

Coronavirus- Ongoing situation

The school is aware of the potential risk of infection from the Novel Coronavirus and we are monitoring the situation closely with regards to the concerns around a potentially pandemic virus.

We are aware that we have a number of students and families returning from overseas. If your child has been overseas to China during the recent holiday break, please urgently advise the school via email to meganc@rops.school.nz to enable us to provide further information, if required.

The Ministry of Health is monitoring the situation and will provide further advice to us as needed. You may visit the Ministry of Health website for further information if you wish:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-china-2019-ncov>

We have detailed procedures in place for the incidence of infectious diseases, and we will be revisiting them with our staff on their return to school next Tuesday. We are also monitoring Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Safe Travel NZ sites to ensure we have access to the most up-to-date information and advice. During the 2019 measles outbreak, schools received regular updates from these organisations and this will happen again for this situation.

I would like to reassure you that I will adhere to the advice and guidance provided to schools by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health's current advice is that, at this stage, there is no specific action schools need to take and the risk of an outbreak in New Zealand is currently low.

A Senior Advisor from the Ministry of Education has advised that, at this stage, I, as Principal of the school, do not have the authority to request that children stay home because of this situation. This can only be done, as with the measles, when the Medical Officer from the Ministry of Health gives this directive – which has not been done at this stage.

I have had communication from the Ministry and I would like to reassure you that:

- our school is closely monitoring information being provided by the Ministry of Health, in regard to the Coronavirus
- at this stage, we have been notified that the risk of an outbreak in New Zealand is currently low and the Ministry of Health's current advice is that there is no specific action to be taken at this time
- just to reaffirm, there are no cases of the virus in New Zealand currently
- should the situation change, as we do with other infectious diseases such as measles, mumps and influenza, we will follow our pandemic plan for managing the illness
- for those of you concerned about possible infection, the Ministry of Health has provided practical information on their website which we encourage you to read - Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) guidance – Ministry of Health website
- included in there is some advice (for travellers) to help reduce the general risk of infection:
 - o avoiding very close contact with people showing symptoms
 - o frequently washing hands
 - o avoiding close contact with sick live farm animals or wild animals
 - o practising cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash hands).
- the Ministry of Health will continue to update that content as further information becomes available

As with all infectious diseases, and in line with our existing procedures, we have the following steps in place:

- Strong hygiene and cleaning practices in place during school time and by school cleaners
- Reminders for students and staff about good personal hygiene practice
- Closely monitoring students for symptoms of fever, runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, faint, muscle ache, other general unwell feeling and contacting parents if these are present
- Reminding children about not sharing food.

As with all illness in a school/community setting, children and adults are advised they must not to come to school if they are unwell.

I will await, and immediately act upon, the advice from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health or the DHB.

Many thanks for your support and understanding with this situation

Megan Clotworthy
Principal
Royal Oak School