no risk for the students and staff in those schools.

You will also be interested to know that research published by the World Health Organisation notes that children and young people under 18 account for only 2.4% of all reported cases of COVID-19. This means we are unlikely to see widespread cases in schools and early learning services in New Zealand.

The Ministry of Health's current advice is that with continued vigilance, the chance of widespread community outbreak is expected to remain low. So we all have a role here to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

Here at Leeston School, we are well prepared and are following the daily updates from the Ministry of Education and Health. If a case did occur in our community we are confident we can put our plans in place and know we will be supported by regional health authorities and the Ministry of Education. I am sure you are all keen to do what you can to prevent risk of infection. The best preventative steps are:

- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and dry thoroughly
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid sharing anything that has come in contact with saliva, whether in your living or social environments
- stay home when you are sick and seek medical attention
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the rubbish
- get adequate sleep and eat well-balanced meals to ensure a healthy immune system.

If you want to know more about COVID-19 please make sure that any reading you are doing is from a reliable source. The Ministry of Health is the best source of information for New Zealand and they update this information regularly - <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

A reminder that anyone who is ill should not be attending school.

The COVID-19 symptoms are a fever, coughing and difficulty breathing. If anyone has these symptoms and has recently been to a [country or area of concern](#), or have been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19, please encourage them to contact Healthline (for free) on [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453) (or [+64 9 358 5453](tel:+6493585453) for international SIMs) or their doctor immediately.

Ngā mihi

Lynda Taylor
Tumuaki

Kia ora koutou

You may have seen that the World Health Organisation has now declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic. As noted by the Minister of Health, this doesn't change what New Zealand is doing to respond to coronavirus.

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 includes border restrictions, a requirement to self-isolate on arrival in New Zealand from China, Iran, Italy and the Republic of Korea and immediate and detailed contact tracing of any confirmed cases. It is important to note those four countries account for more than 90% of cases globally and China and the Republic of Korea have significantly declining numbers of new cases.

We have 5 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand and it is pleasing to know they are all doing well and are at home. Their children, four students at Auckland schools, continue to be well and show no symptoms. 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.

For our school, our pandemic plan is also ready to be implemented if needed. In the mean time 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.

With that, there is a good video clip from Nanogirl that will help your children to better understand the virus - [YouTube clip - Nanogirl](#)

You may have also seen the Prime Minister sat down with Dr Michelle Dickinson (aka Nanogirl) and the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, Juliet Gerrard, to talk about coronavirus:

- [Watch on the PM's Facebook page](#)
- [Read and watch on the Newshub website](#)

One other action we can all take is to be vigilant about our own health and the health of our children. We will be encouraging staff to stay away from school if they are showing signs of illness such as coughs and colds. I 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 practicing good hygiene, we can all keep any spread of illness to a minimum.

Ngā mihi
Lynda Taylor

COVID-19 Update 4: 17 March 2020

Kia ora koutou

The media attention Coronavirus is receiving has ramped things up to another level, and while we are cautious about not wanting to add to the hype, we are just as cautious about not wanting to take things too lightly. Our board are very aware of their responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of our students and staff. The rate of change and information coming out is rapid and so our response needs to be calm, considered and responsive to need and national priorities.

We continue to receive advice from the Ministry of Education and will follow advice given to schools at this time. Remember the advice at this stage is to not panic, keep informed, be prepared and maintain good practices to keep yourself healthy.

As of Monday 16 March, new border measures are in place. It is now compulsory for all travellers arriving in New Zealand from all countries except those listed in [Category 2](#) to [self isolate for 14 days](#) – check our [information for travellers arriving to New Zealand](#) to find out more. Compulsory self-isolation also includes your children if they have travelled overseas with you. If you are intending for your child to travel overseas in the next two to three months, please inform the school office (admin@leeston.school.nz). If you have been overseas within the last 14 days and develop a fever, cough or shortness of breath, phone Healthline's dedicated COVID-19 number [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453) or contact your GP, including phoning ahead of your visit.

Events, handshakes, hongis and hugging

You will have heard that Government has provided advice for those that have large events (eg, more than 500 people attending) coming up in the next week. The Prime Minister also advised that we should stop handshakes, hongis and hugging.

In regards to any impact on school events, we have cancelled our whole school assembly which was to be held on Friday 27th of March. We will keep you informed of other decisions as they are made.

Prevention remains a priority

- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and dry thoroughly
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid sharing anything that has come in contact with saliva, whether in your living or social environments
- stay home when you are sick and seek medical attention
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the rubbish
- get adequate sleep and eat well-balanced meals to ensure a healthy immune system.

If you want to know more about COVID-19 please make sure that any reading you are doing is from a reliable source. The Ministry of Health is the best source of information for New Zealand and they update this information regularly - <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

A reminder that anyone who is ill should not be attending school.

If you have any questions or concerns you are welcome to come and chat with me in person or send me an email at any time.

principal@leeston.school.nz

Nga mihi

Lynda Taylor

COVID -19 Update 5: 18th March

We are taking the following actions to protect the health and wellbeing of our school community and to do our part in reducing the threat of transmission of Covid-19. As of tomorrow, Thursday 19th March, we will be turning off **all** drinking fountains at school and ask that you provide your child with their own **named** water drink bottle.

We will continue to communicate via email and the school app. We will also include the updates on our website. Please ensure that you have updated the school office if you have any changes to your contact details or your child's medical history needs amending.

Please check your son or daughter for flu-like symptoms each morning prior to coming to school. Even with a common cold we ask that students stay at home to not spread the sickness. Please remember to contact the school for each day your child is ill and staying at home. Anyone with Covid-19 symptoms must ring Healthline on 0800 358 5453 or contact their GP.

The following school events have been postponed until further notice and we will make decisions by applying risk analysis on a case by case basis.

Year 5 & 6 Camp

Padder Tennis

Canterbury Duathlon

Nga mihi

Lynda Taylor