



# Mount Eden Normal

## PRIMARY SCHOOL

Te Whare Akoranga o Maungawhau

POLICY

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### *Pandemic Response*

#### **Rationale**

It is important that our school has plans in place to protect staff and students from future pandemics or epidemics.

The Ministry of Health leads the Government's response to a pandemic. It is the responsibility of other agencies to plan for and respond to a pandemic in their respective sectors and settings, based on the direction set out by the Ministries of Education, Health and/or Medical Officers of Health.

Pandemics by their nature are unpredictable in terms of timing, severity and the population groups that are most affected. Contingency planning for an infectious disease outbreak is as important as planning for other emergencies.

#### **Definitions**

- *Epidemic* refers to a widespread but localised occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time
- *Pandemic* refers to an infectious disease that is prevalent over a whole country or the world
- *SMS* refers to the schools Student Management system and contact database

- *Direct contacts* refers to any person or persons who have been within one metre of an individual exhibiting/ subsequently developing symptoms or in an enclosed place with them for more than 30 minutes

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that robust procedures exist to inform the school's procedures and ability to respond in the event of a pandemic scenario.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Principal (or delegate) is designated Pandemic Manager for the school in the event of a Pandemic being declared.

## **Authority to prevent a student's attendance**

If a student is diagnosed with and/or, in the Principal's opinion, shows symptoms of a communicable disease, the Principal has authority to preclude them if they believe on reasonable grounds they may have a communicable disease (Section 19 Education Act).

The student has to stay away for the infectious period of the specific disease.

## **Authority to request a staff member not to attend**

The Principal is authorised to preclude a staff member with an infectious disease or who is suspected of having an infectious disease from attending the school.

## **Authority granted to Medical Officers of Health**

Medical Officers of Health then have powers to manage the disease on a case-by-case basis, including the ability to:

- formally initiate contact tracing of contacts of cases
- issue mandatory directions such as restricting movement and travel
- apply for court orders such as for treatment
- issue administrative 72-hour detention orders (urgent public health orders)

## **Delegations**

The Pandemic Manager assumes full delegated authority on behalf of the Board in the event of a Pandemic being declared. A schedule of delegations exists whereby designated staff would assume the role in order of seniority if required as follows;

- The Principal (or Acting Principal)
- The Deputy Principal
- One (or both) Associate Principals
- Team Leader (in order of experience in the role)
- The Board Chair
- Deputy Board Chair
- Acting Board Chair
- Acting Deputy Board Chair
- Teacher (in order of experience in the role)

If a situation exists in which none of the above personnel are available or able to fulfil the role, advice would be sought from the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA). The Board of Trustees retains the right to resolve to withdraw delegated authority and assume direct responsibility at any stage.

At all stages, legislative requirements take precedence.

### Key Contacts

<b>Website</b>	<b>Auckland Regional Public Health Service</b>  <a href="https://www.arphs.health.nz/">https://www.arphs.health.nz/</a>  <b>Healthline 0800 611 116</b>  <a href="https://covid19.govt.nz/">https://covid19.govt.nz/</a>
<b>Postal address</b>	Auckland Regional Public Health Service Private Bag 92 605 Symonds Street Auckland 1035
<b>Phone</b>	(09) 623 4600
<b>After hours</b>	(09) 623 4600
<b>Fax</b>	(09) 623 4633
<b>Street address</b>	Cornwall Complex Building 15 40 Claude Road Greenlane Auckland 1023

**Government Local Broadcast Channel**

**Stage 1 Requirements - Pre-response & preventative measures**

In the event of increased likelihood of an outbreak of disease nationally and/or globally, (based on formal status notifications from the Ministry of Health and/or the World Health organisation), the Principal, acting in consultation with the Board (or a Board sub-committee with delegated authority for Policy oversight and implementation), will enact the following precautionary steps:

1. Monitor, respond to and follow all advice from official Government agencies
2. Report any cases or suspected cases of a notifiable disease to the District Health Board and/or Medical Officer of Health
3. Offer and recommend annual vaccinations to all staff, paid for by the Board, based on advice from Health officials
4. Keep contact details and relevant health information for all staff and students up to date via the school's SMS
5. Ensure appropriate/recommended resources, equipment and supplies are kept in stock, including in the Sickbay, which should stock available pandemic supplies as recommended by the Ministries of Education, Health and/or Medical Officers of Health.. These should include (but are not limited to):
  - 5.1. Disinfectant
  - 5.2. Thermometer
  - 5.3. Paper towels/Tissues
  - 5.4. Bleach
  - 5.5. Disposable Gloves
  - 5.6. Face Masks
  - 5.7. Panadol
  - 5.8. Hand Sanitizer
6. Communicate information based on advice from the Ministries of Education, Health and/or Medical Officers of Health. with all stakeholders, families and (as appropriate) students in a proactive (and age-appropriately sensitive) manner
7. Review cleaning routines and make provision for enhanced cleaning measures as deemed to be prudent and/or as recommended by the Ministries of Education, Health and/or Medical Officers of Health.
8. Educate students on any hygiene, social distancing and/or precautionary measures as advised by Healthcare professionals to help prevent the spread of the disease
9. Require all staff to report to the Principal (or delegate) any instances of students reporting or suspected of the following;
  - 9.1. High fever (or feel feverish or hot)

- 9.2. Headache, fatigue and weakness
- 9.3. Sore throat
- 9.4. Cough, chest discomfort, difficulty breathing
  
- 9.5. Muscle aches and pains
- 9.6. Travel overseas recently to an affected country
- 9.7. Been in contact with someone diagnosed with the pandemic

