



COVID-19 UPDATE

17 March, 2020

Tena Koutou Parents, Caregivers and Whanau,

Here are some updates received from Iona Holsted - Secretary of Education on Monday 16 March 2020:

Three New Cases

Three new confirmed cases were announced this weekend taking the total confirmed cases for New Zealand to eight. We have been advised these cases are not connected with any schools or early learning services and they are doing well and two are self-isolating at home/hotel with one being treated in hospital.

Prime Minister Announcement

On 14 March the Prime Minister has announced new and strong protective measures to keep individuals, families and communities safe and healthy. The measures come into effect from 1am Monday 16 March 2020 and are as follows:

- Travel restrictions remain in place for people arriving from or who have been in mainland China and Iran over the prior 14 days (Category 1A)
- In addition, all travellers coming from all parts of the world, except parts of the Pacific, will be required to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival in New Zealand. This also includes Australia and French Polynesia. This self-isolation requirement applies to New Zealand citizens, permanent residents and their families (Category 1B).

All travellers coming from the following parts of the Pacific will be required to self-isolate if they show symptoms, within 14 days of arrival. This includes all Pacific Islands Forum members (except French Polynesia, category 1b), Associate Member Tokelau, and Observer Wallis and Futuna. (Category 2). Those in New Zealand thinking about traveling overseas, should avoid all non-essential travel at this time.

For anyone who arrived into New Zealand prior to this time they will need to follow the previous restrictions. The self-isolation requirement would therefore only apply to those arriving on Sunday 15 March and earlier, if they had travelled in or transited through China and Iran or had travelled in the Republic of Korea or Italy. T

his decision has obvious and immediate implications for any overseas trips planned for your school and for staff who may have personal travel planned. We are currently updating with urgency our overseas travel advice and information on staffing provisions, and will send it to you this afternoon through Special Bulletin. The new restrictions will be reviewed on **Tuesday 31 March** and then **every 14 days** after that date. There are no restrictions on freight and goods, they will continue to come in.

COVID-19 Planning

While these bold measures will support the slowing of COVID-19 in New Zealand, it is unrealistic to expect they will prevent further cases. One of the things we are working on is

what will be needed to ensure students are able to continue learning should their school or kura be closed for a period of time due to COVID-19. We have done a bit of thinking in this area already but as part of our planning we need to get a good idea of what support you and your students will need. To do that we need to know what you already have in place and what some of the obstacles might be so that we can work our way through dealing with them - or at least seeing what we can do to help you. Events, handshakes, hongi and hugging You will have heard that Government will be providing advice shortly on mass gatherings. We will disseminate that information as soon as we receive it. For those that have large events (eg, more than 500 people attending) coming up in the next week or so the advice from the Prime Minister was to connect with your local DHB. The Prime Minister also advised that we should stop handshakes, hongi and hugging. Prevention remains a priority Your students, staff and community still have a very large role in preventing the spread of COVID-19 through:

- Awareness – know the symptoms and where to get good information
- Vigilance - stay away if you are ill
- Good hygiene - hand washing and drying, good cough and sneeze etiquette will prevent spread of a range of ills as we move into cold and flu season With prevention in mind, a key message for all of us is the importance of keeping COVID-19 out of the Pacific Islands. We saw the devastating effects of measles in Samoa and it is vital we do everything we can to stop COVID-19 from reaching their shores. The Ministry of Health website remains the best source of information on COVID-19 for New Zealand and for education-related material go to on our website. Further information We understand that you may have questions that are not specifically answered in our current communications. As the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak is an emergent situation, our advice is actively reviewed and added to as more information comes to hand. Please continue to contact your regional office with your questions and we will endeavour to get an answer to you as soon as we can. Regional office contact details are here on our website

Merivale School BOT

The chairperson and I are communicating on a daily basis as to how we best communicate and implement advice and guidance from the Ministry of Education / Ministry of Health to our school and whanau / community

As a precautionary measure, we are working on plans for continued learning should school be closed for a period of time due to COVID-19. These plans will form a part of the school ***Pandemic Plan*** should it need to be put into action. The Board of Trustees are in a process of ongoing review as COVID -19 unfolds.

We will keep parents well informed of developments and ***new information*** as it comes to hand. At the moment it is very important that we stay connected as a school community and navigate our way forward in a timely, consistent and safe fashion.

Nga Mihi

Tom Paekau
PRINCIPAL
(on behalf of Merivale School BOT)