

COVID-19 / PANDEMIC POLICY

Rationale

To ensure that a plan is in place to guide the centre management, should a pandemic be declared locally or in New Zealand.

Objectives

- To meet our requirements under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.
- To ensure that there is a clear understanding of what actions to take should a pandemic be declared for the wellbeing of children, staff and families.
- To summarise the public health measures and recommendations, to support health & safety under the Covid-19 Protection Framework.
- To summarise additional public health measures to prevent the spread of disease and to support contact tracing.
- To guide the practices going in and out of different Alert/ Traffic Light Covid-19 framework levels.

General Information

New Zealand's Covid-19 framework specifies measures to be taken against COVID-19 at each level. The system helps people understand the current level of risk and the restrictions that must be followed. These levels may be applied at a town, city, territorial local authority, regional or national level.

Specific public health measures may be agreed for early learning services by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education which can differ from the measures applied to other organisations, businesses and individuals. These measures will reflect the context of an early learning service environment, including the lower levels of risk for children and the controlled nature of the environment. We will follow the requirements of these government agencies and their advice at all times.

Further information on the alert system can be found on the uniteforrecovery.govt.nz website. <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

This policy also applies to any other pandemic such as influenza, and in these cases, implement all policies as for Covid-19.

General

- Our centre will open / close only after receiving instructions from the Ministry of Health, local health authorities or the Ministry of Education, and for as long as is safely practicable.
- In the case of the centre being closed down under the request of the Ministry of Health, we will follow our response plan.
- Management will work closely with the Ministry of Health and other relevant authorities, following their advice.
- We will maintain communication with other schools and Early Childhood Centres in the area.
- Our emergency contact details will be regularly updated and a process in place for contacting families.
- We will ensure the centre has adequate emergency supplies of tissues, medical and hand hygiene products, cleaning supplies and masks. These may be difficult to purchase once a pandemic begins.
- A process is in place for recording details of staff or child illness.
- Management will coordinate communication to students, whanau and staff at different phases of a pandemic.
- Our centre will ensure that all cases and status reports are notified to health authorities and assist health authorities to track contacts of people showing symptoms.

Guidance for Covid-19 Protection Framework:

- All licenced early learning services will be open with children and staff onsite.
- The same public health measures you are very familiar will remain in place:
 - good hygiene and cleaning
 - contact tracing systems
 - vaccination requirements for workers (paid and unpaid)
 - if you are sick, you must stay home and get tested
 - good ventilation.
- Contact tracing and case management will continue to be very important with contacts being identified, self-isolating and getting tested
- Physical distancing is **not required** at any setting of the framework, but at the Red setting we recommend keeping a 1 metre distance between adults when inside, and where practicable.
- Events where additional adults and children will be attending, such as end of year Christmas functions, will need to align with gathering requirements for the relevant settings in the COVID-19 Protection Framework.

Red

- There will need to be measures in place to protect both at-risk people and protect our health system from an unsustainable number of hospitalisations.
- There are greater risks so extra public health precautions are necessary to protect our children and staff.
- Parents and caregivers who can supervise their children at home should do so.
- Licensed early learning services are open with staff and children on site.
- Fees will be charged for all children unless government support such as wage subsidies are available.

Orange

- There will be moderate measures in place to avoid exponential growth in case numbers.
- Licensed early learning services are open with staff and children on site
- Certified playgroups can operate according to close proximity business requirements.

Green

- Social and economic activity is almost “normal” while we continue to build health system capability.
- Licensed early learning services are open with staff and children on site
- Certified playgroups can operate according to close proximity business requirements.

General Guidance:

- Good hygiene practices will continue to be a priority at all levels as the best way to minimise potential spread of COVID-19. The [uniteforrecovery.govt.nz](https://www.uniteforrecovery.govt.nz) and Ministry of Health websites are a good source of information including:
 - Hand washing (refer to General Health, Illness & Medications policy for procedure).
<https://covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/stay-healthy/wash-your-hands/>
 - Cough and sneeze etiquette
<https://covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/stay-healthy/cough-or-sneeze-into-your-elbow/>
 - Cleaning surfaces
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-general-cleaning-and>

[-disinfection-advice](#)

- Put up posters to support key messages about hygiene.
<https://covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/posters/>
- The following basic hygiene measures are the best defence against COVID-19 including:
 - cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues
 - put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately
 - wash your hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds)
 - avoid close contact with people who are unwell
 - don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
 - clean surfaces regularly.
- The risk of infection increases the closer you are to someone who is infectious and the longer duration of time that you spend close to that person.
- All staff and children with any COVID-like symptoms are being asked to stay at home, and we are asking services to send anyone home who has or develops any symptoms of illness.
- Public Health officials have advised that if these measures are in place, then personal protective equipment is not needed.