**Stage 2 Requirements - *Response in the event an epidemic or pandemic is declared and physical distancing is recommended or directed***

In addition to the requirements of Stage 1, in the event an epidemic or pandemic Alert Level is declared and physical distancing measures are recommended, the Principal will immediately assume full delegated authority for implementation of the Pandemic Plan Policy as Pandemic Manager, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure;

- 10. Continued monitoring, response and adherence to advice from the Ministries of Education, Health and/or Medical Officers of Health, and compliance with any alert level protocols that are enacted
- 11. The designation of an isolation space or spaces, with restricted access to essential staff only
- 12. Regular contact with the local Ministries of Education, Health and/or Medical Officers of Health is maintained
- 13. Board members, staff, parents, caregivers and guardians are informed that the pandemic plan is activated
- 14. Contact details are kept up to date on SMS, including a record of illness notifications
- 15. The current SMS contact list is provided to the local Ministries of Education, Health and/or Medical Officers of Health/any other authorised Government agencies if requested
- 16. Staff, parents, caregivers and guardians are kept updated on their tasks and responsibilities, which will include how to manage sick children and adults and what happens in the event of closure
- 17. Staff, parents, caregivers and guardians are regularly reminded of current advice relating to ways to limit spread of the pandemic including staying at home when sick, cough and sneeze control, hand washing etc, including visual reminders for children in bathroom areas
- 18. Resources are regularly reviewed to ensure that there are sufficient supplies of cleaning materials, with the cleaning schedule kept under ongoing review. This will be determined by the nature of the pandemic and based on the best available advice from the Ministries of Education, Health and/or Medical Officers of Health
- 19. Support staff posted in sickbay full-time Mon-Friday
- 20. Staff reminded not to attend work if unwell
- 21. Direct teacher supervision of children washing hands before eating

22. Children to eat (supervised) in their own class/own area of the school away from other classes before playing
23. No assemblies, community events or team-wide gatherings
24. Zones sports closed
25. Out of school trips re-assessed on a case-by case basis
26. Stopping all lunchtime clubs and activities
  
27. Suspension of the swimming programme
28. Physical distancing of staff, including;
  - 28.1.1. Teams of teachers to have their own local space set up for morning tea and lunch - no whole staff gatherings in the staffroom
  - 28.1.2. No whole staff meetings
  - 28.1.3. Keeping a reasonable physical distance during team meetings
  - 28.1.4. Take your CRT/any release at home if possible
  - 28.1.5. No hugs/handshakes/high fives etc (children/staff/all)
29. Communal areas, such as the library, are closed, with consideration given to ways of cleaning and/or restricting communal use of play areas, physical education equipment and other resources shared between significant numbers of students
30. Staff, students or any other persons on site are referred to the Sickbay to be isolated, collected and taken/sent home immediately should they exhibit symptoms or by request of the Pandemic Manager
31. Students who become ill and cannot be taken home immediately are placed under the medical care of dedicated Sick Bay staff, reassured and kept in the isolation area to await pick-up, with contact limited to the dedicated Sickbay staff
32. Direct contacts of any person or persons referred to the Sickbay for isolation will be limited to a single, segregated area of the school, with any further contact restricted. The Pandemic Manager will seek advice from Healthcare professionals on the appropriate course of action
33. Parents/caregivers of students deemed to have had potential direct contact are advised as soon as possible. Arrangements will be made for staff or other adults to be isolated, taken/sent home and students to be picked up, with a recommendation to seek further advice from Ministries of Education, Health and/or Medical Officers of Health
34. Any confirmed cases are reported to health authorities as required
35. A system is in place to monitor staff and/or families who are ill or suspected of being ill including contacting families who are unexpectedly absent
36. The local DHB and Ministry of Education is informed if more than 30% of the roll is absent

**Stage 3 Requirements - *Response in the event the school is officially directed to close by an authorised Government agency***

The Pandemic Manager will ensure;

37. Through consultation and/or at the direction of the DHB Emergency Planner and/or other authorised Government agency, make the decision to close the school if recommended or required

38. Advise all parents, caregivers and guardians of the closure
39. Post notices of closure on entry points
40. Collaborate with local Government agencies in making facilities available in pandemic response efforts if required
41. Make arrangement for staff who are required to work from home and who are able to do so to develop and regularly update distance learning materials that may be made available online to families/students, observing any instructions or directives from the Secretary of Education relating to distance learning requirements, materials and/or provision of digital devices for students
42. During any period where the school is closed or staff are required to remain at home, it is expected that schools will continue to pay staff for the days/hours they would have normally worked
43. Make arrangements for opening the school for limited instruction for children of essential workers as required and directed by the Secretary for Education. All staff who are cleared to work on health grounds can be requested to work on site at the Principal's discretion, with reference to Ministry of Health advice and criteria and/or direction from the Secretary for Education

***Stage 4 Requirements - Recovery - Response to pandemic/epidemic status being lifted and schools being authorised to re-open***

The Pandemic Manager will ensure;

44. Site assessment, including advice on any special cleaning and/or mitigation provisions that may be required
45. Staff, parents and the wider community are advise that Mt Eden Normal Primary School is reopened via text, email and school website as soon as minimum staffing can be achieved to meet supervision ratios
46. Delegations to the Pandemic Manager return to the Board
47. Arrangements are made for trauma/grief counselling via the Ministry of Education for staff and/or students if required
48. Pandemic Plan Policy and procedures are reviewed and debriefed with staff, with any future Policy recommendations made to the Board by the Principal

Signed: Virginia Brown  
Presiding Member

**Policy review details**

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Review cycle: Biannual

Date for next review: Aug, 2026