



'Growing in Faith
Together'

18 March 2020

Dear Parents/Caregivers

COVID-19 Update

As has been announced, there are 8 new cases of Covid-19 in New Zealand. Yesterday the Ministry of Health's Director-General announced a case of COVID-19 in a school. The student, whose father was confirmed as having tested positive, is currently in self-isolation.

Health authorities have instructed the affected school to stay closed until after the weekend. As a precaution, the school undertook a careful clean of their school overnight, so that all surfaces in classrooms, door handles, bathroom surfaces etc. will have been cleaned in accordance with guidance from the Ministry of Health.

Health authorities have been very clear in their advice that there is **no reason that children should not be going to school.**

As you have been doing, please continue to focus on prevention of spread including through:

- Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly - before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet
- Covering coughs and sneezes with clean tissues or with an elbow
- Putting used tissues in the bin

Staff and students need to stay home if they are unwell in any way.

Physical Distancing

Schools have been advised to postpone or cancel large gatherings and events that are not core to teaching and learning.

Remember that personal hygiene, and reducing unnecessary physical contact (eg. hugs, handshakes, hongi) are still the most important things to do, to stop the spread of any virus.

As a school, we have supplied all classrooms with soap and hand sanitiser; covered the drinking fountains to avoid any cross contamination and teachers are reminding students to wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet and how to cover coughs and sneezes.

Please note that we are deliberately using the term "physical distancing" rather than "social distancing". Maintaining social connection is as important as ever to people's wellbeing during this time, if not more so. If anyone needs to self-isolate we need to show compassion, understanding and our support.

Reminder - Who needs to self-isolate?

The Government announcement at the weekend that anyone who has arrived from overseas **after** 1am on Monday 16 March is to self-isolate for 14 days, and to register with Healthline (0800 358 5453). The exception is people arriving from specified Pacific countries (["Category 2" countries](#) as listed here), who do not need to self-isolate if they are not unwell.

People who arrived from overseas before 1am on Monday 16 March are not required to self-isolate, unless they have travelled from South Korea or Iran. Travellers from those countries need to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of their departure and register with Healthline.

People living in the same house as overseas guests/travellers who are in self-isolation, **need to avoid close contact with them** (no closer than 2 metres apart for more than 15 minutes), and are **not required to self-isolate themselves**.

Encouraging student attendance

We know that some parents have concerns about their children attending school at the moment, some of which may be due to what they are seeing in the media about other countries.

There's a simple rule here:

- students who are unwell (whether or not their illness relates to COVID-19) should stay at home.
- students who are **not** unwell should continue to attend school.

Any decisions about school closures will be made on a case by case basis. In the meantime, unless students are unwell themselves, keep sending your children to school as our environment continues to be safe and the best place for them to continue their learning.

Schools will continue to be provided with the latest information and guidance from the Ministries of Education and Health, so that Principals and Boards can make well-informed decisions based on their particular circumstances.

Please watch this [attached video](#) which shows some useful tips for parents and caregivers about helpful and reassuring ways to talk about the Covid19 pandemic with their children.

Kia Kaha

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Principal