Staying home if sick

- Symptoms of COVID-19 can include new onset or worsening of one or more of the following:
 - Cough
 - Fever
 - Sore throat
 - Runny nose
 - Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
 - Temporary loss of smell

These symptoms are similar to a range of other illnesses, like influenza. Having them doesn't mean a person has COVID-19, but you should remain vigilant.

- Shortness of breath can indicate pneumonia, and requires urgent medical attention.
- Children with asthma, hay fever, allergies, ear infections or other acute or chronic conditions may have similar symptoms. Medical certificates are requested for children with these symptoms to ensure that our families feel equitably treated.
- Before a child is sent home, they should be feeling unwell and there should always be a conversation with the caregiver to determine whether there is another explanation for their child's symptoms that may mean that they do not pose a risk to others and do not need to go home.

Operating under the COVID-19 Protection (Traffic Light) Framework:

GREEN: At **Green** there is almost ‘normal’ social and economic activity while continuing to build health system capability.

ORANGE: At **Orange**, actions aim to avoid exponential growth in case numbers with moderate controls in place.

RED: At **Red**, action will need to be taken to protect both at-risk people and protect our health system from an unsustainable number of hospitalisations.

Public health measures:

<p>If you are sick – stay home and get tested</p>	<p>If people are sick, they should stay home (phone Healthline on 0800 358 5453 or their GP and get tested if they have flu-like symptoms) Get tested for COVID-19 COVID-19 symptoms</p>
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<p>Basic Hygiene</p>	<p>Wash and dry hands, cough into elbows, don't touch your face. Hand washing after going to the toilet, playing outside and before eating. Regular cleaning, particularly of high touch surfaces.</p>
<p>Case management</p>	<p>If there is a case at our service the Medical Officer of Health / public health officials will support us with what to do. Staff or children and whānau may be required to isolate. If this is the case public health officials will advise what we need to do.</p>
<p>Ventilation</p>	<p>Indoor spaces are well ventilated. Well ventilated indoor spaces support positive engagement and minimise the transmission of illnesses. Open windows, doors and vents to promote cross flow of air and avoid stagnant air during the day as practicable and when children are playing in the outside space.</p>
<p>Contact tracing</p>	<p>Early learning services are required to display QR Code posters for the NZ COVID Tracer App and have means for providing contact tracing for those not able to use the QR code.</p>
<p>Travel</p>	<p>Ministry staff undertaking licensing activity and children/teachers attending/working across boundaries. All travel is allowed within and between green, orange and red settings for Targeted local lockdowns, if initiated, may restrict movement across boundaries. (For services in Auckland travel across the boundary is restricted until 15 November, eg. from Red to Orange)</p>

Face coverings	Face coverings are not required in early learning services for staff and children.
Physical distancing	Physical distancing is not required in early learning settings. Distancing between staff and other adults is encouraged. Staggered drop-off and pick ups will help with physical distancing and avoiding people congregating. Drops-offs and pick-ups should be outside as much as possible.
Children with complex medical needs	Parents of children/tamariki with complex medical needs will need to consider whether it is appropriate for their child to attend early learning. Parents may seek advice from their health professional.
Distance learning	Consider how you will support children if they are not physically attending, for example distance learning. Your local curriculum should set out what this looks like. You should communicate with your parents and whānau about what they can expect.
Vaccine registers	Vaccine registers are required to be kept and maintained for workers and those aged 12 and over in home-based who reside in the home.

