

17 March 2020

Kia ora

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 all countries apart from Pacific Islands and immediate and detailed contact tracing of any confirmed cases.

There have been confirmed cases in New Zealand and 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, 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 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. I will be encouraging the 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.

The rule now is that gatherings of 500 or more are to be cancelled. Our students will no longer be going to the Waka Ama Nationals which is disappointing for them.

We will keep you updated.

Ngā mihi

Barbara Cavanagh
Principal
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