

# Coronavirus

Tēnā koutou

As you will have seen in the media the situation is rapidly evolving internationally concerning the coronavirus.

This is a new virus and its specific nature is currently unclear, however it appears that you can have the virus at an early stage and not be showing any symptoms. This incubation period is currently considered to be 14 days.

Children and young people are currently returning to classrooms. The health of students and staff is a priority for all. I encourage you to err on the side of caution and here are some steps you can take.

- As always anyone who is unwell should not be at school or at their early learning service. If you have a particular concern about any child, student or staff member, please urge parents or the staff member to contact Healthline at **0800 611 116** or their GP for medical advice. Healthline has translators and interpreters available **24/7 in 150 languages** and they do have Mandarin and Cantonese speaking staff available.
- If a student still attends school while showing symptoms the Principal of a state school can preclude them if they believe on reasonable grounds they may have a communicable disease (Section 19 Education Act). The student has to stay away for the infectious period of the specific disease. For private schools, Section 19 of the Education Act does not apply. Principals can request that a student with an infectious disease or is suspected of having an infectious disease, does not attend.
- You can request that a staff member with an infectious disease or is suspected of having an infectious disease, does not attend.
- For any staff member or student who may be at high risk of exposure because they have recently been to China or have been in close contact with someone confirmed with the virus, I encourage you to ask that the staff member or parent/caregiver of the student delay the start

of their school year for 14 days and voluntarily stay away.

- If you haven't already done so you need to contact your parent communities to share this and any relevant information. Please keep an eye on our website, as we will be updating this as new information is received.

Iona Holsted  
Secretary for Education

### Other useful information

You can also contact your local District Health Board if you require further information – Public Health Unit Contacts

The Ministry of Education is working closely with the Ministry of Health to ensure that you have the most relevant information to inform your planning in regard to the potential risks associated with the coronavirus and information is now on our website - <http://education.govt.nz/news/novel-coronavirus/>

**Current travel information** – please do continue to refer to the Ministry of Health's information page on their website. It will be updated as new information comes to hand. Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) guidance – Ministry of Health website

**If you have students or staff about to travel to China** – we urge you to visit the MFAT <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/> for updates on travel advice and restrictions.

**If you would like to review your pandemic plan** – the Ministry of Education guidance will assist you through that process - <http://education.govt.nz/school/health-safety-and-wellbeing/emergencies-and-traumatic-incidents/pandemic-planning-kit/pandemic-planning-guide/>.

**The Emergency Management Plan template** also includes provision for pandemics - <http://education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Traumatic-incidents-and-emergencies/Example-of-EmergencyMPlanTemplate-Version-18.01-.doc>

New information will be made available on the [education.govt.nz](http://education.govt.nz) website and through the school leaders and early learning Bulletins.

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