Requirements under the CPF Settings:

	Green	Orange	Red
	<p>At Green there is almost 'normal' social and economic activity while continuing to build health system capability.</p> <p>Early learning services are open with staff and children on site for education and care.</p> <p>Services are prohibited from requiring parents, caregivers and whānau to be vaccinated to access <u>licensed</u> early childhood services. (unless covered by the vaccine mandate)</p>	<p>At Orange, actions aim to avoid exponential growth in case numbers with moderate controls in place.</p> <p>Early learning services are open with staff and children on site for education and care.</p> <p>Services are prohibited from requiring parents, caregivers and whānau to be vaccinated to access <u>licensed</u> early childhood services. (unless covered by the vaccine mandate)</p>	<p>At Red, action will need to be taken to protect both at-risk people and protect our health system from an unsustainable number of hospitalisations.</p> <p>Early learning services are open with staff and children on site for education and care. There are greater risks so extra public health precautions are necessary to protect our children and staff.</p> <p>Services are prohibited from requiring parents, caregivers and whānau to be vaccinated to access <u>licensed</u> early childhood</p>

			services (unless covered by the vaccine mandate)
Operation of services	<p>All licensed early childhood services are open for on site education and care, with public health measures.</p> <p>Certified playgroups can open with Vaccine Passes or other close contact business measures.</p> <p>Certified playgroups that operate at or for an education service (eg. on a school site, run by a home-based service provider) then evidence of vaccination is required for those parents attending.</p> <p>Home-based services can open for children from multiple homes (including fully</p>	<p>All licensed early childhood services are open for on site education and care, with public health measures.</p> <p>Certified playgroups can only open with Vaccine Passes.</p> <p>Certified playgroups that operate at or for an education service (eg. on a school site, run by a home-based service provider) then evidence of vaccination is required for those parents attending.</p> <p>Home-based services can open for children from multiple homes (including fully vaccinated nannies going into multiple homes).</p>	<p>All licensed early childhood services are open for on site education and care with public health measures and any specified controls.</p> <p>Certified playgroups can only open with Vaccine Passes.</p> <p>Certified playgroups that operate at or for an education service (eg. on a school site, run by a home-based service provider) then evidence of vaccination is required for those parents attending.</p> <p>Parents/caregivers who can supervise their children at home should do so. This doesn't prevent parent led services from opening. If</p>

	<p>vaccinated nannies going into multiple homes).</p>		<p>required services will be able to make choices about their capacity to manage attendance.</p> <p>Children can attend more than one service, but parents/caregivers are encouraged to consider minimising the number of children and other adults their children are interacting with.</p> <p>Fully vaccinated staff can work at more than one service.</p> <p>Home-based services can open for children from multiple homes (including fully vaccinated nannies</p>
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			going into multiple homes).
Access on site	<p>No restrictions on access – all staff, volunteers, parents and visitors can be on site.</p> <p>Face coverings are encouraged for parents/caregivers and visitors when on site.eg. drop-off and pick up, to settle a child, or to view a service.</p> <p>Visiting teachers can visit homes in person.</p> <p>Home-based service providers can assess new homes.</p> <p>Parents/caregivers and visitors are encouraged to maintain 1m distancing from other adults if they are going on site.</p>	<p>No restrictions on access – all staff, volunteers, parents and visitors can be on site.</p> <p>Face coverings are encouraged for parents/caregivers and visitors when on site.eg. drop-off and pick up, to settle a child, or to view a service.</p> <p>Visiting teachers can visit homes in person.</p> <p>Home-based service providers can assess new homes.</p> <p>Parents/caregivers and visitors are encouraged to maintain 1m distancing from other adults if they are going on site.</p> <p>Consider limiting events.</p> <p>Consider limiting non-essential visitors on site</p>	<p>All staff, volunteers, and parents can be on site.</p> <p>Face coverings are required for parents/caregivers and visitors when on site.eg. drop-off and pick up, to settle a child, or to view a service.</p> <p>Visiting teachers can visit homes in person, but consider whether remote visits are appropriate in some cases.</p> <p>Home-based service providers can assess new homes.</p> <p>Parents/caregivers and visitors are encouraged to maintain 1m distancing from other adults if they are going on site.</p> <p>Limit events to prevent further transmission. Any events must meet wider public health measures. No non-essential visitors.</p>

