



## COVID-19 Update #2 to Wee Nippers Community

12 March 2020

This update contains the following sections:

1. Letter to our community (informed by the Ministry of Education)
2. Hygiene and illness policies and procedures at Wee Nippers
3. Overseas Travel (including during holidays – (NB your action may be required)
4. COVID-19 – The Facts

### 1. Letter to our community

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 five confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand and it is pleasing to know that 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 early learning service, 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.

With that, there is a good video clip from Nanogirl that will help older children to better understand the virus - [YouTube clip - Nanogirl](#)

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. Wee Nippers is encouraging our teachers, cleaners, cooks and administrators to stay away from Wee Nippers 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 early learning services and by staying away, seeking medical attention and practicing good hygiene, we can all keep any spread of illness to a minimum.

If you have any questions, please contact Nat, Rachel, Simone or George.

Nga mihi

Rachel Cade

Natalie Tisdall

George Crossan

Simone Flight

[manager.invercargill@weenippers.co.nz](mailto:manager.invercargill@weenippers.co.nz)

[manager.mosgiel@weenippers.co.nz](mailto:manager.mosgiel@weenippers.co.nz)

[george.crossan@weenippers.co.nz](mailto:george.crossan@weenippers.co.nz)

[simone.flight@weenippers.co.nz](mailto:simone.flight@weenippers.co.nz)

027 518 7050

027 518 7555

027 518 7550

021 1656 218

## 2. Hygiene and illness policies and procedures at Wee Nippers

To reiterate that latest information and advice we are working to:

- ECEs must follow and enforce policies and procedures around good hygiene and encourage you to do so too by;
  - Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (the same as singing Happy Birthday twice through) before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet.
  - Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Covering coughs and sneezes with clean tissues or with an elbow
  - Avoiding sharing anything that has come in contact with saliva, whether in your living or social environments.
  - Putting used tissues in the bin.
  - Keeping children at home if they are unwell (see our traffic light posters on all classroom doors.)
- If anyone living in or staying in your household is instructed to self-isolate, please advise your Centre Manager. It will be treated in full confidence and will assist us to follow all guidelines and advice we are being given by MoE, MoH and Public Health. For information about self-isolation for everyone involved, see the [MoH guidelines for self-isolation](#).
- If you or your child are showing flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), call Healthline (0800 358 5453) or your GP. **Do not visit your local medical centre or emergency room unannounced.** Call ahead. They will have processes to ensure that you will not put other patients or healthcare workers at risk of getting sick or having to self-isolate for 14 days.

### Quicklinks:

[COVID-19 \(novel coronavirus\) - Ministry of Health website](#)

[COVID-19 \(novel coronavirus\): Information for Early Learning Services](#)

## 3. Overseas Travel (NB: Action may be required)

Families planning or considering overseas travel with children, need to be aware of actual or potential issues, including:

- Anyone who has travelled through China, Republic of Korea, Italy, Iran and/or Japan are required to remain in self-isolation for two weeks before returning to any school. Families with visiting friends and family should monitor the Ministry of Health and SafeTravel websites for information and updates to this list.
- Anyone who has travelled anywhere overseas (including to Australia) may in the future be required to observe a two-week self-isolation period on their return to New Zealand. Please note that while this is not the current status, we want to give people a heads up that it may be a possibility. People who travel also need to be aware of the potential implications of travel bans and isolation requirements changing while they are away.
- **We would like families who are planning overseas travel with children who attend Wee Nippers to please register details of their travel with their Centre Manager.**

## 4. COVID-19 – The Facts

You may be interested to know that research published by WHO notes that children and young people under 18 account for only 2.4% of all reported cases of COVID-19. The Ministry of Health's advice is that with vigilance the chance of a widespread outbreak is expected to remain low - so we all have a responsibility to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

Because COVID-19 is a new virus, it was always going to take time to understand how it is transmitted and who might be most impacted. While the scientists and health authorities have been quickly gathering and sharing the information they do have, there has been very unhelpful and inaccurate information shared about COVID-19, particularly through social media.

Scientists are working collectively and globally to quickly understand COVID-19. There has also been some significant research published recently by the World Health Organisation-China Joint Mission.

So, what we now know about COVID-19 is:

- At this time the vast majority of people in New Zealand have no risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Children and young people under 18 account for only 2.4% of all reported cases of COVID19 – this means we are unlikely to see widespread cases in schools and early learning services.
- New Zealand currently has very few cases of COVID-19 and no evidence of sustained person-to-person transmission in our communities.
- Although asymptomatic infection (people with no symptoms) has been reported, there is emerging evidence that this is rare and not a major driver in spreading the infection.
- Spread happens through coughing and sneezing by someone confirmed with COVID-19 – similar to the way that influenza spreads.

- “COVID-19 does not transmit as efficiently as influenza, from the data we have so far. With influenza, people who are infected but not yet sick are major drivers of transmission which does not appear to be the case for COVID-19” - Director General of World Health Organisation (WHO)
- If someone is confirmed with COVID-19 infection:
  - 80% of confirmed cases of all ages have mild to moderate symptoms
  - 6.1% of all cases are treated as critical – most of these people have other health conditions
  - If a child or young person does get confirmed with the case, 97.5% will get mild to moderate symptoms only (0.2% critical)
  - Recovery time (median) from onset to recovery in mild cases is 2 weeks. For severe and critical cases it is 3-6 weeks
- COVID-19 isn't easily transmitted – and in China research shows it is largely occurring in families (75% - 85% of clusters occur within families), not in the community
- Again in China, early studies suggest that less than 10% of family members of confirmed cases, have been infected with COVID-19
- The people most affected are those over 60 years of age, and those with underlying conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and cancer
- As with other illnesses such as flu, the highest mortality rate is in those over the age of 80