

8 May 2020

Kia ora koutou

Like us, I am sure you have followed with interest the announcements made by the Prime Minister.

It is reassuring to hear how well our country has done at minimising the impacts of COVID-19. Alert Levels 4 and 3 have not been easy and we thank you for your ongoing support for the work we are doing.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister advised that in Alert Level 2 early learning services, kōhanga reo, playcentres and playgroups are safe environments for children and staff and that additional public health control measures are in place to prevent the spread of disease and to support contact tracing.

The good news is that when we are able to, we look forward to welcoming all our children and staff back again. Re-opening our kindergartens during Level 3 has not only enabled us to put in place all the Health and Safety recommendations we have received from the Ministries of Health and Education but to also test and evaluate the effectiveness of these. We are now in a strong position to welcome you and your child/ren back to kindergarten.

The key Public Health approach is to minimise the risk that someone gets infected in the first place, and second to ensure we can identify and contact anyone who has been in close contact with a person, if someone in an early learning service is infected.

As we have done in Alert Level 3, you can be assured that in Alert Level 2 we will know who is at our service, who our staff and children have been in close contact with and take appropriate measures to keep everyone safe.

Physical distancing is a good precaution to prevent the spread of disease. We do, however, know it is near impossible in an early learning environment, so good hygiene practices and regular cleaning are even more important here. This includes staff and children coughing into their elbows, handwashing and drying and regular cleaning of commonly touched surfaces.

Under Alert Level 2, we are advising our staff and ask you to keep any children home if they are sick, and we will contact you and send anyone home immediately if they show any symptoms.

Our kindergartens have safe and sensible practices to maintain the health and safety of everyone on our site. As described by Dr Payinda in his [NZ Herald article](#), “Covid's not measles or chickenpox, it doesn't hang in the air for hours waiting to infect passers-by. It travels on invisible drops of spit. You don't have to cross the street to avoid anyone. Just avoid getting in their 'moist breath' zone”. We all just need to remember to have some breathing space at Alert Level 2!

You may also be reassured to know that as of 8 May 2020, there was a total of 20 cases in the Hutt Valley, (12 in Lower Hutt and 8 in Upper Hutt). There are no new or probable cases reported in the last 48 hours. It has been 31 days since the last case for HVDHB. There are 0 COVID-19 cases in Lower Hutt hospital, and only 4 active cases, with 16 people recovered.

It's important however that not just at our kindergartens but at home, safe hygiene habits are practised by everyone, as this is essential to minimise the risk that someone gets infected with Covid-19.

For more information about the public health measures at Alert Level 2, you can visit the covid19.govt.nz website: <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

If you have any questions about our health and safety plan, or have a child who might be vulnerable to serious illness and would like to discuss a plan for them, please contact us.

We will be in touch again soon to update you on our plans.

Ngā mihi nui

Norma Roberts and Charmaine Hakaraia

General Managers
Hutt City Kindergartens