



COVID-19 Update #3 to Wee Nippers Community

17 March 2020

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1. Letter to our community

Kia ora

Like many New Zealanders, we are waiting to hear the details of the government's economic package later today to understand what it will mean for our community and the days ahead. In the meantime, we ask that you continue to assist us to keep illness out of our Centres and we'd like to share our cleaning and hygiene efforts.

We are continuing to focus on good hygiene practices. Hand washing and good cough and sneeze etiquette are very important tools in preventing the spread of illness including colds, flu and COVID-19. Social distancing isn't as scary as it sounds. Have fun with your children with the "East Coast Wave".

Please stay vigilant about your own health and the health of your children. As mentioned in the last update, 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. For the sake of all, 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.

As ever, if you have any questions, please contact Nat, Rachel, Simone or George.

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2. Cleaning and Hygiene at Wee Nippers

Wee Nippers is cleaned nightly by our experienced cleaners. We prefer to employ permanent cleaners who know our Centre and are part of our wider community than a cleaning company and a revolving roster of cleaners. We also professionally deep clean our carpets and vinyl floors twice a year. This latest deep clean was during the summer closedown. Our verandas are water blasted annually.

Good ventilation is recommended to help limit the spread of viruses. We know that our verandas and outdoor sleep practice help limit the spread of colds each year. The Centres air-conditioning/ventilation equipment is maintained to NZ Building Code standards as evidenced by the Building Warrant of Fitness certificate.

In the classrooms you may have noticed our 'pink' squirter bottles of disinfectant cleaner that teachers in daily practice use to wipe surfaces. We colour code our large supply of cleaning cloths (green cloths for food, blue for art, red for floors or body fluids) and these cloths are washed and dried daily after use or thrown straight in the rubbish if more appropriate.

During a pandemic we need to clean more thoroughly to minimise the spread of the virus. This applies particularly to hard surfaces (for example, sinks, handles, railings, changing facilities, objects and counters). Influenza viruses may live up to two days on hard surfaces, while the norovirus can survive for days or weeks on hard surfaces.

The Ministry of Health recommends that surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should be cleaned often, preferably daily (which is our standard practice). Influenza viruses are inactivated by alcohol and by chlorine so cleaning of surfaces with a neutral detergent followed by a disinfectant solution is recommended. Our choice of products is guided by industry recommendations. (While there is increased interest in the use of 'green', 'eco', 'organic' or 'natural' cleaning products, be aware that many of these products are suitable only for 'cleaning' surfaces by removing dirt, grease and grime, and not for 'disinfecting' surfaces to kill disease causing germs. We do not use these products.)

Our cleaning and hygiene equipment and supplies include;

- Antibacterial cleaning solutions, disinfectant and household bleach
- Personal protective equipment including gloves, tissues, hand sanitisers.
- Increased stocks of paper towels, sanitising wipes, liquid soap and instant hand sanitiser

Wee Nippers is proud of its healthy eating programme and on a daily basis our Centre Cooks follow hygiene practices annually inspected and certified. We overstock our kitchen and staffroom with cups, glasses, and plates to ensure there is no sharing. There is a dishwasher in our staff room and all plates, cups, glasses and cutlery used by the children must go through the sanitiser in our kitchen.

At this time, we are mindful of restricting communal use of some play, physical education equipment and office equipment and cleaning of any equipment that is used.

On Ministry of Education advice we have stocked up on gloves, hand sanitiser, hand soap and cleaning products and have removed tea towels from use and are recommending the use of paper towels rather than air dryers.

Should the situation arise where a child or staff member or contractor has entered the Centre while ill, any areas that they have come in contact with will be quarantined and then deep cleaned as soon as possible. (Please note that the Medical Officer will make the call to close any Centre as a result of contact with COVID-19 and we will address planning for this in the next update.)

3. 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.

Quick links:

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

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