



# Fairfield College

18 March 2020

Kia ora te whanau

The confirmation yesterday that a student at a school in Dunedin has contracted COVID-19 provides an example to us of **what would likely happen at Fairfield College if a student or staff member tested positive for COVID-19.**

The Ministry of Health has closed the school for an initial period of **48 hours**, while it tracks the student's contact history. A priority during the 48 hours is to identify the Close and Casual contacts of the student that has contracted the virus.

**Close contacts** are traced and put in self-isolation for 14 days. A close contact is anyone who has been close to someone with COVID-19. This can mean living in the same house or spending more than 15 minutes close to someone with COVID-19 such as on a flight, bus or train or in the workplace.

**Casual contacts** will also be provided with information so that they know any symptoms to monitor for and where to go to if they become unwell. They are not required to self-isolate. A casual contact is someone who has had contact with a case but doesn't meet the criteria for a close contact. This could mean someone travelling on the same aeroplane who was seated away from the case. For example, they were only close to the person with COVID-19 for less than 15 minutes or were at the same place but not near them.

Another important action is to conduct a comprehensive cleaning of the school so that all surfaces in classrooms, door handles, bathroom surfaces etc. will have been cleaned in accordance with guidance from the Ministry of Health.

**Note:** The Ministry of Health will determine when a school closes, and if or when it may open for instruction. A school may be closed for several days whilst the tracking process happens. Such cases will be dealt with on a school by school basis.

## Physical distancing

As you are aware Fairfield College has suspended the holding of full school assemblies. This is a response to the Government's instruction that we avoid holding large gatherings of people (500 plus).

*The Ministry of Education emphasises that:*

*"Personal hygiene, and reducing unnecessary physical contact (e.g. hugs, handshakes, hongi) are still the most important things to do to stop the spread of any virus. Please note that we are deliberately using the term "physical distancing" rather than "social distancing". Maintaining social connection is as important as ever to people's wellbeing during this time, if not more so. If you have students who are required to self-isolate, you could encourage their peers to maintain social contact with them through phone calls, email, pen-pal letters, class video calls, or age-appropriate social media.*

## Encouraging student attendance

*We know that some parents have concerns about their children attending school at the moment, some of which may be due to what they are seeing in the media about other countries.*

*There's a simple rule here – if students are unwell (whether or not their illness relates to COVID-19) they should stay at home. **Students who are not unwell should continue to attend school.***



**Be respectful**  
**Be responsible**  
**Be the best you can be**

PO Box 12-228  
Hamilton 3248  
New Zealand  
Phone: +64 7 853 5660 Fax: +64 7 853 5679  
Email: adminfc@faircol.school.nz

**Will schools be directed to close?**

The Ministry of Education has explained that the large-scale school shutdowns elsewhere in the world at this stage cannot be translated to the New Zealand context because fortunately we have had no community transmission of the virus. If there was a person who tested positive for COVID-19 and this person had no known contact with another confirmed case or any links to a country badly affected by the pandemic than community transmission of the virus would be present. If this was to happen than the Government more than likely would introduce different measures that may include school closures at a wider level.

**Preparing for distance learning**

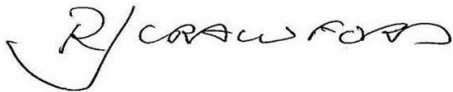
This is a further reminder that Fairfield College will be closed for instruction on Friday March 20 so that teachers are able to further develop a platform to enable distance learning to take place in both a digital and non-digital form. It is my intention to share a document with our school community that outlines how we would achieve this if the school was directed to close.

In the meantime, unless students are unwell themselves, please continue sending them to school.

Be assured that student and staff safety are our highest priority and that we have procedures in place to deal with the challenges of a pandemic. The school's Pandemic Plan is on the school website and it can be viewed by clicking 'Read More' under Pandemic Plan on the home page.

Thank you for your continued support.

Naaku noa, naa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Crawford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Crawford  
PRINCIPAL