Food	<p>Shared platters can be used and food can be supplied in accordance with public health guidance.</p>	<p>Children/tamariki should have separate food containers and should not give or take food to/ from each other. Food can be supplied in accordance with public health guidance</p>	<p>Children/tamariki should have separate food containers and should not give or take food to/ from each other. Food can be supplied in accordance with public health guidance</p>
Excursions	<p>Excursions can resume as normal.</p> <p>As normal a risk assessment must be undertaken ahead of the excursion being approved by the person</p>	<p>Any excursions will need to meet the wider public health measures.</p> <p>As normal a risk assessment must be undertaken ahead of the excursion being approved by the person responsible.</p>	<p>Any excursions will need to meet the wider public health measures.</p> <p>As normal a risk assessment must be undertaken ahead of the excursion being approved by the person responsible.</p>

	responsible.		
Vans	Vans can be used as normal but should be regularly cleaned.	Vans can be used as normal but should be regularly cleaned. Encourage physical distancing of 1m between all adults involved in the pick-up/drop off Face coverings should be worn by adults in the van.	Vans can be used as normal but should be regularly cleaned. Encourage physical distancing of 1m between all adults involved in the pick-up/drop Face coverings should be worn by adults in the van.
Cleaning	You should have a cleaning schedule for regular cleaning of high touch surfaces, linen and sleep furniture, toys and resources.	You should have a cleaning schedule for regular cleaning of high touch surfaces, linen and sleep furniture, toys and resources.	You should have a cleaning schedule for regular cleaning of high touch surfaces, linen and sleep furniture, toys and resources. Toys and resources that cannot be easily wiped down should be put away.

Ministry licensing activity	Any required on site licensing activity can take place. Face coverings should be worn by Ministry staff and 1m distance should be kept from other adults. Only fully vaccinated Ministry staff will be able to go on site.	Any required on site licensing activity can take place. Face coverings should be worn by Ministry staff and 1m distance should be kept from other adults Only fully vaccinated Ministry staff will be able to go on site.	Any required on site licensing activity can take place. Desk-based assessments made where appropriate. Face coverings should be worn by Ministry staff and 1m distance should be kept from other adults. Only fully vaccinated Ministry staff will be able to go on site.
Support services and agencies on site - including Ministry of Education, Education Review Office, Health staff Police, Fire etc	There are no restrictions, but staff must be captured in a visitor register or other system, to support contact tracing. They must also meet any other health requirements applicable at the time. Learning support services	There are no restrictions, but staff must be captured in a visitor register or other system, to support contact tracing. They must also meet any other health requirements applicable at the time. Learning support services continue.	Minimise attendance on site for non-essential services as much as possible. Those on site must be captured in a visitor register or other system, to support contact tracing and must meet any other health requirements applicable

	continue.		at the time. Learning support services continue.
Funding	Usual funding rules apply	Usual funding rules apply	Usual funding rules apply

Cleaning:

- When staff and children are on site regular cleaning of surfaces is recommended alongside your usual cleaning schedule.
- Review your cleaning policies and practices and consider increased cleaning for high touch surfaces (door handles, table tops in common spaces etc.) and bathrooms. Make sure your cleaners have appropriate information, training and equipment.
- Make sure the specific instructions are followed for the disinfectant being used (eg spray and leave on surfaces for 30 seconds before wiping down).
- Ensure the availability of appropriate cleaning supplies (eg disinfectant and cloths) for cleaning of high-touch surfaces.
- There is information about cleaning on the Ministry of Health website.
 - Cleaning surfaces
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-general-cleaning-and-disinfection-advice>
 - Minimising the spread of infectious diseases
<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/environmental-health/infectious-disease-prevention-and-control/workplace-infectious-disease-prevention>

Managing confirmed or probable cases

- If there is a confirmed or probable case linked with our early learning service, we will be advised of this by the Medical Officer of Health, and our regional Ministry of Education staff / local health authorities will work with us to agree on an action plan / communication plan for our parent community and staff.
- If the person(s) who are a confirmed or probable case have worked in / attended our service when they could have been infectious (which could start 2 – 3 days prior to having symptoms), our service will be closed for at least 72 hours to allow time for contact tracing and a clean of the service to align with Ministry of Health guidelines. Close contacts would be considered to be anyone who had:
 - face-to-face contact in any setting within two metres of a case for 15 minutes or more.
 - having been in a closed environment (e.g. entry) within 2m of a case for 15 minutes or more.

Close contacts will be required to self-isolate and will need to monitor for symptoms. Information about self-isolation and Factsheets for contacts are available on the Unite for the Recovery and Ministry of Health websites.

