

Early Childhood Centre

COVID-19 Update #5 to Wee Nippers Community

21 March 2020

To our Wee Nippers Community

The announcements over the past 24 hours have heightened everyone's sense of the speed of action being taken by the Government to "flatten the curve" to try to manage the impact of COVID-19. With PM Jacinda Ardern's announcement that New Zealand is now at Level 2 on the 4 Stage Alert System for COVID-19 (<https://covid19.govt.nz/government-actions/covid-19-alert-system/>), we thought that we would share this latest update from the Ministry of Education.

While we have no indication that a closure of either Centre is imminent, the Decision Tool that the Ministry of Education has shared with us is the most detailed information we have received yet indicating what might necessitate that decision.

He Pānui Kōhungahunga - the Early Learning Bulletin: Special Bulletin – Covid-19 update

Keep tamariki learning and maintain routines

Unless children are unwell, keeping them in their early learning service is the best thing parents and whānau can do for them at this time.

Children engaged in education and following their usual routines are supported in their wellbeing. Maintaining connections with others is also an important – relationships are a source of learning, empowerment and identity for all of us, including children.

Work together and continue to help each other. Continue to be proactive in maintaining good standards of hygiene, particularly around handwashing practices.

Cleaning your home and your service

Maintaining a clean environment is key to preventing the spread of illness. For COVID-19, hard surfaces need to be the focus of cleaning efforts. There is good guidance on the Ministry of Health's website about this.

Decision tool

If you haven't had a chance yet to take a look at the decision tool, please do so when you can. Bear in mind that it's an emerging framework about how we will act if schools and centres start to close. However, we are still a long way from that scenario.

You'll see from the tool that the decision to "close" a school (or service) is based on exposure to public health risk.

Ministry of Education. 20 March 2020

Any closure of a Centre will be directed by the Ministry of Health with limited notice. Once again, can we ask that you make sure that if your contacts have changed at all, that they are updated with Kim or Marie.

As ever, if you have any questions, please contact Nat, Rachel, Simone or George. We will continue to keep you informed with all that we are receiving from the Ministry of Education.

In the meantime, take care of yourselves and check in on people over 70 years of age and those with compromised immunity who have been asked to remain at home as much as they can from now on. We're all in this together.

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Quick links:

www.COVID19.govt.nz

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

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

<http://www.weenippers.co.nz/news/covid-19-updates/>

2. Q&As about Self-Isolation and Possible Closure

Will Wee Nippers need to close and what does this mean for my child’s enrolment?

We will be following Government and Ministry advice on when they may require us/childcare centres to close. The length of a forced closure can be expected to be anywhere from 72 hours to 14 days (10 working days) or more. **There will be no fees or meal charges if we are required to close due to COVID-19.**

(Due to the ever-changing nature of this situation, this will be reviewed on a fortnightly basis and may change should circumstances require).

What if we are directed to go into self- isolation?

If you, or someone living in your home, is required to self-isolate, we would like to remind you to please keep your child/ren at home. In such circumstances, we are offering families two **weeks of no fees or meal charges** to use for self-isolation directed by the Ministry of Health. For absences longer than this we ask that you speak with Nat or Rachel to assist us with some required paperwork to ensure that your child’s enrolment is held.

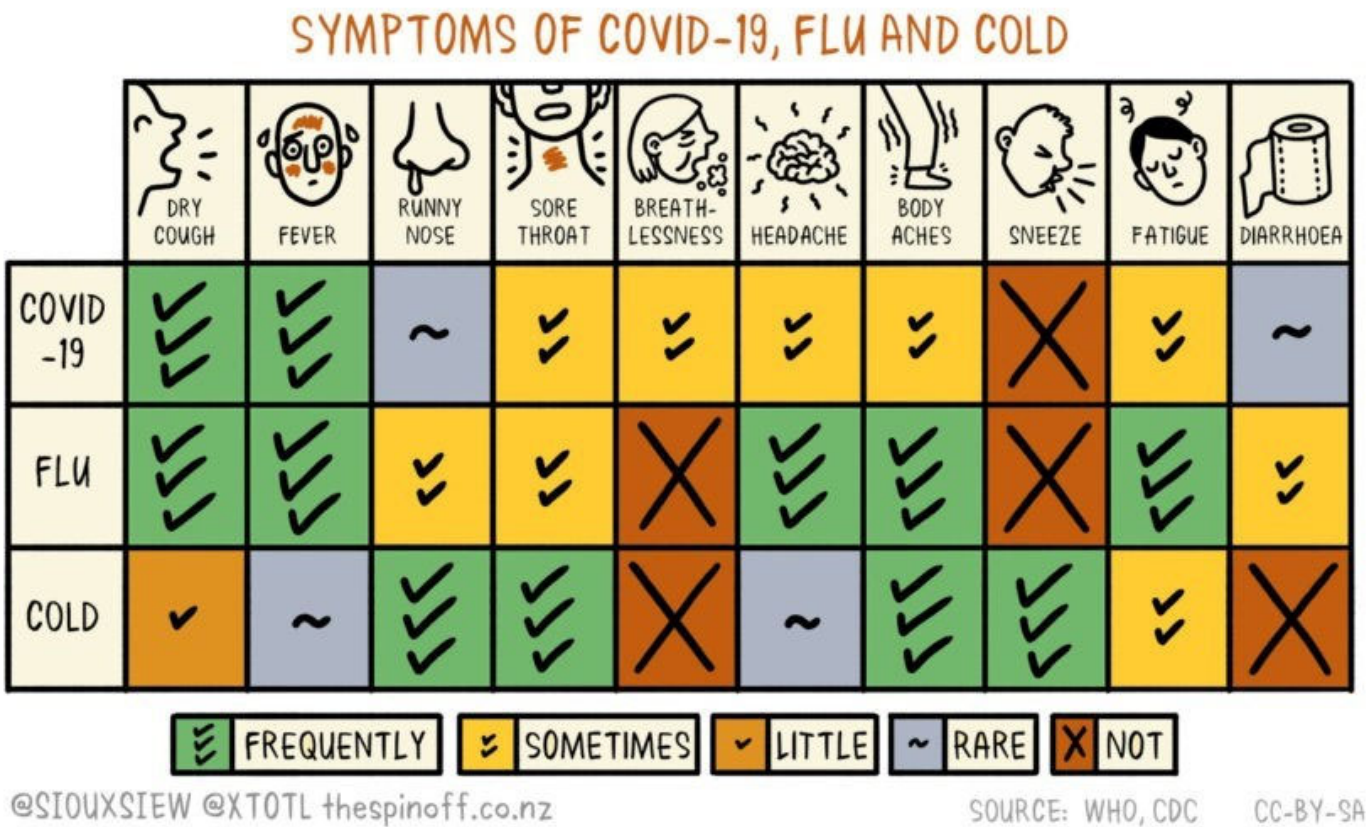
(Due to the ever-changing nature of this situation, this will be reviewed on a fortnightly basis and may change should circumstances require).

What should I do if my child is unwell?

Schools and preschools are places that present risk for transmission of any virus. If children are ill, then there is a responsibility to keep them at home. At the Centre we also need to have a heightened sense of identifying, and acting upon, illness.

We thank you in advance for understanding why, in some circumstances, children will need to be taken home if they are considered by the teachers to be unwell. We hope you all understand why this is being done. The greater good of our community and country has to outweigh individual inconveniences in these circumstances.

2. Health and Wellness, Illness and Attendance



To reiterate that latest information and advice from the Ministry of Health that 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 the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. For information about self-isolation for everyone involved, see the [Ministry of Health 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.