



Fairfield College

9 March 2020

The Corona Virus (COVID-19) continues to impact on a local, regional, national, and global level. On Friday March 6 the school received the following information from the Ministry of Education.

COVID-19 – The Facts

Because COVID-19 is a new virus, it was always going to take time to understand how it is transmitted and who might be most impacted. While the scientists and health authorities have been quickly gathering and sharing the information they do have, there has been very unhelpful and inaccurate information shared about COVID-19, particularly through social media.

This misinformation has supported unreasonable levels of fear and worry in some parts of our communities, evidenced recently in New Zealand by some panic-buying of toilet paper, hand sanitiser and bottled water.

Scientists are working collectively and globally to quickly understand COVID-19. There has also been some significant research published recently by the [World Health Organisation-China Joint Mission](#). So what we now know about COVID-19 is:

- At this time the vast majority of people in New Zealand have no risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19
- Children and young people under 18 account for only 2.4% of all reported cases of COVID-19 – this means we are unlikely to see widespread cases in schools and early learning services
- New Zealand currently has very few cases of COVID-19 and no evidence of sustained person-to-person transmission in our communities
- Although asymptomatic infection (people with no symptoms) has been reported, there is emerging evidence that this is rare and not a major driver in spreading the infection
- Spread happens through coughing and sneezing by someone confirmed with COVID-19 – similar to the way that influenza spreads
- *“COVID-19 does not transmit as efficiently as influenza, from the data we have so far. With influenza, people who are infected but not yet sick are major drivers of transmission which does not appear to be the case for COVID-19”* – Director General of World Health Organisation (WHO)

I emphasise that the Ministry of Health are monitoring this situation very closely and they will guide our school response if the situation deteriorates. The Ministry of Health continues to emphasise that the chances of community outbreak remain low.



Be respectful
Be responsible
Be the best you can be

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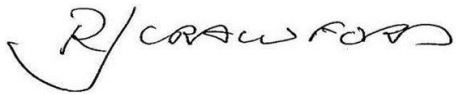
As I stated in a previous letter ***the Coronavirus at this stage is not a reason for students to be absent from school.***

We are continually monitoring the situation and the school will be informed by the Ministry of Education if this situation was to change. If this was to take place the school will implement their Pandemic Plan.

The school's Pandemic Plan has been placed on the school website and it can be viewed by clicking 'Read More' under Pandemic Plan on the home page.

Please be assured that we will keep you updated as new information on this evolving situation becomes available.

Naaku noa, naa

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R/CRAWFORD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R" that loops back under the first part of the name.

Richard Crawford
PRINCIPAL