

**17 March 2020**

Kia ora Greendale whanau,

We're all concerned about the Covid-19 pandemic, so let's work together to keep your family and our school community safe. We can look after each other and we have students and parents with compromised immunity so we need to be especially vigilant.

**Here's how you can help...**

- Let us know if your child or the adults in your home have low immunity.
- Contact us if any of your family members travel out of NZ.
- Keep your children home if they are sick. More likely, it will be a seasonal cold or 'flu, not the Covid-19 virus, but passing on even a minor illness would compromise someone else's immunity. If your child becomes sick during the day we will call you and ask you to collect your child.

**Let's reduce the worries about Covid 19**

There is one important aspect NOT being covered in the news, and that is how to protect our children from being 'freaked out' by stories they may hear about the impact of COVID19 worldwide.

You could limit media exposure when your children are with you. Children are far more impacted by news about fatality rates and deaths than adults. Your children may need help to understand that in New Zealand, we are still at very low risk of an outbreak. If your children ask about fatalities, remind them that most people affected are the elderly and chronically unwell. If children do catch the virus the effects are almost always minor.

Please remind your children that New Zealand is a safe place and that it is unlikely all schools will be closed in New Zealand because of this illness. Encourage them to play outside and do activities that they normally do – including playing with their friends and neighbours. There is no reason in New Zealand to be fearful or to isolate ourselves or our children unnecessarily. (If schools are forced to close, teachers at Greendale have a plan to send work home, a mixture of paper and online depending on what you have available).

**Remind your children how to stay safe**

Hand washing is essential! Remind your children how to wash their hands like a doctor. (We have been discussing handwashing at school and our reminders include posters.) They should wash their hands with water and soap for at least 20 seconds and dry them thoroughly:

- before eating or handling food;
- after using the toilet;
- after coughing, sneezing, blowing or wiping noses and after being with sick people.

**Anyone in your family in self-isolation?**

Please don't send your children to school until the two weeks of quarantine is over. Let us know and we'll provide the children learning for at home.

**Let's stop myths before they grow**

Hate, fear and racism – Please help us remind children that this is not an 'Asian illness' no matter where scientists first found it. The outbreak is not anyone's fault. When the outbreak is finally

over, hate, fear and racism could remain. Please let your children know to tell a teacher if they hear comments of that nature at school.

It is important to remember that we are currently going through a change of season.... into colds and flu season. Please use your good common sense with coughs and colds. As always, if your child is feeling unwell please keep them home. Teach them how to use and throw away tissues correctly and to cough into their elbows which is 'good practice' at any time.

**Carey-Anne Whitaker - Principal**  
**Ralph Brown - BOT Chairperson**

More health advice and virus prevention information is available on the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education websites:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>  
<http://www.education.govt.nz/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-3/>

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to a range of other illnesses such as influenza. Having any of these symptoms does not necessarily mean that you have COVID-19.

Symptoms include:

- fever
- coughing
- difficulty breathing.

### **COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) guidance – Ministry of Health**

*What to do if you're concerned*

If you have the symptoms and have recently been to a country or area of concern, or have been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19, please call Healthline's COVID-19 line, with translators and interpreters available 24/7 in 150 languages:

- Free call 0800 358 5453
- +64 9 358 5453 for international SIMS

If you intend to visit your GP or after-hours medical centre, phone ahead to let them know.