

10 March 2020

Kia ora

Many of you will be aware that four of the five 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 an 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.

Our school staff and leadership remain well prepared for the possibility there might be a case in our community. If that were to occur 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.

We are 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.

Our school values continue to play an important part in all our activities so it is important we continue to care for and support all members of our wonderful school community, especially those who may be impacted by COVID-19 in some way.

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 (<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-countries-and-areas-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 (or +64 9 358 5453 for international SIMs) or their doctor immediately.

Ngā mihi nui

Christchurch South Karamata Intermediate