- The Ministry has further information about what to do if we have a confirmed or probable case:
 - Self-isolation – Unite for the Recovery - <https://covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/stay-healthy/stay-home-if-youre-sick/>
 - Fact sheet: If you have a probable or confirmed case 13 – Ministry of Health - <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-general-public/contact-tracing-covid-19#factsheets>
- In addition to closure for 72 hours for contact tracing, health authorities could require closure for longer periods of time, up to 14 further days. This is likely to be because health authorities consider there could be risk of community transmission or there could be a large number of cases within an early learning service that mean a high proportion of children/tamariki and staff could be considered close contacts and therefore need to self-isolate.
- Healthline is available to support anyone who might be experiencing symptoms or who has been asked to self-isolate - call for free on 0800 358 5453.
- If we become aware of a case associated with our early learning service and we haven't received that notification from health authorities:
 - we will contact our local public health unit or your local Ministry of Education contact for information and support.
 - Apply general cleaning principles expected following a suspected, probable or confirmed case <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-general-cleaning-and-disinfection-advice/cleaning-following-confirmed-or-probable-case-covid-19>
- Keep displaying QR codes for the NZ COVID Tracer App.
- Keep visitor registers and parent contact details up to date should they be required for contact tracing. <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-resources-and-tools/nz-covid-tracer-app>

Requirements for changing Covid levels

- Communicate with families and staff by Educa when any level changes are announced.
 - Advise families of new requirements as per the public health table above.
 - Remind families of any other key messaging given to the general public in

relation to movement restrictions and other specific new requirements advised by the media in case families have missed the information.

- Specific additional guiding principles are as follows.

<p>More up or down to or from green / orange levels</p>	<p>Advise families of requirements of the above public health table. It is safe to attend Montessori. Social distancing will be required, 1m between known adults, 2m between unknown adults. If sick, stay at home & seek GP advice. Risk of contraction from community transfer is not likely, but possible.</p>
<p>Move to Red</p>	<p>Advise families of requirements of the above public health table. All children and staff are able to return without restriction. Risk of contraction is likely possible.</p>
<p>Move to Essential Families only</p>	<p>Advise families of requirements of the above public health table. Only children belonging to families of essential workers and minimal numbers of staff (who don't have medical concerns) are able to attend. Ensure that it is clear that we will not turn children away, but that essential worker's children may be more at risk of being exposed to Covid-19. Fees are likely to be charged only for children attending, but will depend on rent relief and government relief. Risk of contraction from community transfer is possible.</p>
<p>Move into Lockdown</p>	<p>Centre is closed. Fees are unlikely to be charged, but will depend on rent relief and government relief. Risk of contraction from community transfer is very possible.</p>

It is generally expected that if ECE funding and the wage subsidy remains available, then fees would not need to be charged to families in order for us to continue to pay our staff and rent / overhead costs, however if wage subsidies are not available, then fees might be payable, depending on the situation and position of the business, which might require fees to be able to continue to operate on an ongoing basis.


Quick Links for Information

- Worksafe information for COVID-19 - Worksafe website – <https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid/>
- Alert Levels information – COVID-19 website - <https://covid19.govt.nz/covid-19/restrictions/alert-system-overview/>

- Ministry of Education - COVID-specific information - <https://www.education.govt.nz/covid-19/>
- You can keep in touch with your local District Health Board website and stay informed by updated Ministry of Health information on their website - Public Health Units – Ministry of Health - <https://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/public-health-units/public-health-unit-contacts>
- Health & Safety at Work Act 2015 http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2015/0070/latest/DLM5976660.html?search=qs_act%40bill%40regulation%40deemedreg_health+and+safety+at+work_resel_25_h&p=1&sr=1
- For anyone with COVID-like symptoms, they should contact Healthline (for free) on 0800 358 5453 or phone their doctor immediately.
- Our regional Ministry of Education office can be contacted with any questions:

Hamilton office 19 Home Straight Te Rapa Hamilton 3200	PO Box 774 Hamilton 3240 DX Number: GX10047	Phone: +64 7 850 8880 Fax: +64 7 850 8998
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Reference

- *Health and safety in licensed early learning services and kōhanga reo for COVID-19 - GUIDANCE FOR ALERT LEVELS 1 - 4*
-  [Managing-COVID-19-A-public-health-toolkit-for-early-learning-services-and-kohanga-...](#)
- **Unite against COVID-19: What is the CPF?**
<https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/covid-19-protection/>

Approved: _____ **(Date)** _____

Reviewed: _____ **(Date)** _____

DOCUMENT CONTROL			
Owner	Rowena Harper	Version	V2.1
Issue Date	23rd January 2022	Review Date	31st December 2022

READ AND UNDERSTOOD BY			
Name	Date	Name	Date

