

WITHERLEA SCHOOL

COVID-19 BULLETIN

Friday 13th March 2020

Term One - Week 6

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 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 meantime 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.

You will appreciate the importance of giving children factual, age-appropriate information about COVID-19 so that they can feel informed and in control. The guidance will support parents to have those conversations;

- [Talking to children about coronavirus LINK](#)

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.

I will be encouraging my 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,

Andrea Harnett
Principal
Witherlea School

Changes @ School

We have made some careful decisions today in response to the evolving nature of COVID-19;

- **School Pool;** will shut today; Friday 13th March and only be available for our Swim Team who will be training for Swimming Sports next Friday
- **Shoes;** our children are supposed to wear shoes in term 2-3 due to cold weather conditions. We are asking parents to do this from now so our children do not get coughs/colds and pass this to others
- **Ministry of Health;** school is following all Ministry of Health guidelines and updates with the LINK on our School App and Website under Newsletters
- **Sickness;** please keep your children at HOME if they are unwell to stop the spread of illness and support the school with GOOD Hygiene practices (make sure you are able to be contacted or have your Emergency Contact up to date as children will be sent home if too unwell to be at school)

Witherlea Pandemic Plan

The school is required by the Ministry to have a Pandemic Plan. We have one and it is ready to be implemented which means;

- We take all leads from the Ministry of Health (they are the only ones who can shut schools and hospitals)
- In the event that schools are instructed to close we will clearly communicate to our school via; School App, Email and Facebook (please ensure these things are updated)
- School will provide learning information during any closure to support learners at home to the best of our ability (this will be created in the next week for a range of ages)
- Andrea Harnett and Val Nelson are the Pandemic Managers at Witherlea School
- Crest Cleaning Services; our current cleaners have heightened Pandemic Cleaning practices in action for Witherlea School and schools across Marlborough