



## Novel Coronavirus (28/1/20 Update)

Dear Parents, Caregivers and Whanau,

Following directives from Iona Holsted, Secretary for Education, we would like to inform and reassure you around the steps our school is taking to maintain the health of all at St Thomas's School.

In matters of health related to this virus please note:

- Any staff member or learner who may be at high risk of exposure because they have recently been to China or have been in close contact with someone confirmed with the virus, is asked to **stay away from school for 14 days**. Please inform the school office if this situation applies in your case, detailing the date you arrived back in NZ and the date your child is expected back at school.

We are following similar protocols with our international students.

- If you have a concern about your child or any members of your family, I urge parents to contact Healthline at **0800 611 116** or their GP for medical advice. Healthline has translators and interpreters available **24/7 in 150 languages** and have Mandarin and Cantonese speaking staff available.
- If a learner attends school while showing symptoms I can preclude them if I believe on reasonable grounds, they may have a communicable disease (Section 19 Education Act). The learner has to stay away for the infectious period of the specific disease.
- As with our existing school procedures for children demonstrating symptoms of illness, we ask that all sick children are kept home and we will send any child displaying signs of illness home immediately. If your child displays symptoms of illness such as sore throat, high temperature, cough and respiratory issues, please consult your doctor.

Our staff place strong emphasis on teaching good hygiene practices to learners and teachers will be educating children on robust routines for hand washing, sanitising and covering coughs and sneezes. As a school, we will also ensure that sanitisation of tables, door handles and light switches is of a high standard. We have sanitiser dispensers in classrooms and if you wish you may send your child to school with their own sanitiser.

We are required to follow the directions from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health and will be monitoring the situation and continue to provide further updates.

**Note:**

**I am now requesting your support, in that any child who has recently returned from China, or who has had contact with someone who has been confirmed with the virus, remains at home for two weeks from the date of arrival in NZ.**

Kind Regards,

Michael Maher