

WEE NIPPERS Early Childhood Centre

COVID-19 Update #10 to Wee Nippers Community

7 May 2020

Kia Ora to all of our families and whanau

We've had a wonderful first two weeks back at both Centres for a small but buzzing group of teachers and children. Meanwhile many more of you and your children have been enjoying home learning with the team. We are so proud of how our team have pivoted to meet all of the challenges and opportunities since 24 March.

We have frequent conversations about what we have learned in the past weeks that we will take into the future at Wee Nippers. In the next weeks we will be sending out a survey to get your thoughts on what worked, what we could have done better and what you think you want to keep seeing regardless of the national situation.

Many thanks for all the latest survey responses that are helping us plan for Alert Level 2. We can't wait to see you all!

Today Thursday 7 May, PM Jacinda Ardern will give us the first indications of what Level 2 will look like. We will get fairly prompt guidelines from the Ministry of Education after this. **On Monday 11 May**, the PM will announce when we are moving to Alert Level 2.

Monday 11 May we will send you an update confirming our Alert Level 2 open date and all the information you need such as Level 2 operational information, provisions for children who have health issues that make them vulnerable to COVID-19, fees, timetable updates and so forth. We aim to open on or as close to the date that New Zealand moves to Alert Level 2 as we know that many of you are returning to work that day.

In the meantime, Nat and Rachel are following up on questions that were raised in the survey and we all welcome any questions you may have before our next update on Monday.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE WEE NIPPERS STAFF!



What our community can expect at COVID-19 Alert Level 2 at Wee Nippers.

A number of you have questions about what Alert Level 2 will look like and how difficult will it be to settle children after seven weeks at home with Mum and Dad's undivided attention.

At the Centres we're preparing for life to look similar to Alert Level 3 for a lot of what we do, but with expanded group sizes. We are lucky to have such large spaces. We exceeded the increased requirements at Alert Level 3 so are confident that we won't have to institute any waiting lists or reduced timetables at Alert Level 2.

We thought we would pass on some of the comments we have received from parents of children attending the past two weeks.

"I really appreciated the phone call I got where the teacher went through what it would look like at the Centre when we returned. It was good knowing what to expect on the first day. It was also appreciated that we were asked about our children and the changes to the routines etc over the lockdown time. "

"I was nervous about how my children would settle back in the Centre. The phone call that we received prior to returning helped to make me feel more comfortable. The children have been really settled and everything feels good. "

"I was feeling good about my child coming as I had been following the updates and as there was no new cases in Invercargill, I felt safe to bring my child back to Wee Nippers as he was just as safe at the Centre as at home. I was nervous about how he would settle back into the Centre, but he flew in on the first day and was so happy to be back. I was relieved to see this."

"I am so happy to have my daughter back at Wee Nippers she has been really settled since returning."



And from a teacher.

"It's been great with lots of one on one or one on two. Routines continue to be the same and are familiar. The children are settled and enjoying being back at the Centre and the comradery amongst the wider team has increased."

We are confident that the PM's announcement and the Ministry of Education's update today will answer our final questions with solid guidelines. We will share this with you on Monday. In the meantime, don't hesitate to come to us with questions or suggestions.

Cleaning and Hygiene at Wee Nippers

A number of parents responding to our survey wanted reassurance as to how Wee Nippers will provide a hygienic and safe learning environment for children and staff. So, we're updating what we shared with you in March.

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 and will be hosed down weekly.

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 Centre's 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 use multiple times in daily practice 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 even 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). We are now cleaning surfaces that children touch after use or on a regular schedule throughout the day.

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 after washing.

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. We have stocked up on gloves, hand sanitiser, hand soap and cleaning products and have removed tea towels from use and the Ministry of Health has recommended the use of paper towels rather than air dryers.

Should the situation arise where a child or staff member has entered the Centre while ill with COVID-19, any areas that they have come in contact with will be quarantined until it has been deep cleaned. Please note that the Medical Officer will make the call to close the Centre as a result of contact with COVID-19 and this is expected to be for 72 hours to 14 days.

COVID-19 Alert Level 3 Wee Nippers Operations Manual changes that will continue at Alert Level 2.

Many of the measures that we have brought in when we were briefly at Alert Level 2 in March and at Alert Level 3 will continue. They include;

- Maintaining the hygiene and cleaning protocols outlined above.
- Treating classrooms as 'bubbles' that would be maintained throughout Alert Level 3.
- Prohibiting entry to Wee Nippers for children, caregivers or employees who are sick or displaying any symptoms of ANY sickness.
- Continuing new protocols for drop off and pick up including designated caregivers, tablet sign in at both Centres, a sanitising station outside the front door for compulsory use before entering, access limited to a classroom for teachers and children only.
- A non-contact group that includes Centre Managers, and administrators that only interact with staff and parents at reception.
- A contact register of anyone who enters Wee Nippers for the foreseeable future.
- No entry to the Centre by anyone other than Wee Nippers employees and designated drop off and pick up caregivers.
- Gloves used when applying sunscreen, changing nappies, doing laundry and kitchen duties.
- All pacifiers stored in individual named containers and sterilised between use, dropped on the ground or touched by anyone.
- Rooms ventilated as much as possible and kept to a minimum of 18degrees.
- All sleeping in the verandah areas in the fresh air, allowing as much space between beds as possible with the exception of babies who will sleep in the baby's sleep room.
- Increased supervision of bathroom use to avoid or minimize classes mixing.
- Allocated playground time to keep classes separated with outside playground equipment limited and scheduled wipe down after use.
- Children seated with as much space as possible between them using as many tables as possible during crafting and mealtimes.
- Dishes of food covered when they leave the kitchen and then dished by a teacher wearing gloves. Fruit etc that is usually on a platter in individual lidded containers for dishing to the children and the lunch menu kept to all in one meals rather than separate components e.g. Lasagne

NOTE: These are examples of new protocols during Alert Level 3 and continuing at Alert Level 2 and not an exhaustive list.

Quick links:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/>

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

<https://learningfromhome.govt.nz/>

<https://learningfromhome.govt.nz/supporting-learning/home-learning-tv>